

09-10 May, 2022

Jawahar Kala Kendra,
Jaipur

Rashtriya Krishi Evam Poshan Swaraj Sammelan



राष्ट्रीय कृषि एवं पोषण स्वराज सम्मेलन

जवाहर कला केंद्र, जयपुर

09-10 मई, 2022



“SWARAJ in strong communities might be the best means available for ending hunger in India and in the world”.

- **Mahatma Gandhi**

Contents

S. No.	Particulars	Page No.
1	Acronym	3
1	Executive Summary	4-7
2	Introduction	8
3	Day I – May 09, 2022 - Inaugural Session	9-21
4	Indigenous Food Fair and Exhibition	22
5	Panel Discussions	23-39
5.1	<i>Panel Discussion I – Soil Health and Water Swaraj</i>	23-28
5.2	<i>Panel Discussion II – Seed and Horticulture Swaraj</i>	28-35
5.3	<i>Panel Discussion III – Significance of Forgotten Foods and Minor Millets on Food Diversity</i>	36-39
6	Glimpses of Cultural Evening – 09 May 2022	40
7	Day II – May 10, 2022 - Welcome Session	41-46
8	Concluding Session	46-49
9	Action Points and Key Recommendations	50-51
10	Annexure – I: Photo Gallery	52-53
11	Annexure – II: Media Coverage	54-55
12	Annexure – III: Programme Schedule	56-60

Acronym

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CMSS	Community Managed Seed System
CRRI	Central Rice Research Institute
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAP	Diammonium Phosphate
DBT	Direct Benefit Transfer
GVNML	Gram Vikas Navyuvak Mandal Laporiya
ICDS	Integrated Child Development <i>Services</i>
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MSP	Minimum Support Price
NPK	Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K).
OMM	Odisha Millet Mission
PDS	Public Distribution System
PEDO	People's Education and Development Organization
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
RCH	Reproductive and Child Health
UT	Union Territory
VC	Vice Chancellor
WHH	Welthungerhilfe

Executive Summary

Improvement in Soil Health and timely availability of quality seeds, is the prerequisite for the Sustainable Agriculture. But with the drastic changes in the agriculture scenario, several factors have disturbed and created a misbalance in the Agri-ecosystem. Seed system which was earlier in the hands of farmers have been systematically shifted to corporate companies. Soil erosion and its physical and chemical degradation and other weather extremities are causing a threat to major crops. Most of the traditional and nutritious crops like maize, minor millets, local varieties of rice and others are slowly being pushed out due to preference given to cash-crops over these. Seeds of many indigenous varieties have either become extinct or are on the verge of extinction. With a view to bring forward these important issues and look for solutions to these concerns, a two days National Conference - '*Rashtriya Krishi evam Poshan Swaraj Sammelan*' was organised at Jaipur.

The purpose of this conference was to have detailed discussions on strengthening sustainable agriculture programs and policies through promotion of traditional crop diversity, improving the situation of soil health, water and seed sovereignty, which can help strengthen the economic conditions of small and marginal farmers.

Hundreds of tribal farmers, agriculture scientists, experts, government officials, representatives of various civil society organisations participated and shared their views in the 2 days national conference. Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Shri Lal Chand Kataria, Hon'ble Water Resource Minister, Shri Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya, Shri Mumtaz Masih – Chairman, Centre for Development of Voluntary Sector, Rajasthan, Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar – Trustee, Gujarat Vidyapith were the key guests of the event.

During the inaugural session of the conference, **Shri Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya** emphasized on the increasing disturbances and imbalance in the ecosystem, due to human interference. Growing population and reduction in cultivable land have forced us to adopt to new concepts and techniques, which has resulted in change in our lifestyle, resulting in various disorders and diseases. The need of adopting the same old age traditional farming methods and revival of lost seeds and traditional foods was highlighted by him.

Shri Lal Chand Kataria also emphasized on the traditional agricultural practices, whether related to seeds conservation or improvement in soil health, which has been going on since ages, are undergoing a crises. The transformation which has come with time and the challenges being faced by the human life has been difficult. Increasing dependency of farmers on the machines, tractors and chemical fertilizers for high yield and income has ruined the agri-ecosystem. Thoughts on reviving and revitalizing the traditional agriculture system was appreciated by the minister and assured his full cooperation for the noble cause.

Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar in his deliberation accentuated on the need to follow Swaraj philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. For food and agriculture security, it is essential that one eat self grown foods. There is a need to bring a change in one's mindset, habits and nature by putting in continuous efforts to change oneself to get his own Swaraj. This will help in building a society and ultimately a culture and a civilization.

Three Policy Briefs: a) Improving Soil Health in Tribal Areas; b) Conservation of Crop Diversity and Utilization in Tribal Areas; c) Seed Sovereignty in Tribal Agriculture focussing on soil health traditional crop diversity and community seed management was also released by the guests in the event. The details of each policy brief and the policy recommendations on these 3 subjects were shared with the Ministers.

Further, the 3 panel discussions viz. – Soil Health and Water Swaraj; Seed Sovereignty; and Significance of Forgotten Foods and Minor Millets on Food Diversity were organised. Subject experts from various states, participated and shared their views and recommendations.

The panellists of the panel discussion on '*Soil Health and Water Swaraj*' shared the degrading quality of soil health due to malpractices like excessive usage of chemical fertilizers by the farmers, loss of micronutrient from the soil due to soil erosion, excessive rainfalls, use of heavy machineries and other factors. Degradation – Physical, Chemical and Biological were explained by the scientists in the discussion and the indicators which speaks about healthy soil were also shared. The need of community led management of soil health was highlighted in the discussion. The soil health related policies should be oriented towards sustainability and not just the production along with the need of public investment to stop the erosion were the key points emphasized in the panel discussion.

The second panel discussion of *Seed Sovereignty*; the discussion went around the change the genetics and the seed during the green revolution, resulting in imbalance of 5 key elements viz. *Land, Sky, Air, Fire and Water*. The need of changing the seeds again to bring back the nutrition was stressed upon in the discussion. It was emerged in the discussion that few international organizations promoted the new seeds in the name of high yield which consumed high fertilizers and water. The introduction of the hybrid seeds was no more than a conspiracy to control the agriculture production system of our country. The use of plant residue, green manure, cow dung and the science of natural process of maintaining soil fertility were sabotaged to replace the science of using NPK for maintaining the soil fertility. Farmers, practitioners and CSOs representatives shared their practices of seed conservation. In order to achieve Seed Sovereignty, there should be farmers led policy and programmes unfortunately which is not the situation. A special on the significance of cultivation of green gram during Zaid and efforts to increase sowing area of green gram in Banswara was also shared with the participants.

The third panel discussion on the “*Significance of Forgotten Foods and Minor Millets on Food Diversity*” discussed on the nutritional significance of the forgotten and indigenous food which were grown earlier by our ancestors. Importance of minor millets in improvement in soil health, nutrition to human and fodder for the cattle, was shared with the participants. It was recommended to setup processing units so that farmers can process these millets and sell them in the market at a higher price. Model of Odisha Millet Mission was also shared. Highlighting the malnutrition status of children in Rajasthan, the need to incorporate such nutritive food items into government programmes was endorsed. Efforts are needed from the families, the community and the policy makers for the inclusion of millets in the nutritious programmes and the implementation of the same.

The first day of the conference concluded with a cultural evening. An exhibition of indigenous food, organic food items, traditional farming tools, medicinal herbs was also organised.

The second day of the conference initiated with a recap of the first day discussion and sharing the points came out in the panel discussions. Dialogues with the farmers and practitioners were done during the panel discussion. Dr Iyengar, chairing the session, asked the participants to speak up how they can take forward the points forward at the family level, at the community level, in the ecosystem and up to the State and the Centre level. The participants were also asked to share the challenges they face at their level and at State level.

The two days process and the discussion were shared with the chief guest of concluding session, Mr. Mumtaz Masih. It was shared by him that the government programmes do not reach the common man for whom they were designed. The purpose of forming the centre of voluntary sector for providing the benefits of the government scheme to the last person, was shared by him to the participants. Mr. Masih discussed about an action plan devised by the centre in which dialogue sessions will be organised at different districts where in the challenges and the issues of general public and farmers will be heard and the efforts will be done to find the possible solutions. Civil Society Organisations will act as a connect between the Government and the community. A web portal is being constructed where all organizations will be registered and accredited.

The key action points which came out of the 2 days national conference are as follows:

1. There is a need for public investment to check the washout of top soil due to rains from the farmers’ fields. At least 70% of the MGNREGA budget be spent on preventing the wash out of top soil.
2. Need of the decentralised system of soil testing and soil testing facility in every village.
3. Soil health mapping at every village should be done and should also be tracked.
4. Soil health management practices of the tribal areas like green manuring, med-bandi, mixed cropping etc. should be supported by the government through policy measures and should be

initiated at least in the tribal areas. Focus should be shifted from monocropping to mixed farming.

5. Composite variety of seeds should be promoted and focus must be shifted from the hybrid variety
6. There are no government policies to bring back preserved and conserved seeds to the agricultural lands. Programmes like CMSS should be implemented. Public oriented programmes should be made and implemented.
7. Millets should be included in State's Nutrition Programmes.

Introduction

India is home to about 18 per cent of the world's population, 15 per cent of the world's livestock, 4.2 per cent of freshwater resources, 1 per cent of the forests and 0.5 per cent of pasture land. It is gifted with rich natural biodiversity of indigenous crops with seed, water and soil forming the essential trio for crop production. As we know, for sustainable agriculture, timely availability of seeds and improvement in soil health is the basic and most critical for the farmers that factors to achieve food and livelihood security, eventually improving their economic conditions. Being the most significant medium for agriculture, soil is the chief enabler for feeding and nourishing everyone on earth. Seed is the basic ingredient and the very foundation of food for human life. Therefore, the importance of the seeds in agriculture is immense. Water is the lifeline of agriculture. With drastic changes in Indian agriculture, severe misfortunes have happened and the essential trio has been disturbed creating a misbalance in the agro-ecosystem. The gains of green revolution technologies are now diminishing as visible in decline in marginal productivity of agricultural inputs. The seed system has changed over a period of a few decades. Today the entire seed system has slowly and systematically shifted in the hands of a few large chemical multinational companies from the farmers. Erosion of soil and its physical and chemical degradation along with climate-change induced weather extremities are causing a threat to major crops.

Further, in today's world, most of the traditional and nutritious crops like maize, small millets, local rice, and others are slowly being pushed out due to various reasons and the seeds of traditional crops have either become extinct or are on the verge of extinction.

Indigenous farm practices is key to crop diversity and soil health

In this context a two days National Conference - '**Rashtriya Krishi evam Poshan Swaraj Sammelan**' was organised with a view to bring forward these issues and look for solutions to these concerns. The purpose of this conference was to have detailed discussions on strengthening sustainable agriculture programs and policies through promotion of traditional crop diversity, improving the situation of soil health, water and seed sovereignty, which can help strengthen the economic conditions of small and marginal farmers.

The conference was organised from May 9th -10th, 2022 at Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur, Rajasthan, with the key objective to bring forward and promote the sovereignty of *Jal, Jungle, Jameen, Janwar* and *Beej* through the knowledge, wisdom and lifestyle of the tribal community to bring the Gandhian Swaraj among the community and the people as a whole.

The three aspects "Seed Sovereignty, Crop Diversity and Soil Health were discussed at the two-day National Conference amidst the presence of Cabinet Ministers – Agriculture and Water Resources Departments, agriculture experts, practitioners and community people including farmers and other dignitaries across the country.

This conference formed a basis to positively explore the different ways for:

- Improving the soil health which is the prime factor for the production of food.
- Adopting methods like Community Managed Seed System (CMSS) to promote, protect, preserve save, breed and exchange the forgotten seeds, composite variety of local seeds; and
- Conservation of Crop Diversity & Utilization in tribal areas.

Identifying solutions for resolving the issues and challenges faced by the tribal community and the required policy interventions needed from the government, was the motto of the two days conference.

DAY -I, 09 May, 2022

Inaugural Session

The first day of the conference began with a brief introduction of the organizers, the chief guests, subject experts, farmers from Rajasthan and other states, dignitaries and community representatives along with the series of activities which were to follow.

The inaugural session started with the welcoming of the Chief Guest – Mr. Lal Chand Kataria, Hon’ble Minister for Agriculture, Government of Rajasthan and Special Guest Mr. Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya, Hon’ble Minister for Water Resource, Government of Rajasthan by Mr. Jayesh Joshi, Secretary, Vaagdhara and other members of the organization and community people.

Both the ministers were accompanied by Mr. Jayesh Joshi, Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar- Trustee and former vice-chancellor Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad; Mr. Robert Leo- President, Keystone Foundation, Tamil Nadu; Mr. Sawai Singh- President of Rajasthan Samagra Sewa Sangh, Jaipur; Mr. Sunny Sebastian- Former VC Haridev Joshi University of Journalism; Mr. Jaipal Kaushik- Subject expert; and MS Shruti Pandey – WHH, Delhi, on the stage.



Photo 1: Agriculture Minister, Shri Lalchand Kataria and Water Resources Minister, Shri Mahendrajeet Singh Malaviya, Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar along with other dignitaries

As a custom the guests offered garlands to the Mahatma Gandhi's Picture, lightened the holy lamp and as a ritual showing divinity to soil – mother earth, performed the 'Mitti Poojan' of the Beej - Rangoli designed and prepared by the community people. The Rajasthani culture of greeting the guests was depicted by presenting the mementoes and garlanding them by special invitees followed by the welcome speech by Mr. P. L. Patel who expressed his gratitude towards the gathering and the distinguished guests. Mr. Robert Leo from the Keystone Foundation set the agenda of the discussion by sharing his keynote on traditional farming in context of tribal and marginal farmer. Congratulating the community farmers and guests who were present, he highlighted the significance of sustainable agriculture and millets. He said that Rajasthan was the state who gave the maximum production of millets and is the right time to celebrate 2022-23 as the international year of millets supporting this by enhancing domestic consumption of millets with its national and international branding. He emphasized on the need of understanding the significance of millets with the knowledge and wisdom of Adiwasi culture-chemical free, natural millet farming system which includes the seed, land preparation seed conservation, preparation of local inputs, crop protection methods and seasonal management system which are unique to this community. He informed that India is the diabetic capital and the cure is 'millets consumption' as they provide a healthy food system.

Minor millets are cultivated traditionally from higher elevations to plains. Traditional millets are suitable for all indigenous landscapes and are cultivated with multiple cropping systems which enhanced soil fertility, multiple crops offer provides fodder for cattle and the farming families become self-reliant. Indigenous people's landscape management practices provide healthy food systems. Rainfed and integrated agricultural practices are woven by organic values which promotes bio-diversity. During the pandemic scenario agricultural activity was the only activity which went without lockdown. Mr. Leo extended his best wishes to Vaagdhara for its endeavour to making 1 lakh families in the tribal belt of Rajasthan economically strong and self-sustaining livelihood through integrated farming.



Photo 2: Mr. Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya follows Mr. Lal Chand Kataria to garland the picture of the Mahatma Gandhi



Photo 3: Chief Guests and other dignitaries lighting the holy lamp and doing Mitti Pujan

Mr. Jayesh Joshi carried forward the discussion sharing his experiences ten years back when he visited South India, he discovered many dishes made from millets which motivated Vaagdhara to promote millets and now, more than 5000 farmers are cultivating millets in parts of Rajasthan – Banswara, Dungarpur and Pratapgarh. For the last 4 years local fruit varieties are also being preserved and grown locally like *Timru*, *Ber*, and *Sitaphal* which have very high micro nutrient content. The region is self-reliant and capable enough to protect the diversity.

Life style and culture of adivasi is Swaraj in itself



Photo 4: Mr. Jayesh Joshi welcoming the guests and participants

With the state government's announcement in its budget on various missions to conserve soil and seed it was felt that the country wide efforts in this direction should be discussed. Three policy papers, which have been prepared by Vaagdhara during the last one year on the national policy, policies of Rajasthan and other state governments puts forward the issues relating to implementation of such policies – though there are certain matters already included in the policies – desired changes are needed in the policies. The state government's departments play a significant role but if there is a challenge in implementing the policies than it is a matter to think about the required policy interventions. Rajasthan has the oldest and elite seed corporation and if it starts producing minor millets and pulses, such policy interventions may be helpful. How civil society organizations can help and support in strengthening the same through these discussions and this is the objective of the conference. He shared; if a model could be set for the country through an example as to what policy changes are needed, Rajasthan could be the pioneer in this regard. He then urged the ministers by saying that the Hon'ble Chief Minister, is the follower of Gandhian swaraj and if we could set some examples regarding the policy on local seed conservation and efforts of soil conservation and the vision of swaraj it would be of a great help.

Three Policy Briefs: Improving Soil Health in Tribal Areas; Conservation of Crop Diversity and Utilization in Tribal Areas; Seed Sovereignty in Tribal Agriculture focussing on soil health traditional crop diversity and community seed management was also released by the guests.

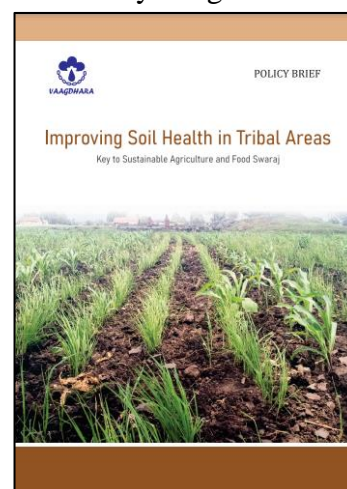
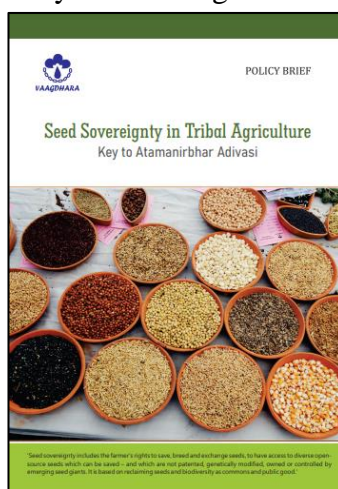
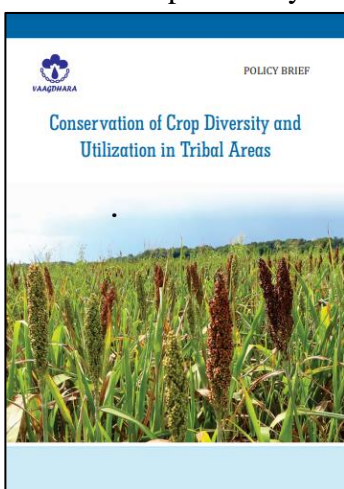


Photo 5: Release of Policy Briefs on soil health, traditional crop diversity and community seed management

The details of policy brief on soil health, traditional crop diversity and community seed management in tribal areas were then presented by Mr. Jaipal Singh Kaushik, Agriculture expert. Welcoming and greeting the distinguished guests he explained about the background and the need of developing policy papers. Vaagdhara has been working with the community at the trijunction of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh for the past many years. There has been discussions among the tribal communities on sustainable agriculture, traditional farming practices during annual conclaves, participated by thousands of tribal farmers annually. Issues related to sustainable agriculture, seed and diversity were raised and discussed during these conclaves. The tribal belt

in Southern Rajasthan is also the hilly terrain getting heavy rains leading to the erosion of the top soil. Most tribals reside on the high areas where they suffer heavy losses of top soil and reduced crop production.

The lockdown due to pandemic witnessed the return of migrants to their homelands which included a high number of tribal youth. This was a clear indication that agriculture in these areas is not sustainable. With the type of soil depth and resources available with the tribal community agriculture is considered no more a profitable business for these farmers and hence 80-90 % families are such from where at least one person migrates for other job opportunity and this was clearly visible during the pandemic. This paved the way for the thorough process to get activated. A need for discussions along with work on policies and practices was also felt.

Three basic issues came out to be worked upon:

1. **Soil Health** – Soil that sustains not only farm produce but also livestock and humans, should have water holding capacity, organic carbon, and micro organisms in it. Soil health is matter of great concern both at national and state level, but is of utmost significance in tribal areas. It is said that it takes one hundred years to form one inch of top soil but takes only ten minutes to be wiped or swept out. Rajasthan government is the first state government to roll out a separate Agriculture Budget which shows the sensitivity of the government towards agriculture and we wish to take this forward. Though the budget has proposed 11 missions for promotion of agriculture, but looking at the past experience what actually happens is that these missions remain limited to benefitting a certain numbers of families ie it is target oriented. What actually is needed is to form an institutional structure which would take this forward. Targets can be met on yearly basis but the farmer should be strengthened enough to manage what we want to give him - “Swaraj”, on his own. One may not believe but the community is capable enough to manage this on its own. A few points to consider has been proposed:
 - a. At least 70% of the MGNREGA budget be spent on preventing the wash out of top soil and on soil health (through Med-bandi, Vegetative cover etc) There is already a provision in MGNREGA to build individual assets under – ‘Apna Khet, Apna Kaam’ where this can be done. There is a need of administrative will to do so.
 - b. There should be decentralised soil testing facilities. 2 persons, preferable females be trained and redied as community resource persons at every Gram Panchayat in every village of the tribal region where they collect soil samples; get them tested; discuss the report with the farmers and tell them the exact inputs needed in their individaul farms. This would also create an employment opportunity for these youth which could be catered at the community level itself and it can come out as a self sustaining model.

- c. Testing for micro organisms: Till now there is no focus on testing for and building of micro organisms which should be taken care of through green manuring and similar practices.
2. **Seed Sovereignty:** In 2007, 45% of the worlds' seeds supply was controlled by just 4 multinational organizations / companies which has now increased to 70%. The controlling instrument for the farmer is the hybrid seed and the intellectual property rights because of which any farmer can use his own seed but can not sell it. Registration of seeds is must before the farmer can sell his seeds and this is a very costly affair. Till 50 years back the farmer was free to exchange his seeds. Whatever the development has taken place is not in the reverse direction but it is quiet threatening to imagine that if these seed companies refuse to provide seeds for 2 years there will be a severe food crises. So when we talk about the seed sovereignty then the local seed production management better known as – community managed seed system is the best. In CMSS all the technical guidance is provided by scientists and the seeds are produced, stored , and provided by the local farmers. The government has just to give him technical assistance and price support. This will also reduce the transport and operational costs as well as the wastage. If this is maintained at the district or the block level it will be the true swaraj where the farmer will locally produce store and sell his seeds in and around his village. The seed subsidy should be given to the farmer only. As of now the complete focus is on hybrid seeds and not on the composite variety of seeds specially in case of maize production in the Rajasthan tribal belt. With the use of hybrid seeds if there is no pesticides, necessary irrigation and fertilizers the harvest will be even lesser than the composite variety. This is also evident from the data study for over the last ten years. So when the harvest from hybrid seeds is either less or equal to that of the composite variety (in absense of necessary inputs because of paucity of resources with the farmers) then why should we not focus on the composite variety of maize seeds rather than promoting hybrid and simultaneously seeds of other local food varieties should be distributed in the mini-kits.
3. **Crop Diversity:** In the early days our forefathers used to grow a variety of crops which provided them with all the necessary nutrition for the family, fodder for the crop and preserve their seeds for further use. With the passage of time many traditional local varieties of crops, also called landraces, have raached on the verge of extinction. This is due to the use of hybrid seeds and promotion of monocropping with the hype that it will make the farmer richer in no time. This tempts the farmer to go for monocroping and use of hybrid variety of seeds and he just grows one crop or two like Maize and Soyabeans rather than the local foods like millets, local vegetables and fruits. Since the local varieties have evolved over a period of decades, thay are climate resilient and can survive high / low rains and other climate warming effects which can not be sustained by the so called commercial crops. Identifying , conserving the local variety and in fact researching on these is very important. The research should be decentralised and farmer friendly. Scientists from the centres should go to the farms and research at the farmers places which would be more replicable. Lastly, the tribal farmer is not economically strong to

buy chemical fertilizers and thus does not get the benefit of the subsidy. Supporting organic manure and incentivising the local farmer for use of green manure where the subsidy is given to these farmers, which would otherwise be given on use of chemical fertilizers, they would use green and organic manure rather than chemical fertilizers. This would also create employment opportunities and agriculture will also be sustainable.

Later in the inaugural session, before handing over the forum to **Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar** Trustee and former vice-chancellor Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad, the dignitaries on the dais were once again greeted by offering them ‘Uparnas’ and mementoes.



Photo 6: Dr Sudarshan Iyengar addressing the gathering on agriculture security in context of swaraj.

Dr. Iyengar was requested to present his exhortation on ‘food and agriculture security in context of SWARAJ.’ Commenting on the portfolios of the ministers and relating them to agriculture he said that the presence of the Water Resources Minister was equally relevant and significant in line with the subject of the seminar as was that of the Agriculture Minister. He also presented his credentials in brief – teacher by profession, resident of Dharampur village of Valsaad district Gujarat and has worked at Gujarat Vidyapeeth, started by Gandhi Ji in 1920.

Commenting on the word Swaraj, Dr. Sudarshan said ‘Swaraj is politics’. Explaining the same he said Gandhi did not play politics of any sector or segment but did politics of human beings. His philosophy of *Vyakti*, *Srushti* and *Samashti* believed that the individual (human being) is at the

focal point – He can understand and think so he can either make or break, however these days he is doing more wrong so we are in trouble and to come out of this various people are putting in their efforts and organizations are trying to work to make up for the same. Knowledge has increased and so has economic trends. Man has reached the moon but even then he is not free from various challenges. People are still dying of starvation, which means that something is wrong somewhere. Gandhi said that the swaraj of the individual is very important and it is a continuous process. One has to keep improving himself and adapt to the surroundings accordingly. Market or the Corporate, he said is very treacherous. These corporates show creativity, activity and have a good management but has ‘greed’ attached to it. They have the strength to centralise the entire power as there is a somewhat association of these corporates with the government.

The nexus of corporates and the government does not allow the transmission of power to the community. Fifty years back scientists told us that the fertilizers, seeds and medicine (agriculture input like pesticides etc.) will be imported as there is a need for higher production of foodgrains to cater to the needs of the growing population. Extensive use of these fertilizers, seeds and medicines which needed more water, electricity and tractors ruined the farmer as well as the agriculture. Everything that belonged to the farmer - produce, labour, seeds, fertilizers, water was surrendered to the market. When the farmers ran out of money for purchasing seeds and fertilizers the government stepped in to distribute loans. These loans were to be repaid in terms of cash, but what in case of crop failure? Here the market force came in to spread consumerism among the people and farmers. As a result the production fell down and farmers were forced to commit suicide. This is how the Swaraj is a matter of politics.

For food and agriculture security it is essential that one eat self grown foods – ‘my seed, my water, my livestock, my produce is all what I eat’. There is a need to bring a change in one’s mindset, habits and nature. Though it is very difficult but continuous efforts should be put in to change oneself to get his own swaraj. This would help in building a society and ultimately a culture and a civilization. Soil is turning into sand which has to be converted into soil once again which will help us in getting our swaraj back.

If I go to Dharampur I shall not eat wheat- why? because there is no production of wheat in Dharampur, however I will eat Nangli (millet) which is a local produce with high nutritional value. So I will eat all what is being grown near and around my place; even if it is available at about a 100 KM distance from my place I would eat that. Now what could be swaraj other than this, where I can eat for myself and make available for others to eat what I have available with me. – Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar

Dr Sudarshan concluded by thanking the organizers and greeting the guests once again promising to discuss in detail during the coming sessions.

Mr. Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya, Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources, Rajasthan started his oration by welcoming the chief guest and other invitees and experts. He shared that the entire content and the text of the event rotates around the tribal culture, lifestyle and their functioning; how to increase their produce and who can keep alive the foods which are on the verge of extinction which could be brought back in the community. His experience of past years revealed that in case a piece of cloud was seen in the east it would rain so heavily that all the rivers and ponds started overflowing. Today even if the clouds are seen during the entire season it does not rain. These disturbances are a result of human interference. Growing population and reduction in cultivable land have forced us to adopt to new concepts and techniques. The traditional foods were so nutritious that even if one had just a single *roti* he used to work for the entire day without feeling hungry but today, even after having 4 *rotis* the stomach feels the pinch of hunger after few hours.

There must have been times where diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, and heart ailments did not exist, but our changing lifestyle has made them our uninvited and unwarranted guests in our life. Today everyone is struggling with their lives. It is high time that the same old age traditional farming methods are adopted, the lost seeds and traditional foods are revived.

He thanked Vaagdhara for striving towards attaining Gram Swaraj. He expressed his gratitude to Former Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh for introducing schemes like MGNREGA which has helped checking the migration, specially of the tribal youth. He said that



Photo 7: Mr. Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya, Hon'ble Minister for water resources sharing his concerns on changing trends in agriculture.

there is a need to stop the erosion of soil due to rains. Adoption of conserving ‘agri water at the agriculture place, village water at the village level and household water at houses’ is now a necessity. He wished all the success for the conference being conducted for the noble cause and hoped that the resultant agenda that emerges out after two days discussions would be such that the entire country follow it. He urged the Agriculture minister to devise some strategy which would help in revival of traditional foods, seeds and storage of other food grains.

Mr. Lal Chand Kataria, Hon’ble Minister of Agriculture started his address by welcoming the farmers, subject experts, invitees from Rajasthan as well as other states and media persons and thanking Vaagdhara for organizing the conference and inviting so many guests and experts across the country. He also expressed his concern and need to discuss the issues related to farmers.



Photo 8: Hon’ble Agriculture Minister, Mr. Lal Chand Kataria delivering his keynote address at the event.

The issues, challenges and the agony in the agriculture sector being witnessed across the country and globally have forced us to think as to what can be done to overcome these. The traditional agricultural practices which has been going on since ages, the methods which were used traditionally for conservation of seeds locally are undergoing a crises. Being a farmer himself the minister echoed his concern on water availability. He said if there is no water left on the planet what would happen as whatever is sown needs water to grow, other than a suitable environment and climate along with other favourable conditions like weather. Other aspect is the soil health which is being talked about and worked upon by the central as well as the state governments and concerned departments.

The transformation which has come with time and the challenges being faced by the human life are tough. He cited the example of a train which comes from Punjab to Bikaner, known as ‘the

Cancer train' carrying cancer patients as passengers for treatment. It was highlighted by the minister referring to the wrong actions done by mankind towards the nature. This is the result of the interventions done in the light of so called education imparted. 40-45 years back the villages were electrified and tractors were introduced in the fields replacing cows, oxes, buffaloes and camels. The entry of tractors led to the exit of oxen, camels and lastly the buffaloes. With the passage of time the entire village started selling the livestock as the tractor started giving them remuneration in terms of rental income, forcing all and one to start buying tractors for their fields. With the electrification in the villages another intervention was introduced and that was the use of chemical fertilizers because there was a shortage of food grains in the country and a need to increase the food production. The then so called intellectuals in the villages started to change the mindset of the farmers that they should use Urea and DAP along with pesticides which would not only increase the production but also their income.

Earlier the farmers in the villages used to sell or exchange seeds of local varieties at the time of rains and it was a good practice. Now a days the seeds are being sold by companies from Andhra Pradesh– no one knows who has grown those seeds and from where they have been procured. The seeds are sold at a very high price and are believed to give a better harvest than the indigenous variety which is much cheaper and readily available. The minister believed that during the seminar many a thoughts and solutions would emerge in terms of use of natural resources in agriculture, sustainability and strengthening of the farmer and the youth taking interest in these activities.

He concluded his speech with a thanks to Vaagdhara for organising such an event in the city and assured his full cooperation in whatever manner he could.

Mr. Sawai Singh, a Gandhian follower and President of Rajasthan Samagra Seva Sangh expressed happiness on the basics orated by both the ministers as both of them - the sons of the soil have been involved in agriculture and had faced the ground realities. Mr. Singh reminded what Gandhi said - '*God has given two hands to human beings which are sufficient to feed him.*' Gandhi said that the indian farmer is capable of feeding the entire nation. He believed that agriculture was an integral part of the feeling of Swaraj and it was Gandhi who initiated the Kisan-Aandolan in Champaran. Mr. Singh said that even though the land has divided during the past years the farmer can feed his entire family with the production on 2 bighas of land. Earlier all the commodities were produced in villages but now it seems that all such activities are being taken over by the corporates.

Expressing his concern over distribution of subsidies both at the central as well as the state level, he said that this large scale distribution of subsidies has led to the increased nutritionally harmful food production which has again increased the expenditure for the people as well as the government. If this subsidy is given to the village farmers using organic fertilizers, all the farmers would benefit in terms of money and others in terms of nutrition security. He also suggested that if the production activities of cloth or oils etc is brought back to the villages more opportunities would spring up for the villagers. He reminded of the Gandhi saying 'economic and social inequality would lead to violence'. Agriculture has the potential to feed the community and create job opportunities.

If the Government of Rajasthan comes up with pack warnings on pesticide packs and fertilizer packets that use of pesticides and fertilizers is harmful, the state would be a pioneer in doing so and set an example for the nation to follow.



Photo 9: Mr. Sawai Singh sharing his experiences and suggestions with the guests.

With this **Mr. Deepak Sharma**, agriculture expert, took over and set the agenda for post lunch session by briefing the audience on the three panel discussions to be held.



1. Soil health and Water Swaraj
2. Seed and Horticulture swaraj and
3. Significance of food diversity in context of forgotten foods and minor millets.

Photo 10: Mr. Deepak Sharma setting the agenda for the panel discussion.

Indigenous Food Fair and Exhibition

Farmers / organizations and dealers of organic products, green manure and chemical free pesticides exhibited their products along with community people who displayed local variety seeds.



PANEL DISCUSSIONS

1. Panel Discussion I – Soil Health and Water Swaraj

The post lunch session on the first day of the seminar took off with the panel discussion on soil health and water swaraj. Moderated by Dr. Sukhdev Singh Burark, Former Director, (Research) Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, Udaipur the panel had Mr. P.L Patel from Vaagdhara; Mr. Lakshman Singh Lapodia GVNML; Mr. Devilal Vyas from PEDO, Dungarpur; Dr. P. K. Gupta, Soil Scientist from Kota; Mr. Kan Singh Nirvan, Agriculture Practioner, and Mr. Jaipal Singh Kaushik, Agriculture Expert.



Photo 11: Panellists on stage for the session on Soil Health and Water Swaraj

Expressing his gratitude to the organizers for honouring him to be the moderator for the session, **Dr Sukhdeo Singh Burark** stressed upon the significance of the soil without which there could be nothing. He said one can survive for long without food but it is very difficult to survive without water, so both soil and water are essential for life. If the soil is not healthy the food grown will not be healthy and so will be the condition of the consumers of such foods. To discuss the significance of both these elements he invited the panellists to come forward with their suggestions. Representing Vaagdhara, **Mr. P. L. Patel** started the discussion and highlighted some facts:

- 24 states have carbonic deficiency in the soil;
- 90% of the soil samples in 27 states and UTs showed shortage of nitrogen in the soil;
- Phosphorus deficiency has been recorded in 17 states and UTs.

According to the Centre for Science and Environment report the subsidy on chemical fertilizers distributed to the tune of Rs.1.3 lac crore is limited to Rs. 100 crores in case of organic fertilizers. This has led to excessive use of chemical fertilizers for the past 2 decades; as a result, the nutritional value of the soil has deteriorated to a large extent. Above 50 % of the soil is of very poor quality; there is a washout of top soil from the hilly areas in the tribal belt. He further shared that Vaagdhara has been working in 1000 villages covering tribal families to promote organic farming in order to increase the organic carbon in the soil. The soil has been given the status of God by the community and it is worshiped on the World Soil Day along with a pledge that they will not use any kind of chemical fertilizer in their fields. This helps in developing a belief in them that the use of organic manure will help in increasing the productivity. Here we are talking about protecting the soil, saving the livestock, using its waste, vermicomposting, multi cropping, use of green manure like 'Jeevamrut' etc. Vaagdhara has been discussing and promoting the main elements of swaraj and working to protect the sovereignty of *Jal; Jungle; Jameen, Jaanwar and Beej* within the community.



Another panellist **Mr. Lakshman Singh Lapodia** from GVNML expressed his gratitude for uniting him with old friends through this conference which he called as 'Satsang' (a company of good people talking something divine). He said that he has been working in a small part of the state serving the mother earth. He echoed the concerns which rose during earlier session on saving water, soil, livestock & earth and the blunders of mankind for the situation we are facing today. He said it is our duty to undo the wrong deeds. There is human civilization on earth; we have water, livestock, nature which needs to be combined to make the earth stronger which in turn will make all of us strong. The efforts done by his organization in the area to make the land strong, were shared by him. The land in his area was such that only 3% of the rain water seeped in and rest was drained. The people in the villages through their efforts have changed the landscape in the region where today after 40 years, there are 103 wells with water availability at 10 feet. Every well has green fodder around it



for feeding the livestock. The grazing grounds are full for animals to feed. This was made possible just because of their dedication and they devised ways which were suitable for their agriculture, livestock, and environment. The team constructed ponds in 40 villages through 'Shramdaan' (donation of labour for common cause) from 1977 to 1985. They used the Chauka system to create water recharging units. He suggested that selection of crops should be such which require less water to grow like black gram.

The next panellist **Mr. Devi Lal Vyas** from PEDO, Durgapur compared the relation of agriculture and water. He said, if the soil is not proper or lacks nutritional value, the resultant harvest would be of similar poor nutritional value. The issue is that how we can make soil and water useful and productive with the community involvement. Sharing an experience of his early life from Baran region of Durgapur he said that around 40 years back the farmers in that area used to cultivate sugarcane and make jaggery from it. But in later days, the use of DAP and Urea worsened the quality of soil so the people from that place had to shift to another crop because the market for jaggery declined. If the micronutrient content of the soil is finished, it will adversely affect the production. So, the community took the management of soil, agriculture and other things and now it is in their blood. Mr. Vyas suggested that there should be a village wise soil mapping which will bring out the constituents in that soil and only the deficient elements which are required to make that soil healthy may be added. There should be discussions at the village level campaigning for soil health and prepare the villagers to understand the actual positions of the soil in their respective fields and promoting the soil health management.



He further suggested to stop mono cropping and shift to multiple cropping systems that mean adoption of crop diversification which was actually the traditional form of agriculture. Furthermore, the composite variety of seeds should be promoted and focus must be shifted from the hybrid variety. If the required input is not given to the hybrid seeds the output will also be inadequate.

Another suggestion was to convert the urea-based DAP to green manure-based DAP, which he has been doing in his area, using the slurry residue from gobar gas (Bio-Gas) plants. He suggested to provide an alternative to the farmers, if DAP is not promoted.

Further in the session, **Dr. P. K. Gupta** – a Soil Scientist from Kota appreciated the discussions so far and continued with suggesting measures to tackle the issues and challenges. Dr. Gupta shared that every year almost 5,334 lac tons and on an average 16.4 tons productive soil per hectare of soil is depleting. A 10-12 cm of rainfall washes out 2000 quintals of soil from 1 hectare of farmland just because of faulty management. Degradation of soil has also taken place due to use of heavy machinery and extensive use of chemical fertilizers in the soil for high yield. This degradation can be classified into:



1. **Physical degradation:** caused by erosion of top soil; extensive use of heavy machinery in the land hardens the soil; dust formation due to carbon losses.
2. **Chemical degradation** which includes reduction of organic carbon in the soil; soil reaction – change in PH of soil; modification of soil nutrients and soil pollution caused by excessive use of chemical fertilizers.
3. **Bio-degradation** is caused by reduction of microbial community in the soil; adversely effected soil processes like soil respiration, enzyme activities and soil nutrient recycling etc. Microbial population is very significant without which the crops and plants do not get the nutrients from the soil.

Soil health: good soil health not only supports crop production but also supports the eco-system. Soil provides essential nutrients to plants, supplies water, and gives mechanical support. It activates other activities in the surrounding habitat like carbon transformation, mineral transformation and that's why we say that soil is dynamic and not dead. The soil is called healthy when all the activities of the ecosystem are being carried out simultaneously in it supporting plant and animal growth. He shared about the indicators which speak of healthy soil:

1. Soil which sustains plant and animal growth.
2. Soil which increases bio-diversity.
3. Good water and air quality.
4. Supports human health and habitat.
5. Carbon sequestering, meaning that the amount of carbon dioxide present in the atmosphere is reduced and the carbon content in the soil is enriched i.e., the carbon from the air is taken into the soil. This will reduce the green house effects; improve the environment and will impact the soil positively through nutrient recycling. Carbon sequestration can be done by forestation or vegetation growth and Bio-char.

Suggestions provided by Dr. Gupta were related to:

1. Crop residue management: There is not sufficient organic fertilizer which could replace the chemical fertilizers. The crop residue is an excellent source of crop nutrient. There is a need to educate farmers on crop residue management and incentivise the use of crop residue otherwise the policy will not be implemented at the ground level.
2. Composting: Improved methods of composting can be highly beneficial for the farmers.

Taking the session ahead **Mr. Jaipal Singh Kaushik**, an Agriculture Expert came forward with possible policy interventions on soil health. He said that in 1960s there was a need for food security and increase in agricultural production but today sustainable agriculture is a necessity. There should be community led management. It is the community farmers who should decide as to what is to be done and how. There may be a shortage of green manure today but we should move in a direction where after 20 years we should have sufficient green manure or organic fertilizers which would sustain agriculture. We should have our own seeds and high production. The agriculture must be scientific as it has been since 100 of years.



As far as 'policy' is concerned, he stressed upon that it should be oriented towards sustainability and not only towards production. Policies and practices cannot be separated. Policy cannot be appropriate if the farmers are not united. The nexus between the corporates and the governance can be broken by the farmers only.

One cannot think of agriculture without soil and the soil should be productive. What is to be seen is that it is not washed out by rains. There is a need for public investment to stop this soil washout from whatever source the funds are arranged.

As a matter of policy:

1. There is a need for public investment to check the washout of top soil due to rains from the farmers' fields.
2. There should be decentralised system of soil testing. There should be soil testing facility in every village. Also, this should be done by the community youth.
3. Soil health mapping at every village should be done and should also be tracked.

4. Soil health management practices of the tribal areas like green manuring, med-bandi, mixed cropping etc. should be supported by the government through policy measures and should be initiated at least in the tribal areas.

Finally, **Mr. Kan Singh Nirwan**, a farmer and agriculture practitioner took over the dais to present his experiences on the subject. His way of life and agriculture is, that he says, what he lives. The Indian farmer was the natural veterinary doctor as well as an agricultural scientist. Both the concepts of chemical as well as organic fertilizers have been formulated by people of foreign origin. His theory says that in its entire life span the plant takes 97% of its diet from the climate without any human help. There are 3 things that are essential for the farmer: 1) He should know his mother tongue; 2) He should be able to communicate with the nature; and 3) He should understand the



qualities of a cow. Land, nature and cow are one and the same. Every farmer needs to understand the science of these three elements. Every creation comes from the 5 elements and gets merged in the same (*Dharti – Land; Akash-Sky; Vayu-Air; Agni-Fire and Jal-Water*) which it is constituted from. The plant takes moisture from the soil and everything else from the climate. One can get a bumper crop in a field of 30 acres with the help of just one cow. If the governments amend their policies and the farmers tweak their intentions, the country will once again prosper like that in a golden age. It all depends on the quantity of microorganisms in the soil. One gram of cow dung has 300 to 500 crore microorganisms in it and if they are multiplied, they can provide all the 26 types of nutrients required by the plant.

Finally, **Dr. Burark** concluded the panel discussion with his remarks that the focus of the government has been on the programmes and not policies. It is target oriented and not public oriented. Public oriented programmes should be made and implemented.

Panel Discussion II – Seed and Horticulture Swaraj.

This panel discussion was moderated by **Dr. K S Varaprasad**, with the following panellists participating. Ms. Anita Damore from Vaagdhara; Mr. Man Singh Ninama from Janjatiya Vikas Manch; Mr. Majid Khan and Mr. Krishna from Vaagdhara; Mr. Gurbaksh, a farmer from Kheti Virasat Mission, Punjab, Dr. Ram Gopal Sharma, Joint. Director, Department of Agriculture and Mr. Jacob Nellithanam – Bharat Beej Swaraj Manch.



Photo 12: Panellists of “Seed Sovereignty” session on stage:

Dr Varaprasad initiated the discussion by talking about the basic which is the *PANCHBHOOT* – Dharti (Land), Aksah (Sky), Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire) and Jal (Water) also known as the five elements. These five elements are the essentials to support the human beings, plants and animals to keep them healthy and fit. During the green revolution we worked 80% on changing the genetics and the seed. The seed was modified in such a way that it required more fertilizers, more water and more pesticides to control the pests which polluted the land and water. We mismanaged the 5 elements and the focal point was the change in the seed.



To bring back the nutrition we need to change the seed again which will automatically manage the 5 elements. The original seeds of the traditional varieties which we had earlier but have been forgotten can be revived back. To commence the discussion on this issue, he first invited Ms Anita Damor – Facilitator cum Board Member of Vaagdhara.

Ms. Anita Damor associated with Vaagdhara shared that our forefathers used locally produced and preserved seeds of all the local foods be it millets or any other crop. Over the past 10-15 years these seeds have been forgotten and have been dependent on market. Now if the seeds are not

available at the right time, the farmer won't be able to grow the crops. Also, the seeds from the market are costlier and if the farmer doesn't have money to buy the same, he won't be able to get the seeds.

Since the past 4 years she has been preserving and using locally produced seeds to grow the crops and catering the needs of her family. Seed conservation and seed treatment have now become a part of their lives. She is also using the green pesticides and locally produced green manure in her fields and also exchanges seeds with other farmers for those which are not available with one or the other. Similarly, the local variety vegetables are grown and are immediately sold when taken to the market.



Following Ms. Damor, **Mr. Gurbaksh Singh**, associated with '*Kheti Virasat Mission*' – Punjab shared about their mission. Their mission organises workshops to educate farmers on ways and means to select the local variety of seeds, protect, preserve, enhance the quality and increase them. These seeds are the property of the farmers and if this property is lost then there is nothing left with the farmer. Already 70% of the seeds have slipped away from the hands of the community and that needs to be revived and protected.

These farmers from Punjab are producing millets which was an integral part of the food platter in the age of their forefathers. 'Kodo' millets are being grown and the seeds of the same are being distributed with three conditions applicable: First the seeds should be sown in the locally accepted manner and without any fertilizers or pesticides. Secondly, these farmers distribute the seeds to other farmers. Only 100 grams of the seeds are distributed which give a harvest of 1-1.5 quintals. Now these millet seeds have reached almost all parts of Punjab with a strong network build up. The local variety of seeds are of a much higher quality as compared to hybrid ones. Even if the produce from local variety seeds is less it gives a good premium to the farmer and a higher income because of its high nutritious value. It is the '*Kheti Virasat Mission*', in Punjab which has started a Poison Free Agriculture and the organic



farming is being practiced by most of the farmers in their area. A millet processing unit has also been setup with the help of 'Bhoomi-Ka'. Production of millets helps save water and gives nutrition security to the consumers. Use of millets in daily diet will be helpful in keeping healthy and it is believed that it will prevent cancer like diseases among the people.

Mr. Man Singh Ninama from Janjatiya Vikas Manch, Banswara shared that the seed is believed to be God and is a constituent of the 5 elements. In the earlier days when the seed was available with the farmer locally, he used to sow it immediately when it rained. With the dependency on the market the untimely availability of the seeds forces the farmer to keep out of the sowing season.

The traditional and locally available seeds are being revived and the exchanges have started taking place once again. This is helping the farmer in raising his income.



We are in a process of establishing a Seed bank at block level. This may lead to community's own seed business activity in future and help achieve seed swaraj. The community is working on the traditional methods of agriculture after facing the problems caused by the use of hybrid seeds. It is expected from the government that it makes the local variety seeds available to the farmer at the right time.



Mr. Jacob Nellithanam from Bharat Beej Swaraj Manch shared the need of understanding the politics of seed. The development, in the name of Agriculture Science, took place with the green revolution. The concept of NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potash) emerged from Germany. It was a very big lie that the use of NPK could improve the agriculture and bring a drastic change in crop production. The use of plant residue, green manure, cow dung and the science of natural process of maintaining soil fertility were sabotaged to replace the science of using NPK for maintaining the soil fertility. It was a kind of

conspiracy to control the agricultural production of a third country. Few organisations which

controlled the major part of the industry in Europe and America were behind this to expand their agro business. They chose the seed as a medium to control and expand their business.

They promoted the new seeds in the name of high yield and use of inputs like fertilizers, use of more water and the likes. They demanded the locally produced high quality seeds which were being used traditionally for years by changing their names as ‘landraces’.

However, before the green revolution, after independence farmers have harvested about 140 quintals of rice; 75 quintals of wheat and similar amount of *Jowar*, from 1 hectare of land. The productivity of the seeds was excellent. The use of hybrid seeds in the name of green revolution was opposed by the then Director of Central Rice Research Institute (CRRI). Later on, he discovered more than 19000 varieties of locally produced rice and it was found that more than 1600 varieties were high yield varieties. This clearly indicated that the introduction of hybrid seeds in the name of green revolution was nothing more than a conspiracy. The resultant as discussed above is clear. So, it is required to move back to using our own seeds which are climate resilient and have good production capacity. There are no government policies to bring back such preserved and conserved seeds to the agricultural lands.

Mr. Majid Khan from Vaagdhara spoke on seed and horticulture scenario in the community. Seeds are a part of our heritage but the local varieties are on the verge of extinction. They have been replaced by hybrid variety. Market dependency has increased. Following the tribal culture and tradition the community is still trying hard to protect and conserve the traditional seeds because they clearly understand that if the traditional seeds are not conserved then the coming generation will not forgive us. Certain challenges being faced in the tribal areas are:



- a. The youth are not interested in farming and prefer to move out to cities in search of job opportunities.
- b. The resources are not being utilised properly.

Solutions: The children should be educated from their childhood about the traditional agricultural practices and the values attached to it so when they grow up, they remain interested in the indigenous farming.

A nursery should be prepared at home and around, where local variety plants of fruits and vegetables can be grown to cater their needs and also become a source of their income. The theory of 3 Ps – Promote; Provide and Protect give a light as to how the traditional farming can become a sustainable source of livelihood. Seed treatment is also an essential part of seed conservation. There are traditional methods of seed treatment which can preserve the seed, its quality as well as productivity, for a longer time. The use of such seeds will give nutritious foods which keep the community healthy and the situation of malnutrition shall improve.

The community should take the lead and identify the traditional seeds that need to be protected and use indigenous methods to restore and preserve the same which could be exchanged among the community. The community should follow practices to save the tribal culture and traditions.

Further in the session, **Dr. Ram Gopal Sharma**, Joint Director (Inputs), Department of Agriculture shared about his experience of working with the tribal community and his current responsibility of for seeds and fertilizers management and its distribution across the state. Praising Dr. Varaprasad he said that Dr Varaprasad has protected the Genetic bio-diversity and preserved the lacs of varieties of genes and germplasm or landraces as they may be called, which may be of some use in any time to come.



Talking about pesticides he said that pesticides are a sort of poison which was discovered years back. The discovery of poison and its use are two different things. In 1968 the experts felt that the pesticides contain poison from which one needs to be cautious. Insecticide act was formed in 1968 and rules framed in 1971. The chemicals used in pesticides which were treated as safe were termed harmful by 1980-82. This became a continuous process. The chemicals which were treated as safe till 1990 were listed out as being unsafe by 2002. There are almost 450 chemicals which were used earlier have been taken out of the list after being termed as harmful.

Explaining the genetics of seeds, he said that there are some species of seeds where the same quality is transferred to the coming generations of that variety for thousands of years. If such varieties are conserved then the quality and productivity of the same can be preserved.

On the contrary in case of hybrid seeds, there is high yield in the first generation and in the second generation there is segregation.

The composite variety is also a very good variety and has genetic diversity. It is more flexible and climate resilient. This variety can extend its life from 90 to 120 days. It can grow in dry regions as well as that with high rains. The ups and downs of fertilizer inputs are also absorbed by such varieties. Composite varieties have a broad gene base where as hybrids are very narrow meaning that they give a harvest under a set of environments. The central government has launched a programme 'Paramparik Krishi Vikas Yojana' with an intention to use the indigenous basic knowledge for agriculture. Steps initiating zero budget farming, organic farming, and Vedic farming are being taken. *Jaivik Kheti Mission* has been promoted in the Rajasthan Government Budget has been allocated a major chunk of the budget.

Another fact to be highlighted is that the pesticides are more dangerous as compared to the chemical fertilizers. Chemical fertilizers have a broad base with some less harmful chemicals and some more harmful. The concept of bio fertilizers and organic fertilizers is an emerging trend and the government has policies on these in place and work has already been started.

Mr. Krishna Singh from Vaagdhara spoke on the efforts done for moong (green gram) in the tribal region of Banswara. Most of the farmers are marginal and have small land holdings – 4-5 bighas of land. The green gram is the crop which suits the agro climatic zone in the area. It is grown in summer and is also known as a Zaid crop. He shared that in 2016-17 consultation was held between Vaagdhara and the Tribal Area Development and after that 1000 women took to cultivation of moong in summer. The following benefits of growing green gram were observed.



1. The rhizobium from the green gram crop helps the soil to gain nitrogen content.
2. The humus content of the soil increases.
3. The nutrition level is high in the families' consuming moong because of the protein intake from the green gram.
4. The summer crop of green gram helps to check migration from the tribal community.
5. One family got about 1- 1.5 quintals of green gram produced in 70-75 days as a summer crop. This provided a nutritional diet for the family for the entire year.
6. Exchange of local sees took place. No external input support was given.

This year the production of green gram as a summer crop or Zaid is being taken up as a campaign in the entire area. This has led to an increase of moong cultivation from about 2000 hectares to 3000 hectares.

Summarizing the panel discussion, Dr. Varaprasad highlighted following various important points:

1. The knowledge of the traditional seed is with the farmer. Natural occupation is with the farmer.
2. We have identified 12 fruits in the Andhra region which are more nutritious than apple but our children do not even know their names.
3. Bringing all faculties together on one stage by Vaagdhara through this seminar will definitely take Rajasthan forward.
4. Recommending the same variety for the entire country is wrong.
5. The geography of the country varies from one place to another- temperature, rainfall, soil, moisture holding capacity is different for different places.
6. 4.5 lacs germplasm are there in the gene bank.
7. There was no system of monocropping in the early years.

Question & Answer session.

Mr. Kamendra Singh from Samarthak Samiti, Udaipur shared his work and said that he has been working on forest foods for the past 4 years and promoting tree-based livelihood. He reminded the panellists that honey bee also plays an important role in agriculture and can contribute to about 20% increase in the total agricultural production and should be mentioned in such sessions, in future.

Mr. Mohan from Bajaj Foundation: He asked how to store seeds according to the climatic conditions. Mr. Gurbaksh answered: The local seeds should be first identified and then one variety should be stored by one farmer and should be grown regularly. He said that the technical guidance can be provided later on.

Concluding the session, Dr. Varaprasad shared that if we need to achieve seed swaraj we need to have a farmer led policy. There is no farmer led supply chain in either the programme or the policy. Orissa Millet Mission is an example which could be followed across the country as per the local conditions. Lastly, he thanked Vaagdhara for inviting him from Hyderabad for such a meaningful session and said that he was looking forward for working with the organization.

Panel Discussion III – Significance of Forgotten Foods and Minor Millets on Food Diversity

The third panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Bhuvnesh Jain, Regional Director, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan. The panellists comprised of Mr. Kailash Ninama from Vaagdhara; Mr. Jacob Nellithanam; Mr. Sanjay Sabud from Wassan and Dr. M. L. Jain, Former Director RCH - Health Department, Rajasthan.



Photo 13: Panellists of 3rd panel discussion on stage:



Initiating the panel discussion, the first panellist **Mr. Kailash Ninama** said that the foods that our forefathers used to grow were traditional and were so nutritious that their life span was much more as compared to those living and eating today. This food is no longer available these days as the varieties have been either lost or forgotten. For the last 10-12 years, Vaagdhara started working with the tribal community to revive the forgotten foods and traditional agricultural practices through discussions on food and nutrition security. The families consuming millets and traditional foods are healthier in comparison to those taking foods

like wheat and rice, they are suffering from various diseases.

Community in tribal areas of Rajasthan have made efforts to revive and manage the locally available seeds. Exchange of seeds has also started and today almost 70% of the lost varieties have

been revived. Such varieties are easy to grow and do not require much hard labour. These can grow under adverse conditions also. The community is using the locally produced seed and has slowly and gradually kicked out the hybrid variety from use. Many a farmer have come out of the debt trap after the use of traditional foods from the available local seeds. Not only food grains but local fruits and vegetables have been revived and almost all families are having traditional foods and vegetables in their houses, like shahtoot, kathal, guavas, mangoes, papayas, bananas and even mahua. With this trend it is believed that in a few years to come the community will become self-reliant and not dependent on markets.

The next panellist **Mr. Jacob Nellithanam** shared that the millets have been termed as nutri-cereals and are being promoted by the governments for the past few years. These are grown traditionally and can grow even in poor soil. Millets like Ragi can give a yield of 40 Quintals per hectare if cultivated intensely. 8-10 quintals of Kodo, kutki and kaang can be produced in 1 hectare of land. With the use of liquid manure like Jeevamrut 2-3 times, the production can be increased. With the increased awareness the consumption of millets is increasing and so it its price which give a handsome income to the farmer. These crops also help in improvement of soil health and the farmer also gets fodder for cattle. If the processing units are set up the farmers can process these millets and sell them in the market at a higher price.

Mr. Sanjay Sabud from Wassan in his deliberation presented the details of **Odisha Millet Mission (OMM)**. He shared that OMM was on the report based on the pilot project done in Andhra Pradesh and is basically a programme of the agriculture department of Odisha government. The nutritional value of Millets is much-much higher than that in wheat and rice. Millets, which was once treated as food of the poor is now being considered as smart food and is now available in malls in the urban areas. Millets are being consumed more in cities and the villagers are still stuck to wheat and rice. Objectives of the mission shared were:



1. Increase the production and productivity of millets.
2. Bring the livelihood of the farmer in the mainstream.
3. Increase the household consumption of millets.
4. Include the millets as food in the state nutrition programmes like ICDS, PDS etc. (Odisha has included millets in ICDS and PDS programmes.)

He shared about the programme which started in 2017 in 15 blocks has now spread in 19 districts 142 blocks and this year the CM has allocated a sum of Rs. 2880 crore for the mission. Odisha has become the first state to finalise a specification of mission missionaries and where the standard price for little and foxtail millet has been finalised. The state is the first to incentivise the farmer for three seasons for three years through DBT. Ragi has been included in ICDS.

Learning from the mission: All the stakeholders should be a part of any programme of the government. The schemes should be flexible enough to be revised. Planning should come from the field i.e.; it should be a bottom-up approach.

Moving ahead in the panel discussion, **Dr. Moti Lal Jain**, Former Director (RCH), Department of Medical, Health and Family Welfare, Rajasthan shared the consequences of poor seeds, poor soil health and extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides in the current days farming practices, which are evident from the following facts:



- 30–50 % of children in Rajasthan are malnourished and out of that 8-15 % are severely malnourished and need hospitalisation.
- 70% children are anaemic.
- 35-50% children are of low birth.
- 50% women are anaemic.

He shared that in spite of the ICDS programme running since 2nd Oct, 1975 the status of malnutrition is worth worrying. It seems that the ICDS has also limited itself to wheat and rice. The nutritive value of millets is 30-300 times more than wheat and

rice. There is a need to incorporate nutritive foods like millets to be incorporated into government programmes like done in other states. Until the millets are included in the government's nutrition programmes this cannot be justified. Efforts are needed from the families, the community and the policy makers for the inclusion of millets in the nutritious programmes and the implementation of the same.

Concluding remarks by the moderator, Dr.

Bhuvnesh Jain: The local variety of Bajra which was helpful in maintaining eco-balance and provided fodder for the cattle which could be preserved for 10-15 years (through traditional methods) has become extinct. This has drastically affected the livestock and animal husbandry in the area. The consumption of millets has been associated with the status of the people which should be actually associated with the health. The poor farmer doesn't have land for farming and is dependent on common property resources which are also limited. The foods which are vanishing from our



food platter and our farms needs to be revived and brought back not only in our food platter and farms but also in the common property resources to feed the poor and landless farmer. Foods like Kair- Sangari are also on the verge of extinction. The new generation is not even aware of such foods. So how can we get back the taste of such foods and vegetables?

He expressed his gratitude to Vaagdhara for organising this conference which will take us back to the culture and traditional heritage of agriculture which will enrich our family, villages, ecosystem and our health. It will also become a source of livelihood.

The day's activities came to an end by closing remarks by **Mr. Sunny Sebastian**, former vice chancellor, Haridev Joshi Journalism University and board member of Vaagdhara. He said that there is no state in the country for practicing Swaraj other than Rajasthan. The Chief Minister Sh. Ashok Gehlot has set up many Gandhian Institutes in the state. Quoting Gandhi on swaraj he said "At the individual level swaraj is quietly connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment." Gandhian philosophy said that nature has everything for everyone in itself. He thanked both the ministers present in the morning session despite their busy schedule. He also thanked the entire gathering who has been patiently listening to all the mind-boggling sessions. Before winding up, the panellists on the stage were greeted by offering Uparnas.



Glimpses of Cultural Evening, Shilpgram – 09 May 2022



The Master of Ceremonies and the anchor of the two-day event Mr. Satish Acharya introducing the artists.



The guests enjoying the evening watching at the Shilp-Gram



The Chief Guest for the evening Mr. Narendra Kumar on stage after being felicitated.



Jugalbandi on 'Bhapan' - a local musical instrument, by Mr. Narrotam and party.



Mr. Narrotam and party performing during the cultural evening, before the guests and gathering.



Photo 14: Glimpses of cultural evening

DAY -II, May 10, 2022

Welcome Session

The second day of the conference witnessed the folk dances and the songs in the morning, before the formal beginning of the sessions. The songs in Vaagdi language were sung by the participants came from Banswara, Dungarpur and Pratapgarh districts and tribal dance was performed showing their respect to agriculture, soil and seeds.



Photo 15: The community people singing folk songs and performing folk dance

Mr. Dharamveer Katewa, a Social Activist and Secretary, Indian Asthma Care Society formally began the second day's proceedings with his keynote and welcome address. Welcoming the guests and gathering he acknowledged Vaagdhara for his excellent work doing for the community. He said that whatever was said on day 1, was the same which was being spoken 35 years back amidst the intellectuals and agriculture experts at various places across the country – not to feed the soil with DAP and Urea, but no one paid attention to these words and went ahead with the practices of the green revolution. Today our existence is facing a crisis. The son of a farmer



doesn't want to practice agriculture, rather wishes to migrate to cities in search of job and becomes a labourer there - an irony for the land with rich and traditional agricultural heritage which has fed the community for ages. The state of Punjab which used to feed the nation and send its sons to the army for service to the nation has fallen in the drugs trap. Echoing the concerns raised by other dignitaries and agriculture experts he stressed on the use of non-chemical fertilizers and pesticides while practicing the traditional methods of farming as was being done by the tribal community. He concluded his oration with the desire that the coming sessions would be useful, fruitful as the previous ones and reach some logical conclusions.

Mr. Jaipal Singh Kaushik presented a recap of the earlier day activities and preface for the second day. He briefed about the previous days' sessions and expressed his belief that whatever comes from the two days discussions will definitely be considered by the Ministers who were present on the first day of the conference. He told in brief about the discussions took place in the three panel discussions and the feelings expressed by the ministers. The policy matters and the matter of practices which shall emerge after the day's discussions will have to be taken forward and how this shall be done will be discussed later in the day. What steps will be taken in future for maintaining soil health and preservation of seeds and attain swaraj. He urged the gathering to come up with ideas and solutions freely during the session as they may prove to be fruitful for preparing policy matters.

Later in the session, **Mr. Robert Leo** from Keystone Foundation was invited to speak on “Organic Farming- PGS Farmer who is associated with Vaagdhara in the subject of certification for the past 4 years. He said that through various programmes the community is engaged in organic farming but what is the recognition of this organic status? That is where we are looking at the PGS system. In India the certification is done by private companies and they charge a high amount so only big farmers are able to get certification.

There are farmers who are doing organic farming in the area of Nilgiris and we were thinking – What could be the alternative certification for this community and tribal farmers. Some civil societies came forward and talked with IFOAM who gave a guideline which was adopted and a system was evolved which was called PGS – Participatory Guarantee System. The farmers create a committee called the peer review committee. This committee gives a guarantee to the co farmers about their organic status of agriculture. After a study from 2007 to 2009 the system was rolled out and the government of India in 2013 recognised this system and is called PGS India system. There are 5 principals of this system. This is a system where the consumer will have to believe that the produce is organic. PGS system is a tool to promote organic farming.



Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar, chairing the session, translated in brief what Robert Leo said in English for the convenience of the Hindi speaking audience, before moderating the day’s only session “strategy to carry forward the points from the two days discussions.” The three subject experts on stage for the session were: Mr. Deepak Sharma, Agri expert from Udaipur: Mr. Robert Leo, Mr. Devi Lal Vyas and Mr. Jaipal Singh Kaushik.



Photo 16: Panellists on stage

Dr Iyengar asked the audience to speak up or question of the discussion points and how they could be taken forward at the family level, at the community level, in the ecosystem and to the state and the centre. What are the challenges at our level and at the state level?

Many of the participants asked various questions, shared their challenges and experiences as follows:

- Cultivation of a crop called '*Decha*' can help increase the soil fertility, provide fodder for cattle and use the seeds for various purposes.
- Use of maize pops to control termites.
- One farmer wanted to form more groups for PGS but said that he did not have the permission. Mr. Leo responded him and said that he should contact Mr.PL Patel who will guide him in the matter and take the lead. Keystone foundation would provide all the support in the matter.
- Issue of certification of Turmeric (*Haldi*) was raised by one of the participants.
- A farmer from Punjab raised an issue that there was a lot of paper work involved in getting the PGS certification. Another problem was related to subsidy or direct benefit to farmers on organic farming and small machinery.
- One participant shared that there is no technical process for organic certification. PGS is totally based on trust. There should be some technical aspect attached to it. He said that people face fraud in case of organic products so there should be a separate platform for organic products.
- Challenge in maintaining transparency in peer review. Rate and marketing are another issue with PGS certification.
- One farmer from Haryana raised the issue of uploading the data. However, he said that the rates are decided by the entire group and farmers help each other in various activities.
- Few of the farmers from the tribal areas shared their experiences of practicing organic farming and selling the organic produce in the market.
- One of participants suggested that the Gram Panchayats should certify the produce as organic. He said that the Gram Panchayats should not only focus on development projects but should also indulge in agricultural works.
- One more farmer suggested that there should be a network of seed savers which will help in seed distribution and seed exchange. He urged all the farmers who are preserving the seeds that they should take care of such seeds with utmost caution as they are the life of agriculture and essential for the coming generation.

After the guests had expressed their views Dr. Iyengar took over and said that three issues are of great importance:

- 1) What can we do at the community level?
- 2) What can we do at organizational level and?

3) What can be done regarding the policy matter?

He invited Mr. Deepak Sharma to speak on the issues emerging at the community level.

Mr. Deepak Sharma, Agriculture expert shared that the first point which comes at the community level is to what extent we want to make our agriculture organic. If we have confidence and desire to shift towards organic farming, then we can say that this is the first step towards taking the farmer to organic mind-set, without any obstacle. The community shall have to believe that organic is my priority and I will do it for myself and not for market. If we grow all we need for our self then there is no reason that the market forces can dominate us. Since the farmer has the legacy of agricultural science so he will have to believe that it is he himself who will have to grow organic food and no one shall come for his help. Agriculture is a culture and a tradition, not a Business. This needs to be established in the minds of the community.

Mr. Devi Lal Vyas was asked to present his thoughts on the perspective of the organisation. He said that any farmer who has 4-5 bighas of land can grow so much food that he doesn't need the market at all. Organic means live. The problems have arisen over the last 50 years and it has been done by the private companies. There is a need to document the entire process and disseminate it. This would be an effective step. The scale of work needs to be increased. Another issue is of processing. Since there is no value addition to the organic products the farmer does not get a fair price of his produce. If processing units are set up at the village level it can help the farmer to get a better and fair price of his product.

Change in the mindset is
an issue

Further **Mr. Jaipal Singh Kaushik** was invited to deliberate on policy perspective. Mr. Kaushik shared that the policies do affect the agriculture to a great extent. What is to be done and how it is done at the policy level, must be understood. Further, on what issues we need policy advocacy? The policies so far have been formulated in the context of green revolution, fertilizer subsidy, MSP and seed subsidy / procurement. The policy issue is that this subsidy should also apply on organic farming or sustainable agriculture practices. Documentation of the process of certification must be done.

1. The technologies of sustainable agriculture should be a part of policy matter and must be incentivised.
2. Self- Certification for should get recognition by the consumer.
3. There should be an organization of farmers and organization, to compete with the market forces.
4. A time frame of about 10 years needs to be kept that might be taken for induction of these factors in policy.
5. How to influence the government programmes at the implementation level.

Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar said that to attain swaraj the feeling of dedication and sacrifice is must. We have been talking of agriculture and nutrition swaraj for the past 2 days; let us start from Poshan Swaraj (Food grains, pulses, oilseeds, fruits, vegetables and fodder) first. Before the Poshan Swaraj there should be the Seed Swaraj. – meaning the seeds grown in our nature comprising of environment, soil, sunlight and water. The swaraj and self-reliance of seeds is very important. The concept of organic farming starts with the seed and if we do not save our seeds and are dependent on the market, we cannot guarantee anything. The governments and the markets are imposing seeds on the farmers so it is very essential for Krishi Swaraj that it is followed by ‘Beej Swaraj’. It is a long fight which the community has to fight. If we conserve, promote, protect and use the locally developed and grown seeds which have come from the surrounding environment, then only we will be moving towards the actual swaraj. He said that our motto should be “*Pehle Roti Phir Bazaar*’ but we are going in reverse order ‘*Pehle Bazaar Phir Roti*’ and this is the root cause of the current situation.

We started paying cash for seeds, fertilizers and medicines (agro input) so we had to repay in cash and we succumbed to the market pressure. We will attain krishi swaraj when seeds, fertilizers and water, labour and medicines (required in the fields for agri purposes) come from the environment around us. Lesser the cash for production, more is Swaraj. Another feature of Krishi Swaraj is: limited needs. Limited needs –limited cash requirement leads towards Krishi Swaraj. He said that the community cannot fight with the corporates and can never win over them. These corporates will get a set-back only if we stop using the products of these companies. Our lifestyle is also a part of Krishi Swaraj. There is abundant knowledge on earth and we should use this knowledge for ourselves and not to give strength to others. With this the discussion on the strategy to move ahead was concluded.

Concluding Session

In the concluding session of the 2 days conference, the Chief Guest – **Mr. Mumtaz Masih**, Chairman, Centre for Development of Voluntary Sector, Rajasthan, was welcomed by Mr. Jayesh Joshi.



Photo 17: Guests on stage during concluding session

The Chief Guest and the experts sharing the stage were greeted by Mr. Joshi. He extended his warm welcome and a special thanks to the chief guest to have accepted the invitation and spared his valuable time to share our concerns. He said that the centre (to strengthen the voluntary sector,) being chaired by Mr. Masih is a very significant centre not only for the state but also for the country.

Mr. Joshi raised some issues relating to the voluntary centre before the chief guest. He said that the civil society organisations are struggling to have a dialogue with the government where their voice could be heard. The history of the voluntary sector in Rajasthan has been very strong and significant. Various organisations are spread across the state many of which have been working for more than 40 years.

The government has been using these organizations as vendors binding them for loans from the ADB and the World Bank. The Rajasthan government is blessed enough to get us rid of this vendor tag and give us the status of an organization. He said that be it the Right to Food, NREGA, right to information whatever the revolution took place, was a result of the voices raised by the voluntary organizations. However, the role of organizations was almost nullified when it came to implementation of the programmes and in today's structure has no place for such organizations. Some circulars by the government have weakened our movement.

These organizations are very efficient, self-governed organizations and should be treated and called as Civil Society Organizations. These organizations have played a very significant, proactive and responsible role during Covid.

Adivasi tradition and culture is the best example of the vision of Swaraj – they have preserved the seed, soil, water, forests and traditions across boundaries. Rajasthan can be an example in protecting the tradition and culture of the swaraj organizations where the voice of practitioner of swaraj which is weakening if the association of these organizations and the government is established and strengthened through a dialogue process. He further requested Mr. Masih to take forward this message by the civil society organization up to Chief Minister.

Further in the session, **Mr. Deepak Sharma** shared the two days activities and discussion points were summed up and the strategy to carry things forward with the Chief Guest.



Dr. S.S. Burark shared that Rajasthan has widely diversified geographical conditions and a varied heritage so it is advised that the policies should be region specific. The agriculture became cost oriented due to green revolution techniques and the increased costs of agriculture accompanied with high debts forced the farmers to commit suicides. On the contrary those practicing diversified agriculture traditionally are still safe and secure. He requested the chief guest to consider the fact that the programmes of the government should not only be target oriented but should focus on works of public oriented demands which actually makes the

community satisfied and happy.

Mr. Mumtaz Masih said that agriculture is a very important subject and it is a pleasure to say that the hon'ble Chief minister has taken an initiative to present a separate agriculture budget this year. He echoed Jayesh Joshi's concern that NGO is definitely a wrong word because these organizations work at the grassroots level where no government officer likes to work. The programmes of the government do not reach the common man for whom they are designed. The purpose of forming the centre for development of voluntary sector in Rajasthan is to provide the benefits of government schemes to the last person. Here the role of the organization begins.



These organizations can help take these programmes to the actual needy in the remote areas special in the rural part. He further shared that an action plan has been devised by the centre. A training programme is being designed and shall soon be implemented in each district. Before this, a dialogue session in every district will be organised where the centre will hear their voices- what are the issues being faced by these organizations and why. How can these be resolved? This is also necessary for good governance. The organisations will act as a connect between the government and the receiver of the government schemes. A web portal is being constructed where all organizations will be registered and accredited. With this he left the stage thanking all and extending good wishes for the event.

Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar took forward the discussion of the concluding session and showed the way ahead. He thanked Rajasthan Government for forming a centre for development of voluntary organizations. He said that the organizations must be free to speak out the truths and raise voices but should not be unbridled. 'We should be both, accountable as well as responsible'. When the government says that the organisations should be instrumental in taking its programmes to the common man it makes them a delivery organisation. This means that the government admits that the government machinery does not reach the man at the last level. The efforts of the organisations to assist this machinery to reach the last person is very necessary and healthy practice for the society and the state. The volunteers of such organizations also play the role of social critique. They don't just deliver but also diagnose, design creatively and demonstrate. On behalf of the organisation, Dr. Iyengar assured that the organisations are there to support the centre creatively and critically.



The two days national conference was brought to its completion by the vote of thanks from the former VC of Journalism University and a renowned journalist **Mr. Sunny Sebastian**. He praised Vaagdhara for organising such an event and its commitment and dedication towards its work as it was very clear what is supposed to do. Commenting on the NGO sector he said that the sector is facing a tough time. The NGOs act as a bridge between the society and the government. NGOs play an important role as it is a communicating link between the public and the administration. He described the two-day event has been a good exposure activity.

Thanking all and one he extended a special thanks to Dr Iyengar for his clear, specific and sharp views. The leaders of the people, the ministers were thanked for giving a direction to the sessions. Thanking all the experts by names he expressed his thanks to all the participants and organisers.

Action Points and Key Recommendations came out from the two days national conference:

1. Improving soil health:

- Increased public investment is needed to check the washout of top soil, due to rains, from the farmers' fields. It is recommended that at least 70% of the MGNREGA budget be spent on preventing the wash out of top soil. There is already a provision in MGNREGA to build individual assets under – '*Apna Khet, Apna Kaam*' where this can be done.
- The scope of soil testing has been limited to maintaining soil health cards. For reaping the actual benefits of soil testing, there should be a decentralised system of soil testing i.e., this facility should be made available at village level also.
- Soil health mapping is essential. It should be done and also be tracked at every village.
- Soil health management practices of the tribal areas like green manuring, med-bandi, mixed cropping etc. needs a government support through policy measures.

2. Protecting and preserving the seeds:

- Government needs to shift its focus from hybrid to composite varieties. Need is to develop policies to bring back preserved and conserved seeds to the agricultural lands. Programmes should be public oriented and not target oriented.
- Community Managed Seed System should be implemented. This needs to be done by the community under the expertise of the state government.

3. Conservation of Crop Diversity- Improving, Incentivising, Promoting and Practicing of Traditional Agricultural Practices.

- Traditional farming methods are looking back to be in the mainstream. With the understanding of the health hazards of the green revolution technologies all the stakeholders are of the opinion that there is a strict need to take stern action to protect the health and nutrition status of the community. With the concerns being raised by experts and the government representatives it is now well established that the traditional agricultural practices should be revived, promoted, incentivised and practiced.
- Coming out of the shackles of the market forces the government should frame public welfare-oriented policies rather than target-based programmes. Involving the community in the discussions should be a common feature while framing the agricultural policies.

- Inclusion of organic manures, chemical free pesticides, soil friendly crops like moong (green gram), Mixed cropping, emphasis on *Jal, Jungle, Zameen, Beej and Jaanwar* in agriculture is the crux of the proven tribal methods of agriculture, which needs to be promoted.
- Enhancing the knowledge of the tribal with latest technologies, while using their wisdom and expertise is another action point needed. This can be done by taking all research to the farmer rather than calling the farmer to the remote institutions.

4. Promotion of Millets or Nutri-cereals:

- As it is now established and recognized that millets are one of the best sources of nutrition for the community as well as others its production should be protected and incentivised. If the focus is shifted to mixed farming from monocropping, millet cultivation can be increased. The successful models of Odisha Millet Mission can be followed and implemented by including millets in State's Nutrition Programmes. This can also be taken as a pilot project in the tribal areas of Rajasthan, to begin with.
- Branding of millets at national and international level and looking for methods to market them by installing food processing units at the village level will help the farmer get a fair and better price for his produce.

Annexure – I: Photo Gallery





Annexure – II: Media Coverage

Indigenous farming key to crop diversity: experts

They call for new beneficial policies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Emphasis was given on indigenous agricultural practices to promote crop diversity, protect soil health and strengthen seed sovereignty at a two-day national convention on traditional agriculture and nutrition, which ended here on Tuesday. New policies should be formulated to protect land and natural resources of farmers, said experts and researchers from several States who participated in the convention.

A recommendation letter on the livelihood rights, traditional farming and community seed management was also released on the occasion. The participants said the rural communities, including the tribals, could achieve sovereignty by safeguarding their traditional practices along with their inherited knowledge.

An exhibition of indigenous seeds and organic pro-

ducts was also held at the venue, Jawahar Kala Kendra.

Rajasthan Agriculture Minister Lalchand Kataria, who inaugurated the convention, said doing farming in the geographically difficult terrains of the State was a challenging task because the topsoil was often washed away and new soil took several years to form again. "This challenge of nature can be met through indigenous practices, in which new technology should be incorporated," he said.

Sunny Sebastian, former Vice-Chancellor of Haridev Joshi University of Journalism, Jaipur, said the Gandhian concept of Swaraj, which encompassed all spheres of life, was in its true spirit promoting self-sufficiency of hamlets in the tribal-dominated regions, which had emerged as "model republics" with the elements of democratic consultations and greater public interaction.

The Hindu, 10th May, 2022

Mins, experts discuss sustainable agriculture

First India Bureau

Jaipur: A two-day 'Rashtriya Paramparik Krishi and Poshan Swaraj Sammelan' culminated at Jawahar Kala Kendra, Rangayan auditorium on Tuesday. To improve soil health, increase the availability of seeds; promote indigenous local varieties of seed, and promotion of sustainable agriculture practices, Agriculture Minister Lalchand Kataria, Water resource minister Mahendra Singh Malviya, farmers from different



Lalchand Kataria, Mahendra Singh Malviya during the event.

districts, women farmers from tribal areas of Rajasthan, agriculture researchers, NGOs, and different experts came together to share, discuss and get a concrete solution to the existing problem of environmental degradation.

First India, 11th May, 2022



दैनिक भास्कर

जयपुर 11-05-2022

जयपुर, बुधवार 11 मई, 2022 | 09

जेकेके में दो दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय पारंपरिक कृषि व पोषण स्वराज सम्मेलन आयोजित

जयपुर | जवाहर कला केंद्र के रंगायन सभागार में मंगलवार को दो दिवसीय 'राष्ट्रीय पारंपरिक कृषि एवं पोषण स्वराज सम्मेलन' संपन्न हुआ। सम्मेलन में बीज, मृदा, जल खाद्य एवं कृषि विविधता तथा स्वराज पर समुदाय के अनुभव, अभ्यास एवं अध्ययन पर चर्चा, मृदा स्वास्थ्य में सुधार के उद्देश्य से बीजों की विविधता के साथ संरक्षण को सुनिश्चित करना, बीज की स्वदेशी स्थानीय किस्मों को बढ़ावा देना और पारंपरिक और लुप्त होती स्थाई कृषि पद्धतियों को बढ़ावा दिए जाने पर जोर दिया गया। राजस्थान के आदिवासी क्षेत्र में मौजूदा चुनौतियों का संज्ञान लेते हुए कृषि मंत्री लालचंद कटारिया ने कहा बांसवाड़ा, डूंगरपुर, प्रतापगढ़ जैसे क्षेत्रों की भौगोलिक स्थिति ऐसी है जहाँ पर खेती करना बहुत मुश्किल है, पहाड़ों वाला असमान भूभाग जहाँ पर जब भी बारिश होती है, तो पहाड़ों की सतह से मिट्टी ढलान की वजह से बहकर चली जाती है और फिर इसे बनने में सालों लग जाते हैं। इन बदली प्रकृति प्रदूत स्थितियों से किसानों को कठिनाइयों से जूझना पड़ता है। कोरोना महामारी के बाद लोग खाने-पीने पर ध्यान देने लग गए। जल एवं संसाधन मंत्री महेंद्र सिंह मालवीय, धर्मवीर कटेवा, जयपाल सिंह कौशिक, रॉबर्ट लियो, सुदर्शन अयंगर, जयेश जोशी, दीपक शर्मा, सनी सेबेस्टियन, सवाई सिंह और सुखदेव सिंह बोदक ने भी संबोधित किया।

स्वदेशी बीजों के संरक्षण पर मंथन



जयपुर @ पत्रिका. जवाहर कला केंद्र के रंगायन सभागार में मंगलवार को राष्ट्रीय पारंपरिक कृषि एवं पोषण स्वराज सम्मेलन का समापन हुआ। दो दिवसीय सम्मेलन के दौरान बीजों के संरक्षण तथा इसकी स्वदेशी-स्थानीय किस्मों को बढ़ावा देने व पारंपरिक और लुप्त होती स्थाई कृषि पद्धतियों को बढ़ावा देने पर मंथन हुआ। कृषि मंत्री लालचंद कटारिया ने कहा कि बांसवाड़ा, डूंगरपुर व प्रतापगढ़ की भौगोलिक स्थिति के चलते वहाँ किसानों के लिए खेती करना मुश्किल है। बारिश के बाद यहाँ पहाड़ों से मिट्टी बहकर चली जाती है और इसे बनने में कई वर्ष लग जाते हैं। वहीं, जल-संसाधन मंत्री महेंद्र सिंह मालवीय ने कृषि की पुरानी पद्धतियों को पुनः अपनाने पर बल दिया। मुमताज मसीह ने कहा कि जल्द ही एक वेब पोर्टल शुरू किया जाएगा, स्वयंसेवी संस्थाएं पंजीकरण करा सरकारी योजनाओं का लाभ प्राप्त कर सकती हैं। कार्यक्रम को धर्मवीर कटेवा, जयपाल सिंह, सनी सेबेस्टियन, सवाई सिंह सहित अन्य वक्ताओं ने भी संबोधित किया।

Coverage in Dainik Bhaskar and Rajasthan Patrika, Jaipur, 11th May 2022

Digital Coverage

1. <https://epaper.patrika.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=1158cb1eeb5&eid=undefined&imageview=1>
2. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/indigenous-farm-practices-is-key-to-crop-diversity-soil-health/article65401836.ece>

Annexure – III: Programme Schedule

क्र.सं.	विवरण	समय	स्पीकर
	रजिस्ट्रेशन	प्रातः 09:00 से प्रारम्भ	
प्रारंभिक सत्र			
1	गौधी जी का माल्यार्पण	10:00 – 10:05 AM	
2	बीज-मृदा पूजन	10:05 – 10:10 AM	
3	अतिथियों का माल्यार्पण से स्वागत	10:10 – 10:20 AM	
4	स्वागत उद्बोधन	10:20 – 10:30 AM	श्री सुदीप शर्मा, वाग्धारा
5	पारम्परिक कृषि - आदिवासी एवं सीमान्त कृषक के परिप्रेक्ष्य से	10:30 – 10:40 AM	श्री रॉबर्ट लियो, की-स्टोन फाउंडेशन, तमिलनाडु
6	पारम्परिक कृषि एवं पोषण स्वराज सम्मलेन की प्रस्तावना - जनजातीय क्षेत्र में खाद्य - पोषण सुरक्षा एवं सम्प्रभुता के लिए पारंपरिक कृषि, बीज एवं वन संरक्षण की आवश्यकता	10:40 – 10:50 AM	श्री जयेश जोशी, सचिव वाग्धारा
7	मृदा स्वास्थ्य, पारंपरिक फसल विविधता एवं सामुदायिक बीज प्रबंधन पर अनुशंसा पत्र का विमोचन	10:50 – 10:55 AM	
8	जनजातीय क्षेत्र में मृदा स्वास्थ्य, पारंपरिक फसल विविधता एवं सामुदायिक बीज प्रबंधन की स्थिति	10:55 – 11:10 AM	श्री जयपाल सिंह कौशिक, कृषि विज्ञ
9	"मुख्य अतिथि एवं विशिष्ट अतिथियों का अभिनन्दन"	11:10 - 11:15 AM	
10	"विशिष्ट अतिथि का उद्बोधन" खाद्य एवं कृषि सुरक्षा - स्वराज के परिप्रेक्ष्य में	11:15 – 11:40 AM	डॉ. सुदर्शन अय्यंगर, पूर्व कुलपति एवं वर्तमान ट्रस्टी, गुजरात विद्यापीठ, अहमदाबाद
11	"विशिष्ट अतिथि का उद्बोधन"	11:40 – 12:10 PM	श्री महेन्द्रजीत सिंह मालवीय, माननीय मंत्री, जल संसाधन विभाग
12	"मुख्य अतिथि का उद्बोधन"	12:10 – 12:40 PM	श्री लालचंद कटारिया, माननीय मंत्री, कृषि विभाग
13	अगले सत्र एवं पैनल चर्चाओं की रूपरेखा	12:40 – 12:50 PM	श्री दीपक शर्मा, कृषि विज्ञ
14	प्रारम्भिक सत्र का समापन एवं धन्यवाद ज्ञापन	12:50 – 01:00 PM	श्री सवाई सिंह, अध्यक्ष समग्र सेवा समिति, राजस्थान
15	पारम्परिक एवं जैविक खाद्य, पोषण, संस्कृति प्रदर्शनी का उद्घाटन	01:00 - 01:15 PM	
भोजन अंतराल 01:15 – 02:15 PM			

द्वितीय सत्र		
16	<p>पैनल चर्चा 1: मृदा स्वास्थ्य एवं जल स्वराज</p> <p>1. मृदा स्वास्थ्य पर समुदाय आधारित प्रयास - श्री.पी.एल. पटेल, वाग्धारा</p> <p>2. सामुदायिक परिप्रेक्ष्य श्री लक्ष्मण सिंह लापोड़िया, जीवीएनएमएल एवं श्री देवीलाल ब्यास, जन शिक्षा एवं विकास केंद्र (पीडो) - डूंगरपुर</p> <p>3. रिसर्च परिप्रेक्ष्य डॉ. पी.के. गुप्ता, मृदा वैज्ञानिक, कोटा</p> <p>4. मृदा स्वास्थ्य नीतियों के परिप्रेक्ष्यानुसार श्री जयपाल सिंह कौशिक, कृषि विज्ञ</p>	<p>02:15 – 03:15 PM</p> <p>मॉडरेटर: डॉ. सुखदेव सिंह बुरडक, पूर्व निदेशक (अनुसन्धान) - महाराणा प्रताप कृषि एवं तकनीकी विश्वविद्यालय, उदयपुर एवं सदस्य - वाग्धारा</p>
<i>टी-ब्रेक 03:15 - 03:30 PM</i>		
17	<p>पैनल चर्चा 2: बीज एवं उद्यानिकी स्वराज</p> <p>1. आदिवासी क्षेत्र में परंपरागत बीज व्यवस्था में किसान की भूमिका – श्री राकेश गरासिया, वाग्धारा</p> <p>2. बीज व्यवस्था में जनजातीय स्वराज संगठन की भूमिका - श्री मानसिंह निनामा, जनजातीय विकास मंच</p> <p>3. सामुदायिक (परिवार स्तर) परिप्रेक्ष्य: श्री जैकब नेल्लीथनम, भारत बीज स्वराज मंच एवं श्री माजिद खान, वाग्धारा</p> <p>4. सामुदायिक (संगठन) परिप्रेक्ष्य श्री उमेन्द्र दत्त, खेती विरासत मिशन, पंजाब</p>	<p>03:15 – 04:15 PM</p> <p>मॉडरेटर: डॉ. के.एस. वराप्रसाद, पूर्व निदेशक, राष्ट्रीय पादप आनुवांशिक संसाधन ब्यूरो (ICAR -NBPGR)</p>



	<p>5. बांसवाड़ा जिले में जायद मूंग की खेती का अभियान श्री कृष्णा सिंह, वाग्धारा</p> <p>6. नीतियों के परिप्रेक्ष्यानुसार - डॉ. रामगोपाल शर्मा, संयुक्त निदेशक, कृषि विभाग, राजस्थान</p>		
18	<p>पैनल चर्चा 3: विलुप्त होते खाद्य पदार्थ एवं छोटे अनाज का आहार विविधता के लिए महत्त्व</p> <p>1. सामुदायिक (परिवार) परिप्रेक्ष्य</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • श्री कैलाश निनामा, वाग्धारा • श्री परमेश पाटीदार, वाग्धारा <p>2. सामुदायिक (संगठन) परिप्रेक्ष्य</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • सामुदायिक स्तर पर आवश्यक प्रयास - श्री जैकब नेल्लीथनम, भारत बीज स्वराज मंच <p>3. नीतियों के परिप्रेक्ष्यानुसार</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ओडिशा मिलेट मिशन में किये गए प्रयास - श्री संजय सबुद, वासन • डॉ. मोती लाल जैन, पूर्व निदेशक, स्वास्थ्य विभाग - राजस्थान 	04:15 – 05:15 PM	<p>मॉडरेटर: - डॉ. भुवनेश जैन, क्षेत्रीय निदेशक - नेहरू युवा केंद्र संगठन</p>
19	<p>प्रथम दिवस की चर्चा का सारांश एवं धन्यवाद ज्ञापन</p>	05:15 – 05:30 PM	<p>श्री सत्री सर्वेस्टियन, पूर्व कुलपति - हरिदेव जोशी पत्रकारिता विश्वविद्यालय एवं सदस्य - वाग्धारा बोर्ड</p>
<p>सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम सांय 7 बजे से प्रारंभ - रात्रि भोजन 08:00 बजे स्थान: - डूंगरपुर हट, शिल्पग्राम</p>			



राष्ट्रीय सम्मलेन पारम्परिक कृषि एवं पोषण स्वराज

रंगायन थियेटर, जवाहर कला केंद्र, जयपुर
09 मई - 10 मई, 2022

कार्यक्रम विवरण - द्वितीय दिवस - 10 मई, 2022

क्र.सं.	विवरण	समय	स्पीकर
1	स्वागत उद्बोधन	10:00 – 10:15 AM	श्री धर्मवीर कटेवा, सचिव - इंडियन अस्थमा केयर सोसाइटी
2	प्रथम दिवस की चर्चाओं का संक्षिप्त विवरण एवं द्वितीय दिवस की प्रस्तावना	10:15 – 10:30 AM	श्री जयपाल सिंह कौशिक, कृषि विज्ञ
3	जैविक खेती - पीजीएस किसान	10:30 – 10:45 AM	श्री रॉबर्ट लियो, की-स्टोन फाउंडेशन, तमिलनाडु
4	दो दिवसीय चर्चा से निकले बिंदुओं को आगे ले जाने की रणनीति - 1. सामुदायिक स्तर पर आवश्यक प्रयास: श्री दीपक शर्मा, कृषि विज्ञ, उदयपुर 2. संगठनों के स्तर पर आवश्यक प्रयास: श्री देवीलाल व्यास, जन शिक्षा एवं विकास केंद्र (पीडो) - डूंगरपुर 3. नीति निर्धारकों के स्तर पर आवश्यक प्रयास: श्री जयपाल सिंह कौशिक, कृषि विज्ञ	10:45 – 11:45 AM	मॉडरेटर: - डॉ. सुदर्शन अय्यंगर, ट्रस्टी, गुजरात विद्यापीठ, अहमदाबाद
टी-ब्रेक 11:45 - 12:00 PM			
समापन सत्र			
5	"अतिथियों का स्वागत एवं अभिनन्दन"	12:00 – 12:10 PM	श्री जयेश जोशी, सचिव वाग्धारा
6	दो दिवसीय चर्चाओं का विवरण एवं आगे की रणनीति	12:10 – 12:20 PM	श्री दीपक शर्मा, कृषि विज्ञ, उदयपुर
7	"विशिष्ट अतिथि का उद्बोधन"	12:20 – 12:45 PM	श्री मुमताज मसीह, अध्यक्ष, सेंटर फॉर डेवलपमेंट ऑफ वॉलंट्री सेंक्टर राजस्थान



8	"विशिष्ट अतिथि का उद्घोषण"	12:45 – 01:10 PM	श्री महादेव सिंह खंडेला, अध्यक्ष - किसान आयोग, राजस्थान
9	स्वराजियों का सम्मान	01:10 – 01:15 PM	
10	दो दिवसीय सम्मलेन का समापन एवं धन्यवाद ज्ञापन	01:15 – 01:30 PM	डॉ. शचि आदेश, सदस्य - वाग्धारा बोर्ड
भोजन			



Head Office:

Village and Post Kupra, District Banswara, Rajasthan (India)
Ph: 9414082643 | Email: vaagdhara@gmail.com | Web: www.vaagdhara.org

State Coordination Office:

A-38, Bhan Nagar, Near Queens Road, Vaishali Nagar, Jaipur, Rajasthan
Ph: +91 141 2351582