

Training on Sustainable Agricultural Practices

REEN works extensively to train women farmers in sustainable agricultural practices, inculcating in them principles of farm management that lead them on the road to self-reliance.



Initial intervention activities usually begin with orientation sessions that introduce the principles of sustainable agriculture and outline the harmful effects of chemical farming. They explain the need for a paradigm shift in cultivation practices. Discussions with farmers at an individual as well as community level help them understand the benefits of these principles so that they may make an informed decision, if they choose to adopt them.

After orientation, we conduct intensive training sessions to equip farmers with the technical knowledge to begin adopting these practices. These sessions, constituting several modules, place a strong emphasis on biodiversity conservation and cultivation of indigenous varieties, which inherently require low inputs and respond well to organic preparations. They teach farmers to prepare cost-effective organic inputs at home, thereby enabling them to eschew the use of chemicals. They also teach soil and water conservation methods, optimal integration of various farm processes for efficient recycling of resources and practices such as the SRI method for paddy cultivation which help ensure good yields.

Structure of training modules



Comprising of a blend of time-tested traditional methods (which have gradually fallen out of use) and scientifically developed modern practices, the training modules provide an alternative farm management system that farmers are often unaware is beneficial to them. These practices cut down costs of cultivation and ensure good yields; moreover, by promoting indigenous varieties well suited to local conditions, they also help strengthen the resilience of farming communities to climate change. Three main modules, developed largely in-house through years of experience, make

up the training sessions. The methodology used involves class sessions, field visits, group discussions and experience sharing.



Module 1

This consists of soil and water conservation methods and includes:

- soil type and structure, micro-organisms and micronutrients in soil
- techniques of soil conservation
- increasing soil fertility through organic farming
- farm ponds for percolation of rain water
- drip irrigation
- land development activities such as terracing, small pits etc. that help increase soil moisture content and fertility

Module 2

Here, farmers are taught about sustainable agricultural practices (such as the Guli method of ragi cultivation and SRI method of rice cultivation), cropping patterns etc.

Module 3

This consisted mainly of organic preparations, seed saving and seed treatment, nutrient management techniques, natural pest repellents etc. Topics covered include:

- Improved cultivation practices
- Growth promoter
- Organic formulations for pest and disease management
- Nutrient management
- Seed treatment and seed conservation



Reducing dependency on external sources and teaching them to utilize available land resources effectively, with little damage to the environment and without eroding the resource base of future generations will ultimately help agrarian communities strengthen their food and livelihood security.