

Sikkim: The Organic Farming Journey

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INTRODUCTION

Sikkim is known to the fully organic state since 2016, its products are being sold in the organic markets of the Sikkim and as well in the foreign country as the export. The life of people is far better than the past life how they were living while cultivating the conventional farming. Around the 50% increment in the number of tourist who visits the state, it is indirectly improving the life of native people there. Initially farmers were having the fear of adoption of organic farming to due various reasons like low yield, sensitive to plant disease, insect sensitive and crop failure etc.

JOURNEY OF ORGANIC FARMING IN SIKKIM

From the 2003, the revolution had started with target of achieving the fully organic state as soon as possible. So the Government official went to the farmers through the extension workers to spread the organic farming knowledge and target achievement by the state. Farmers were asked to join the training by the scientists and also sent outside the state to adopt the much better skill from that other states and country. In 2010, the Sikkim organic mission started to increase the pace of organic farming in state. In the 2016 the state could achieve the 100% organic state.

ACROSS THE FINISH LINE

- The process of converting Sikkim into a 100 per cent organic state was fast-tracked in 2010 with the launch of the Sikkim Organic Mission
- 2003- Sikkim begins discouraging use of chemical fertilizers, reduces fertilizer subsidy by 10 per cent and the Sikkim Organic Board is constituted.
- 2003-2009 - State adopts 396 villages as bio-villages to test organic inputs.
- 2006-2009 - About 8,000 ha of land is certified as organic.

- Eight units of vermi-culture hatcheries are established in five state farms and three Krishi Vigyan Kendras.
- 2008-09 - Ginger processing unit is established at Birdang Farm, West Sikkim. Ginger is one of the four high-value crops selected by Sikkim for its trade potential
- 2010 - Sikkim Organic Mission is launched to fast-track conversion of Sikkim into a 100 per cent organic state
- 2010-11 - More than 18,234 ha of land is certified. Automated greenhouses are established for production of disease-free quality planting material.
- 2011-12 - 19,216 ha land is certified.
- 2012-13 - 19,188 ha land is certified. 'Organic farming' is included in school curriculum
- 2015 - Entire agricultural area in the state is converted to 'certified organic'.
- 2016 - Sikkim is formally declared a '100 per cent organic' state.

HOW IT BECAME?

In 2003, Sikkim decided to adopt the resolution to switch the organic farming. At that time people were not ready for this drastic move by state. So, policies phased out the chemical fertilizers and pesticides from the state. Achieved the total ban on the sale of the chemical fertilizer and pesticides and due to this move the farmers of the state bound to adopt the organic farming. The Sikkim Organic Mission in 2010, backed by government funding, supported this initiative by providing seeds and manure, training farmers in organic methods and even sending them outside the state for advanced training. The government initiated further infrastructural measures such as building bio fertilizer units, seed processing units and soil testing labs; enabling the organic cycle to bloom. Farmers have also been facilitated in receiving loans as well as being provided counseling support by the agricultural department. Start-ups like Organic Sikkim have also helped farmers find markets for their produce, eliminating middlemen and resulting in higher profits.

Even India's budget for 2016–17 introduced various measures to increase crop yields and boost organic farming. These include increasing the area of land to be brought under organic farming to half a million acres and launching a scheme to push sales of organic produce in

both domestic and export markets. Also the undulating land mass of the state made the farmers to adopt this system uniformly.

WHY IT BECAME?

Organic agriculture is important for our health and the future of our world for many reasons. It's needed to sustainably feed the world. It carries far fewer toxic pesticide residues, and is grown using no GMOs. It doesn't poison farm workers or the micro-organisms living in the soil that produce healthy, drought-resistant crops. Organic farming is also better suited to climate change, protects biodiversity, enhances soil fertility, and, to top it off, organic foods are more nutritious and taste better.

But without pesticides and other tools known for producing high-yield agriculture, would organic food really be able to produce enough food to feed people? Many studies from around the world show that organic farms can produce about as much if not more food than conventional farms. It may take several seasons for farmers to learn the new ways and see success, but as the soil and biodiversity recover, yields go up. And in places where most of the world's hungry live, yield gaps for organic food disappear.

HOW SIKKIM IS BENEFITING FROM BECOMING AN ORGANIC STATE?

Sikkim's transition to an organic state is good for public health and the environment in the area. It's also good for the economy. Tourism to the area is also increasing and bringing in more money. Guests can stay in organic villages, where they are able to enjoy the abundant natural beauty and eat fresh, organic meals. Sikkim organic retail stores offering pulses, rice, mandarin oranges, ginger, cardamom, and turmeric have been set up by the government in New Delhi. More stores are planned for other major cities. Due to the surge in demand for Sikkim's organic produce, farmers are now earning 20% more.

Referances

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