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Natural Farming for Management of Agriculture

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Natural Farming can be defined as “chemical- free and livestock based farming”. Soundly grounded in agro-ecology, it is a diversified farming system that integrates crops, trees and livestock, allowing the optimum use of functional biodiversity. Natural Farming holds the promise of enhancing farmers’ income while delivering many other benefits, such as restoration of soil fertility and environmental health, and mitigating and/or reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Natural Farming builds on natural or ecological processes that exist in or around farms. Being considered as an agroecologically diverse farming practice, it brings hosts of ecological and social benefits, although, there are two school of thought- opposing each other on the efficacy of its practices. Natural Farming (NF) is contemplated by its protagonist as one of the most potential crop cultivation methods to drastically cut down production costs by reducing dependence on market for purchase of critical inputs.

Internationally, Natural Farming is considered a form of regenerative agriculture—a prominent strategy to save the planet. It has the potential to manage land practices and sequester carbon from the atmosphere in soils and plants, where it is actually useful instead of being detrimental. Natural Farming has many indigenous forms in India, the most popular one is practised in Andhra Pradesh. The practice has also spread, in other forms, to other states, especially those in southern India.

It is promoted as ‘*Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati*’ (BPKP) under the centrally sponsored scheme *Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana* (PKVY). BPKP aims at promoting traditional indigenous practices— which are largely based on on-farm biomass recycling with an emphasis on mulching and use of cow dung and urine formulations. It excludes all synthetic chemical inputs. Currently several states are undertaking Natural farming through central programmes like RKVY, PKVY, BPKP and others state specific programmes.

Keywords: Natural farming, agro-ecology, agriculture technology.