

Scaling up Zero Budget Natural Farming could lead to annual subsidy savings of INR 2100 crores in Andhra Pradesh

New Delhi (7 January 2020) — Andhra Pradesh could save nearly INR 2100 crores (~USD 292 million) in fertiliser subsidies annually if it scaled up Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) to all six million farm families in the state by 2024, according to an independent study released by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). Scaling up ZBNF could significantly alter the landscape of chemical inputs in agriculture, particularly fertilisers. The study found that 77 per cent of the farmers adopting ZBNF were not using any fertilisers while the rest continued to use chemical inputs in smaller quantities along with adopting a few critical natural farming practices. Overall, the average ZBNF farmer in Andhra Pradesh grew rice and maize using 99 per cent and 85 per cent less urea per acre than a conventional farmer, respectively.

The CEEW study, in association with Sustainable India Finance Facility (SIFF) and supported by Vijayavahini Charitable Foundation, is based on a survey conducted in May 2019, covering more than 600 farmers in 60 villages across six districts in Andhra Pradesh. The surveyed districts included Anantapuram, Kadapa, Krishna, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, and West Godavari. In Andhra Pradesh, more than 500,000 farmers are currently practicing ZBNF as part of a state government-led initiative.

CEEW research found that ZBNF had been adopted by a large number of marginal farmers in Andhra Pradesh. Instead of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, ZBNF farmers use low-cost locally-sourced natural concoctions, inoculums and decoctions based on cow dung, cow urine, jaggery, lilac, green chillies, and many other such natural ingredients.

Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, said, “To take the current research on *Bhartiya Prakrutik Krishi Paddhiti* (Indian natural farming practices) further, we need more organisations and partners to conduct comprehensive and multi-faceted studies. Research across different agro-climatic zones in the country to look at overall cost reduction, yields, climate change, water-use, price realisation, will further help understand the prospects better.”

Dr Arunabha Ghosh, CEO, CEEW, added, “Andhra Pradesh’s evolving experience shows that scaling up ZBNF could lead to massive savings on fertiliser subsidies, while reducing the input costs for the farmers. However, impacts of ZBNF across other regions and agro-climatic zones must be examined before a nation-wide roll out. Further research is also needed to understand the impact of ZBNF on greenhouse gas emissions, crop yields and resilience, and the chemical fertiliser industry as the practice scales up.”

Link to the study: [Can Zero Budget Natural Farming Save Input Costs and Fertiliser Subsidies? Evidence from Andhra Pradesh](#)

About CEEW

The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) is one of South Asia’s leading not-for-profit policy research institutions. The Council uses data, integrated analysis, and strategic outreach to explain – and change – the use, reuse, and misuse of resources. It prides itself on the independence of its high-quality research, develops partnerships with public and private institutions, and engages with wider public. In 2019, CEEW once again featured extensively across nine categories in the ‘2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report’. The Council has also been consistently ranked among the world’s top climate change think tanks. Follow us on Twitter @CEEWIndia for the latest updates.

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