

“GARDEN OF VEGETABLES” BECOMES CHEMICAL FREE

- A Case study of Kurakula Thota village

Kurakula Thota is a small hamlet village, situated at about 3 Km. from Kalyandurg town. The village has only 64 families belonging to a single backward community. For the past 100 years, all the families have been growing only vegetables and greens. Hence the village name “Kurakula Thota”, which literally means “Vegetable garden”. They have been growing only vegetables and greens as their small land holdings of 2 to 3 acres are insufficient to raise other crops. They have neither become too rich, nor starved even during series of droughts, as they have regular income throughout the year.

Earlier the farmers used farm yard manure to grow their crops. But for the past 20 years, they have started using chemical fertilizers and pesticides to arrest the growing incidence of pests and diseases. These vegetables grown using chemicals obviously had residues of chemicals left over in them. So apart from supplying nutrients and vitamins essential for good health and longevity, these vegetables also supply poisonous chemicals hazardous to human health. More over the farmers were getting low returns on investment because of high investments on chemical fertilizers and pesticides.



During 2007-08, AF started its sustainable agriculture program in the village. It explained to the farmers the ill-effects of high cost chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and also about growing healthy vegetables at low cost with better returns for farmers. AF had organized a series of through awareness campaigns and motivational meetings in the village. Practical demonstrations were also organized on preparation and application of bio-pesticides. The farmers gradually responded positively and formed into two Sasyamitra (farmer) groups with 30 men farmers and 20 women farmers. They decided together to use only bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides for growing vegetables.

Consequently the village has now 15 Vermi Compost units, 60 Farm Compost units and they all use bio-pest control methods such as Neem oil spray, decoctions of neem, chilly and garlic, pheromone traps, bird perches, border and trap crops etc. Some of them have also applied Jeevamritham – a liquid bio-fertilizer to their vegetable crops. So, the cost of cultivation has come down and they are able to recycle the farm waste. There is good cooperation, knowledge sharing, and exchange of experiences. They feel happy and proud they spread health among themselves and among the consumers.

Now, the whole village is using only bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides to grow their vegetables and greens! They have started selling their organic produce at Kalyandurg with self certification and have a reasonably good market for that. Now Kurakula Thota, a tiny hamlet village has become a model for organic farming of vegetables..

AF is also helping the farmers to get organic certification, so that they can realize better value for their produce.