

Organic Agriculture

1. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

1.1 Organic Agriculture

“Organic agriculture is the form of healthy agriculture system where inputs and behaviors regarded as harmful to the human and ecosystem health are refrained. Which specific inputs and behaviors are harmful in what extent depends in the local situations and are documented in the standards. Thus the standards of OA are supposed to be changed as the society and local environments are changed”.

In the world 4.6 % of the total edible food market is covered by organic products and it is increasing by 15 – 20 % every year. In Nepal, around 20 % of the total food produced is still organic. But only 10,000 ha of Nepalese organic agriculture area is certified up to now.

People interested in consuming organic products are increasing day by day. A survey carried out by NPG in Kathmandu, Chitwan and Pokhara shows that an average of 5.6 % population are interested in consuming Organic products at any cost. Other 29 % are interested in it if available in competitive price and accessible location.

1.2 The problem

When chemical fertilizers and pesticides were introduced in mass scale in Nepal in 2030s and 40s respectively, they were regarded as panacea for the hunger problem of Nepal. So lots of government subsidies and promotional activities went on with the flood of foreign aid towards this.

But slowly and slowly some negative impacts of these chemical were experienced in every parts of the world and Nepal also could not remain untouched. Following were the major hazards of these chemical inputs as experienced by the farmers-

Effects	% of the surveyed farmers experiencing this effect
Vomiting and dizziness	16 %
Headache	53 %
Loss of bees and other beneficial organisms	78 %
Emergence of newer and stronger pest population	88%
Soil compaction	100%
Less nest and nutrition in the crop	100%

Source: Impact of agrochemical survey in Kaski, Kavre and Dhading

All these problems in total have impacted in the frequent failure of crop, human health and farm economic balance.

Besides, there are even records of male sterility, contamination of pesticides in mother's milk and increased rate of cancer in various parts of the world.

1.3 Rationale

To cope up with all these problems and ensure healthy life of the people, use of these hazardous agrochemicals must be stopped. Following are the major reasons in favor of this movement-

- Nepalese agriculture system is dominated by small and medium level farmers. For them increase in production through increased investment in chemical fertilizers and pesticides is never economical. So to protect them from financial loss, we need to promote Organic agriculture.

- Nepalese crop varieties are unique in their test, nutrition and medicinal value. With proper information and advertisement, Nepal can fetch a lot of foreign currency through their exports. But these qualities are being deteriorated due to the use of agro chemicals. To protect the qualities of these varieties and maintain agro biodiversity, Organic agriculture should be promoted.

- Nepal is loosing so many of the important flora and fauna which would lead to a lot of ecological cost in future. To avoid this danger, and protect our biodiversity, we need Organic agriculture.

- Through the provision of SPS act under WTO, India and other nations are refraining from importing general agricultural products from Nepal with the fear of chemical contamination. This has hampered our economic growth through agriculture. In the world we can not compete in agriculture through volume of products. They are already far ahead than us in this matter. Rather we can compete in quality aspects. Such good and differential quality id offered by organic agriculture

2. PURPOSE

Thus the major purpose of the movement of NPG should be "Promotion of Organic Agriculture in Nepal, as far as possible".

It is for sure that Organic agriculture needs a bit longer preparation to be successful. Establishment of the ecological balance in the farm, production of enough biomass etc. takes more time, skill and patience. So it can not be practiced all at once through out the nation. But we can identify the potential areas and set a limit for every year.

4. APPROACHES

To promote Organic Agriculture in such potential areas, we need to emphasize the following approaches-

- Identification of suitable crop and varieties for all the pocket areas of organic agriculture
- Research and demonstration of these techniques should be strengthened and wider spread
- There should be subsidies for the farmers for up to the conversion period
- Organic collection and marketing centers should be widely available
- Government subsidies should be made available for certification.
- Promotional activities of all the GOs, NGOs and Pos should be uni-linear and non competition but cooperating.

4. FOCUS AREA

Up-to-date experiences show that Organic agriculture is more successful in mid-hill belts of Nepal as compared to Terai. So our first stage of activities should be focused towards the maintaining the organicness of these traditionally organic areas and promote else where in the next phase. To facilitate these big activities, following activities must be done-

- Declaration of OA district / region / areas of the country
- Inclusion of Organic agriculture in mainstream academic and research activities
- Establishment of Collection and distribution center of organic products in every district headquarters and municipal ward centers.
- Facilitations for the promotion of Farmers led researches in various site specific issues of agriculture
- Publication and distribution of various farmers' friendly materials.
- Subsidies for the production of Organic manures in mass scale, organic certification and organic sales counter establishment
- "Polluters pay" principles in the use of every pesticides and fertilizers.

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