

NEW PARADIGM FOR RAINFED FARMING

From Impoverishment to Empowerment :
With Productivity, Profitability & Sustainability for Farmers & Farming

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Abstract

Indian farming and farms in majority are characteristically small, rainfed, resource poor and debt-ridden. Productivity, profitability, sustainability and quality of life of agrarian sector is constantly and steadily going down. The new paradigm researched, developed and started being adopted by farmers is located in Central India, Wardha, a farmers' suicide affected area. The paradigm has very high potential of immediate upscaling since it is developed very much under the conditions of resource-poor farmers.

Key features of the innovative experience under rainfed conditions are discussed. They include on-field soil and water conservation techniques, appropriate seeds which are not high-input-varieties, use of local labour, skills, wisdom, renewable bullock power and other low-external-input but high-internal-regeneration-of-input techniques, which are organic. Consortium of more than 30 companion crops (food & cash crops) scientifically designed gives synergy effect.

It gives rich diversity of food crops for family consumption giving food security, affordable nutrition security and improvement of soil health on various scientific parameters.

The economics with 6 years' data concretely established (coupled with farmers' data) the profitability which is steadily increasing. Security of income and food together give better quality of life. Cases of farmers' experience in varied situations are discussed. The support policy implications are suggested.

This paradigm in essence assures higher productivity, profitability, sustainability and low risk for rainfed areas, with several other benefits of widely ranging dimensions.

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