

MANAS RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Activity Report



Our Manas Rural Development Institute, an Organic Farming Training Centre

Year 2015-2016

Address

304, Sunflower Tower, Kharkar Lane, Thane 400601.
Maharashtra, India.



Shri Ramchandra Dhanawade, Secretary Govt. Protocol inaugurating Seminar on Pomegranate



Shri Vyankatesh Kulkarni, Chairman MARDI addressing the participants of the Seminar



Shri Yogesh Patil, Chairman Gramsamruddhi, Foundation, Nashik addressing the pomegranate growing farmers



Expert Talk by Dr Vinay Supe, Pomegranate Expert Scientist, M.P.K.V.Rahuri, Maharashtra



Shri Ramchandra Dhanawade, Secretary Govt Protocol MS addressing the participants of the seminar



Growers from Khandesh area attending the seminar on organic pomegranate in large numbers



Preface

It gives me a great pleasure in presenting Annual Activity Report for the year 2015-16 of the Manas Rural Development Institute. Ours is a NGO engaged in spreading the concept of Organic farming amongst the farming community since more than a decade. We are also actively engaged to propagate consumption of organic and safe food amongst the city dwellers. This activity report has been presented in altogether different format in order to highlight the different facets of our philosophy of rural development.

In ancient India, when the traditional systems were practiced on “Concept of Panchkroshi” by the village communities, country cherished “Golden Era” and social fabric was at the helm of prosperity. Indians promoted discipline of *‘annam bahu kurvitta’* meaning thereby growing and sharing food in plenty. Country was known for production and export of high quality spices, cotton and silk fabrics. The system reveals holistic crop management through use of suitable cultivars, use of quality seeds, process of seed treatment, use of suitable soils, intercrops having optimum plant population, balanced nutrition, optimum use of water, timely weeding, protection from disorders, using herbal and dead animal wastes, harvest at right stage, seed drying and storage. Cow and cow family was integral component of farming system. I am sure that with the conviction to help the farming communities in rural areas and to organize themselves in to groups to enable them to manage their socio-economic activities most competitively, we can ensure a secured future for them. This is a small beginning from our side.

Manas, Thane

(Vyankatesh Kulkarni)
Chairman

Manas Rural Development Institute

Thought Behind...

Aim

- To train and equip farmers with the intention of giving them a sustainable life in the village
- To develop Eco-friendly partnership between consumers and farmers.

Objectives

- To have a systematic utilization and integration of the available natural and human resources for their socio economic development in rural areas.
- Spreading awareness about organic farming using ancient organic technology. Adopting Gandhian philosophy of 'Panchkroshi'.

Philosophy

- Gandhian Philosophy of 'Panchkroshi'.
- A cluster of nondescript villages that unify in order to form a 'Panchkroshi'.
- The philosophy identifies and encourages an Ideal Village Community.

Hypothesis

Manas Krushi Farm is a successful model of organic farming because:

- Farmers from villages are trained in organic farming are able to meet their goal of self sustainability.
- They are successful in maintaining their cultural heritage by practicing Ancient Indian techniques.
- They optimize the utilization of resources.

Thesis

- Raising Funds by selling the agricultural produce to educate the farmers about environmentally viable methods of farming to eventually increase the socio-economic status and standard of living of the farmers.

Approach

For quite some time now, India has continuously been projected and stamped as a country of the poor. And truly so...!

The picture is now gradually changing due to the active participation by enthusiastic number of NGOs and dedicated countrymen. Working on the principles of sustainable agriculture,

The Beginning...

- Purchased land in 1994 for establishment of Manas Krushi Farm at Sajivali in Shahapur Taluka of Thane District.
- Up to 1998 conventional methods of farming was followed which was base on usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- It was observed that the conventional method of farming was not profitable due to heavy input expenses on external inputs.
- Hence, during 1999, the entire farm was brought under Organic methods of farming under the guidance of Shri Deshpande, Promoter of Rishi Krushi system of organic farming.
- Homa Therapy for agriculture was also implemented under the guidance of Gurudev Paranjape
- In 2001, Manas Krushi Farm got Certified Organic Status.
- The cost of cultivation was reduced to great extent and the farm produce was chemical free.
- Our survey indicated the farmers in the near by villages were following conventional methods of farming.
- We noticed that more than 70 per cent of the farmers from the adjoining villages were mainly cultivating paddy and other crops during the kharif season which were mainly rain fed.
- Dependence on use of external farm inputs was prominent resulting into input cost escalation.
- The marketing arrangements were also haphazard like conventional.
- The crop yield was low resulting low farm income
- On an average per acre income from the paddy crop was Rs. 8000/-

- Informally we started spreading message of organic farming amongst nearby villages from 2001 onwards.
- It was with the primary focus to augment the farm income of the farmers as a whole and improve their socio-economic status.
- When this activity gathered momentum we incorporated an NGO in 2005 by the name “Vedic and Homa Therapy for Agriculture” to create sustainable platform for promotion of organic farming.
- The NGO was registered as Company under provisions of section 25 of Company’s Act, 1956

Larger Vision

- During the period 2001-05 the focus of the activity was on organic farming alone.
- It was accepted by the farmers from the surrounding villages with overwhelming response.
- Hence it was felt necessary to bring all the activities under organized platform and further continue with the spreading them over larger base.
- The activities developed during this period were mainly on seed production program in association with the Mahabeej and providing marketing support to the farmers for the produce.
- The sailing was smooth between 2005 to 2008 where it became necessary to broaden our vision and maintain organic farming as sustainable activity with help of “rural agriculture infrastructure development”
- The vision prompted change in the name to “Manas Rural Development Institute”.

Our Achievements

- Structured on our working experience in the field, we started evolving a model of Organic Agriculture activities.
- This model supports the main activity of Organic Agriculture and ensures overall development of farmers and surrounding villages.
- We started conducting awareness programmes for the benefit of farmers and women self help groups.
- Suitable cropping pattern was devised to augment the farm income of the farmers

- Two season cropping was achieved with the help of creating irrigation facilities and financial and marketing support.
- In order to increase the income of the farmers we in association with Mahabeej undertook the activity of Paddy Seed production program.
- We started supplying Paddy Seeds procured from Mahabeej to the farmers advising them to adopt suitable package of practices.
- To promote organic farming in the adjoining villages we distributed Gir cows at subsidized rate to the farmers, since organic farming practices are mainly cow centric.
- The activity first started in 10 villages with 131 farmers in the year 2004-05 with total seed production of 22 tonnes has now extended to 20 villages with more than 1000 farmers with total seed production of more than 600 tonnes.
- Through adoption of revised cropping pattern and paddy seed production program It was noticed that on an average the farm income increased from Rs. 8000 to Rs. 15,000.

Programmes Implemented

- **Educational Activities:**

We undertook multipronged approach by training

1. Pre-school children with an objective to prepare and develop the learning habits of children and make a strong foundation for their formal education.
 2. Youth who are acting as a community representative for undertaking implementation of the various developmental programs undertaken by the Organization.
 3. Women: Promotion of self help groups, vocational training, income generating activities, health and nutrition etc.
- Vocational training, environmental awareness, organic farming practices, preparation of bio-enhancers and bio-pesticides etc.
 - Tree Plantation Programme:
 - We have promoted tree plantation on large scale by involving school children, members of women SHGs youths and farmers.
 - Plants and seedlings were distributed for plantation.
 - We have also conducted environmental awareness camps and rallies on Environment Day
 - Eye checkup camp:

- Health check up camp
- Milk distribution program: For the proper nourishment of the children of the weaker section from Sajivali Village We distribute milk obtained from our Goshala to free of cost daily.
- Drinking Water Facility: We have also provided drinking water facility to the residents of Sajivali village by Tap Water System.
- Community Hall: We have constructed community hall for the people of Sajivali village for under taking various social activities.
- Promotion of Sports: We are promoting sports activities in the adjoining villages by sponsoring the sports activities.

The Enhanced Programmes

- MARDI realized that organic farming to make sustainable, required backward and forward integration of services & financial stability of farmers.
- This was complied with, seed supply, Vermi-compost supply and further produce was purchased at fixed price for entire season.
- We started undertaking various training programs on the subjects like
 - Seed bank, planting material and nursery development
 - Vermi-composting and other bio-inputs
 - Irrigation systems
 - Watershed development
 - Shed net and Green Houses
 - Micro-finance
 - Marketing support

Our Strength today

- Three centers of our NGO viz Thane of Maharashtra, Rajkot of Gujarat and Maheshwar of Madhya Pradesh.
- About 3000 acres are certified organic and rest in under “in conversion” process.
- About 1600 tonnes seed was produced and sold to Mahabeej.
- Marketing tie-up was developed for more than 6500 tonnes of farm produce successfully.

- Well equipped Organic Farming Training Centre

Future Vision

- It was felt that mere organic farming will not increase the household income substantially unless it is backed by strong marketing.
- It was also felt that the rural youths should also have regular income source as that of salaried employee in order to prevent their migration to cities.
- To achieve this we envisaged the holistic rural development model.
- Holistic Rural Development Model conceived by the MARDI addresses overall issues besides the agriculture promotion like social development, Compliance of Energy needs, Financial Support and Marketing of agriculture produce.
- The project that MARDI initiated is “Eco Friendly Partnership between Farmers and Consumers.
- It envisages the cultivation of organic crop and supplying to end consumer duly processed.

Road Map

- Development of rural agriculture infrastructure that will support value addition and marketing of farm produce
- Cluster based Installation of cold chain and warehousing facilities.
- Value addition processes to be adopted at village level by group of farmers.
- Processes like making Atta from wheat, hand polished rice, cold pressed oil, pulse milling, spice pounding, etc by traditional processed but with modern machinery.
- Further enhancement of value addition till packaging and distribution.
- Optimum logistic support to reduce carbon footprints.

Expected outcome

- With the support of technical guidance, finance and agriculture infrastructure the substantial revenue enhancement is envisaged.
- We propose the receipt of farmer to be enhanced in two phases Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 50,000 in view of creation of infrastructure, value addition process involved and remunerative prices.

- This will be achieved through processing and value addition of the farm products like hand polished rice, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and supplementary income from the milk production.
- We expect the farm income of the farmers to be enhanced to Rs. 70,000 plus in the span of five years.
- For this requisite infrastructure of cold chains, common cow housing, logistics, electricity generation etc will be developed in the cluster of villages with the marketing support.

Testimonials

- Research & Demonstration site (200 + Acres) is certified as Organic Farm since 2001 by Indian, EU and USDA Organic standards.
- Seed production program since 2005, supported by Maharashtra State Seeds Corporation (Mahabeej) in Thane district.
- Accreditation as Facilitator for Organic Horticulture Promotion program by National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Govt. of India.
- Recognized as official Training Agency of Organic farming by National Center of Organic Farming (NCOF), Ghaziabad.
- Technology collaboration MOU with IADI (Govt. of South Korea) for soybean and other crops

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Chairman

1. Shri Vyankatesh Kulkarni:

- Shri Vyankatesh Kulkarni Formed Manas group almost two decades back.
- He is a recognized expert in Organic agriculture
- Awarded Udyan Pandit by Govt. of M.S



Vice-Chairman

2. Dr R. K Pathak :

- Dr R. K Pathak is Vice chairman of MARDI.
- He is an eminent horticulturist with rich 4 decades of experience in that field
- In the past, Dr Pathak has headed many government research institutes.



Director (Training)

3. Dr S. M. Kshirsagar

- Dr Kshirsagar is Director at Manas.
- The versatile member of the group in the past has worked in research department of Agricultural Economics of Mahatma Phule Agriculture University Rahuri.
- Chief Manager in Bank of India, and Chairman Bhandara Gramin Bank, (Rtd.)
- He has published 6 books on Self Help Groups & Organic farming.



Director

4. Dr (Mrs.) Nandita Arbatti:

- Dr Arbatti is member of international hypertension society & International nutrition society.
- She has presented more than 20 scientific papers at national & international conferences on hypertension, nutrition & Male fertility & more than 35 papers in international journals.



Director

5. Dr. Ashok Shah

- Specialist in the field of microbiology and industrial biotechnology and visited number of overseas countries to deliver lead talks.
- Now he is devoting most of his time and energy Ancient Indian literature, science of plantation, traditional agricultural practices, healthy living, Organic Farming, Value addition, Solid Waste treatment, Bio compost, medicinal and aromatic plants



Director

6. Mr Ravikant Thanawala :

- He is presently Accounts and Finance Controller.
- Retired from Synthetic Chemicals Ltd , as Dy.General Manager, Corporate Finance.



Director

7. Mr Pradip Gadkari

- B.E (Electronics & Telecom), DBM (Finance), BGL
- He is presently the Legal Head of the Group.
- He is with the Group for the last 8 years



Director

8. Mr. Rajiv Anikhindi

- B.A (Economics) DBM (Finance)
- He is with the Group for over 10 years
- He is Director of MARDI

MANAS RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Annual Activity Report for the Year 2015-2016

Manas Rural Development Institute (MARDI) has pleasure to present this 11th Activity Report for the year 2015-16. The Company is registered under the provisions of Section 25 of Company Act, 1956. The provisions depict the Company as “Non Profit Company”.

Economic Scenario

The Indian Economy achieved a significant growth during 2015-16, despite a Global recession and a delayed sub-normal monsoon in the second half of the year. As per the advance estimates of GDP for 2015-16, released by the Central Statistical Department (CSO) the economy is estimated to have recorded growth at 7.2 % in 2015-16. with a growth in industrial and service sectors reported at 8.2 % and 8.7 % respectively. This has been despite a negative growth of 0.2 % in agricultural sector as a consequence of sub-normal monsoon leading to drought condition in may part of the country.

Deficiency in rainfall in the south west monsoon during 2015-16 severely affected Kharif crop, especially paddy and other cereal crops. As per the advance estimates, covering only Kharif crop production of food grain is estimated at 98.83 million tonnes in 2015-16 as against 117.70 million tonnes estimated for the Kharif season of 2014-15 and a target of 125.15 million tonnes set for 2015-16. As against this, the total food grains production in the year 2008-09 was highest at 233.88 million tonnes.

Major Programmes implemented during the year 2015-16

1. Rice Seed Production Programme with market linkage of Mahabeej at the Villages

Rice seed production programme with the market linkage of Mahabeej, a pioneer seed production seed company in government sector of Maharashtra State is the prestigious programme being implemented by Manas more than a decade. The empowering of farmers in seed production program was also ensured so that now these farmers groups can undertake such seed production programs independently

to enhance their farm income. This enabled us to handover the program to the volunteers / farmers from these villages to implement the program of their own. Accordingly the farmers themselves implemented the rice seed production program as usual without any difficulty. The guidance and support whenever needed was extended in order to make the program most successful. Thus there is substantial increase in their farm income from the paddy seed production programme undertaken by villagers under support and guidance from Manas and Mahabeej. This year the farmers received on an average Rs 1650/- per quintal which is quite high than the prevailing market rates which are hovering around Rs 1000-1100. Thus Manas initiatives to increase the farm income are quite successful in our adjoining villages.

2. Training Programme for the farmers from Andaman and Nicobar Island

Training program on Organic Farming sponsored by Department of Agriculture Andaman and Nicobar Islands under National Horticulture Mission Scheme of Human Resources Development was successfully conducted for the farmers at our Training Institute at Manas Krushi Farm from 18.12.2015 to 22.12.2015.

The major topics covered during the program were as follows:

- Organic Farming and its relevance
- Different Systems of Organic Farming
- Four wheeler system of Organic Farming
- Harnessing the Energy from different sources
- Use of Agnihotra in Agriculture
- Importance of cow in Organic Farming
- Use of Agriculture Calendar in Agriculture
- The Soil as living organism, role of organic matter
- Crop Production Technology
- Organic Pest Management
- Green Manuring, Composting Techniques
- Organic Vegetable Cultivation
- Horticulture/Floriculture Plants
- Organic Group Certification

- Marketing of organic products

In addition to above during the Training Program the participating farmers (In all five with one Team Leader from the Agri. Dept) performed the following activities.

- Preparation and application of Bio-pesticides like Dashparni Ark and LAMIT
- Preparation and application of Bio-enhancers, Bijamrut, Jivamrut and Amrutpani
- Composting and Vermi-composting techniques and methods
- Horticultural plantations
- Performance of Agnihotra and chanting of Mantras
- Chanting of Agnihotra Mantras and use of Agnihotra in human health, water purification and in agriculture

Films:

- Film prepared by Manas on Homa Organic Farming
- Film prepared by CRI Lucknow on Organic farming for Horticultural Crops
- Film on Natural Resource Management

The Faculty support extended by following experts:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Dr S M Kshirsagar | Training Co-ordinator |
| 2. Dr R K Pathak | Homa Teacher, Five Fold Path Mission |
| 3. Mrs Karin | Homa Teacher Five Fold Path Mission |
| 4. Ms Aralia | Homa Teacher Five Fold Path Mission |
| 5. Mr Yogesh | Practicals on Bio-enhancers |
| 6. Mr Vaibhav | Practicals on Bio-pesticides |
| 7. Mr Bharat Bairagi | Field visit to farmers' fields |
| 8. Mr Surve | Horticulture plantation Expert |

The overall response of the participating farmers was very positive and encouraging. If followed properly we are sure these farmers will implement Homa Jaivik Krushi at their Neil Island which will be trend setter to other farmers. The participation certificates were distributed at the hand of Shri Vyankatesh Kulkarni, Chairman, Manas Rural Development Institute, Manas

Krushikarma Farm Sajivali (Thane). We recommend the similar program can be initially conducted for the benefit of select staff of the Agriculture Department first at Andaman and Nicobar Island for propagating the concept of Homa Jaivik Krushikarma in the island.

Action Points emerged:

For immediate promotion of Homa Jaivik Krushikarma activities in the Island it was recommended to implement the following activities on TOP PRIORITY

- To advise farmers to adopt the practices of using Angara, Mahua flowers (*Madhuca latifolia*) for increasing microbial activities in the field. Use of Agriculture calendar for carrying out various agricultural activities and sowing/planting operations.
- Planting Glyricidia on big bunds and Tur on field boundaries and internal bunds to capture nitrogen from the atmosphere.
- Use of Bijamrut and Jivamrut as bio-enhancers for encouraging seed germination and plant vigour.
- Use of Nimbark and Lamit and Cow butter milk & urine as bio-pesticides
- Performing Agnihotra and use of Agnihotra ash in the farms
- Formation of Organic Farmers Groups (OFGs) for adoption and promotion of Homa Jaivik Krushikarma in contiguous area for ease in certification
- To provide exact time of sunrise and sunset to the farmers to enable them to perform Agnihotra regularly.

3. ATMA Farmers Meet at Manas Krushikarma Farm Sajivali

Our training facilities at Manas farm on organic farming has been widely utilized by the Department of Agriculture, Forest Department, ATMA, etc. As done in the past the Department of Agriculture, Thane Division has utilized our Organic Farming Training infrastructure for their staff and farmers for conducting various programmes related to Rain Fed farming, Farmers' Groups Farming, Organic Farming etc., This time the members of ATMA farmers groups from Kalyan also attended including women SHG members from the villages in large numbers. Dr S M Kshirsagar gave in brief about the promotion of SHGs in rural areas and agro-based income

generating activities to be undertaken by the groups. The participants from Shahapur and Bhiwandi Talukas also attended the similar program in good number.

4. Seminar on Organic Pomegranate production from khandesh area of North Maharashtra

Farmers meet / melava was arranged on 4th and 25th March, 2016 at Manas on the subject of sustainable farming and organic Pomegranate production by Sooryamandel Group headed by Shri Vyankatesh Joshi. The huge gathering consisting of more than 106 farmers from the Nashik and Dhule districts participated in the programme. Dr Supe, a scientist from Mahatma Phule Krushi Vidyapeeth talked at length on different facets of pomegranate cultivation with new technological developments. The response of the farmers was overwhelming. The Farmers were also addressed by Shri Rajendra Dhanawade, Secretary, Govt. Protocol, M.S. He appealed the farmers to adopt different techniques of pomegranate farming with the organic methods. The participants were also addressed by Shri Yogesh Patil, Chairman Gramonnati Pratishtan, Nashik. This programme got wide publicity in their house magazine Gramonnati on the subject of organic pomegranate production practices. Shri Shivajirao Keshatwar and Shri Govind Joshi shared their experiences in organic pomegranate production and crop protection measures. The farmers who started implementation of organic methods of pomegranate production also shared their experiences on quality chemical free pomegranate fruits production with reduced cost followed by questions and answers session. Shri Vyankatesh Joshi chaired the function. The training days were also utilized for field visit of the Manas farm.

5. Educational Trip of YCMOU students

Dr S M Kshirsagar, our Director of Training and Development is also well connected with the YCMOU, Nashik as a PGR Teacher Counselor. He is engaged in teaching the subject like Agro-journalism for B Sc (Agri) students and Agricultural Extension Management for the M.Sc (Agri) and Ph.D. students. This year also the YCMOU selected our Manas Krushi Farm for the educational trip of the students of Agro-journalism. Around 30 students participated in the educational trip. The various practical activities carried out at the demonstration hut of the Manas were shown to

the students and practical training on preparation of various inputs required in organic farming was imparted. The various films on Organic Farming Systems, Water Conservation Techniques, Dairy Farming, Forest Management etc were also shown to the students. The field visit of the Manas Krushi Farm was also undertaken. Thus the students had fully enjoyed their educational trip with the sole objective of caring nature mother.

7. Organic Products Awareness Program for Urban Consumers from Thane and Mumbai.

A special awareness trips were arranged for the urban consumers especially through social groups like Bhagini Mandals and Self Interest Groups. Some training program was also arranged for the social groups who are actively engaged in conservation of nature and especially tree plantation activities since long. Dr. S M Kshirsagar conducted one day training program at Manas Rural Development Training Institute. The Classroom sessions with power point presentation followed by field visit to witness various plantations at the farm was the uniqueness of this training program. In all 53 participants attended the training. The participants enjoyed a video show of conservation of forest conceived by Department of Forests, Gujarat State, "Jungle Na Hota To Tu Kya Karega". The participants consist of many professionals devoting their life for the concept of Hariyali and Nature Conservation.

We have also undertaken series of awareness programmes and campaign of consumption of chemical free food for the benefit of urban consumers especially city dwellers from Dadar, Mulund and Thane. Our target group was the women members of different informal groups functioning very nicely since long in the cities. They are the main opinion makers about the purchase of food items for their family members. Therefore these programs were arranged at their establishments for the convenience of the members of these informal groups or mandals. The program content was devised to create awareness about the impact of consumption of chemical food on human health and the solutions for the same.

8. Educational and Environmental Study Tours

We have developed Manas Krushi Farm and Manas Organic Farming Training Centre with all requisite infrastructural facilities and demonstration huts of preparation of bio-enhancers and bio-pesticides. Well equipped Goshala with the indigenous cow breed of Gir, Floriculture activities with Sonchafa cultivation, other Horticultural plantations like Mango, Cashew nut, Coconut, Jamun, Lemon, Guava, Custard Apple, Amala etc the total Horticultural plantation on more than 53 acres with more than 5300 trees. The visitors get essential knowledge about the floriculture, horticulture, Dairy, Composting methods, Organic bio-enhancers and bio-pesticides, Homa i.e. performance of Agnihotra for purification and natural blend of scenic beauty surrounded by beautiful mountain ranges beneath the Bhatsa Dam offers an unique opportunity and climate of learning. Many organizations bring their students, farmers, Women members of SHGs etc to visit our farm for happy learning. This year also witnessed huge turnout of school going children in huge numbers. The Bhatsa school has been the pioneer to avail these facilities to create awareness about various facets of organic farming and food with living with the nature. High level dignitaries and officials from the various Govt Departments and other social institutions visited our farm site. The Forest Department also took an advantage of visiting our farm site and Training Institute for their Fram Guards Training School, Shahapur. Our Dr S M Kshirsagar is also a regular visiting faculty for this school.

During educational visit to Manas Krushi Farm Sajivali, the different systems of organic farming were explained with the help of power point presentation, video shows and doing practicals at our demo hut. After that during field visit of the farm the different types of horticulture, floriculture and vegetable plantations were shown. Special visit to our Goshala for enthusing farmers to rear the Indian cows for cow centric organic farming was also undertaken.

9. Women Meet on the eve of Women's Day Celebration

As done in the past Prasad Chikitsalaya, NGO from Ganeshpuri celebrated Women's Day and arranged huge gathering of the women members of the Self Help Groups. In all more than 1000 members participated in the meet. The SHG members presented various programmes on different topics related to women health,

agriculture, environment and other social aspects. Dr Kshirsagar was invited as a Chief Guest. He congratulated the women members for their awareness in these fields and talked at length the role of women SHGs in rural development.

10. Free Eye operations of local people of adjoining villages of Manas

At the result of conducting free Eye check-up camps with the help of Tulsi Eye Hospital Nashik, of International repute the list of persons suffering from various eye illnesses was prepared. From the list the patients were sent regularly to the Tulsi Hospital for eye treatment and if necessary cataract operations. It is a step towards humanity by providing eye check-up for the needy village folks and backward tribal community of the society. Villagers now receiving the benefit of the free eye check-up. Some beneficiaries were also provided eye drops for eye lubrication. As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure, MARDI's eye check-up camp is a step of prevention from any eye problem in any villagers. During their visit vision disorders were identified and treated subsequently. As these beneficiaries belong to the weaker sections of the society, MARDI bears all the expenses for conducting the camp. MARDI place on record our deep sense of gratitude and thanks to the Tulsi Eye Hospital Authority for their kind help and co-operation. This year also two persons from Sajivali and one from Saralambe were operated for eye illness successfully at Tulsi Eye Hospital Nashik.

11. Drinking Water Facility to villages

The villages from Shahapur face acute shortage of water in summer. Manas have taken an initiative for supplying fresh water to the village Sajivali through Tap system. Special overhead tank was constructed at Manas Krushi farm Sajivali and from this Water Tank the drinking water has been supplied daily through taps to the villagers. Thus the entire village including Tribals started getting good amount of fresh drinking water which has diminished incidence of water borne diseases due to contamination. Manas has plans to provide such drinking water facility to other adjoining villages also in near future with participatory community involvement and management.

12. Organic Training Centre

Manas Rural Development Institute has already conducted various training programmes in respect of agriculture and rural development since a decade. We have now created essential infrastructure like Training Halls, Office Buildings, Guest Houses, Demonstrations structures, unique composting systems from wood chips and other organic material including cow dung and urine. The Training Hall is very spacious having capacity to accommodate around 500 trainee participants. The high quality posters on organic farming, bio-enhancers and bio-pesticides have been displayed in the Training Hall as well as in Demonstration Hut. These posters have been highly appreciated by the various visitors and trainees. Our dream will come true of establishing International Knowledge Centre at our Manas Krushi Farm at Sajivali in Shahapur Taluka of Thane district. We wish to promote the traditional indigenous knowledge and systems used in areas like organic farming, biodiversity conservation and are also involved in imparting training to farmers, NGOs and students. The Centers main focus would be specifically in three areas, biodiversity conservation, organic agriculture and Ayurveda and Aahaar Sanhita for human wellness. So far we have conducted more than eight programmes on organic farming systems at this institute to the local farmers, college students, NGO staff and Motivators and Farm Houses, Students from Foreign countries like Sweden. The response is overwhelming. The school and college students, farmers clubs from ATMA, Women SHG members from the various Talukas of the district, Forest Guards and Forest Officers of the Forest Department are regular recipients of the technical knowledge from this Training Centre.

13. Support to Marketing of Organic Produce

We had already made inroads for organic movement in five districts of three states with the farmers' participation. Group certification is in progress. Now in order to fetch good prices for the organic produce we are going to start own marketing organization to meet the consumers demand for the organic produce and also to benefit the farmers for providing them a common platform for the marketing and fetching good remunerative returns. We have already launched our organic products in the market through other Organic Shoppe vendors. Special website has already been launched for this purpose i.e. www.manasorganicfood.com. In order to create

consumer awareness amongst the city dwellers we have conducted series of programmes at Bhagini Mandals at Dadar, Mulund and Acharya Atre Katta, Thane. The programmes were well received by the participants and in turn the members of such Bhagini Mandals specially visited our Manas Krushi farm to witness the oil and grains processing indigenous techniques.

14. Organic Agriculture: Promotional Publications

Books Published in Marathi

1. Sendriya Sheti : Shaswat Sheti Ani Pramanikaran (Organic farming and Certification)
2. Mazi Gir Gai (Gir Cow)

We propose to publish series of books related to organic farm practices, vegetables, fruits and food grains production techniques.

Dr Kshirsagar, our Director and Chief Coordinator, Training and Rural Development actively participated as a Guest Speaker in the workshops, seminars and training programmes arranged by Agriculture Finance Corporation Ltd, Mumbai on the subjects of Joint Forest Management, Promotion of Self Help Groups for development of forests, Global Warming, Climate Change and Eco-tourism in the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa. He has been visiting faculty at Forest Training School Shahapur of Govt. of Maharashtra Forest Dept. He is also rendering his services as a Professor at YCMOU, Nasik for the subject of Agro-journalism and PGR Teacher Counselor.

Acknowledgement

MARDI is very happy to place on record its heartfelt thanks and appreciation to everybody and every organization which have helped us in organizing various programmes and activities throughout the year most successfully. We are also equally thankful to various dignitaries, valued visitors and students from various educational establishments from the State of Maharashtra for their visits to our farm and institute and appreciating our efforts and making valuable suggestions for further improvement. We really owe a lot to them for this act of kindness and sure to receive same help and patronage in our future endeavors too.



Organic Training Program for Andman & Nicobar Farmers, Introductory session



Dr R K Pathak, interacting with the participants on Organic Farming Systems



Field visit to Chilly Plantation & preparation of Bioenhancers & Biopesticides



Visit of the Trainee Participants from Andaman to Organic Chilly Plantation farm



Experience sharing on Practical organic Okra Cultivation at Manas Farm



Distribution of Certificates to the farmers at the hands of Chairman Shri Vyankatesh N Kulkarni



Organic Rice production at Manas Krushi Farm



Organic Okra Production at Manas Krushi Farm



Sunflower cultivation at Manas Krushi Farm



Our floriculture plantation, golden flowers



Organic Muskmelons production at Manas Krushi Farm



Demo on Compost making process