

**Social Enterprise Model in Organic Farming and Marketing in India –  
A Case Study**

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**Objectives**

**Location and purpose**

**Key areas of work -**

- **Agriculture Production**
- **Supporting Self Help Groups in setting up their own organic farming unit**
- **Marketing**
- **Consumer Awareness**

**Two Case Studies –**

Ms. Rachna Singh, President, Federation of Self Help Groups, Block Chakarnagar, District Etawah

Mr. Jagbhan Kushwaha, President, Deva Mata Satat Jaivik Krishak Samooh, Village Targuvan, Block Talbehat, District Lalitpur

## 1. State of Agriculture in India – a brief background

Indian subcontinent has been a land of agriculture since time immemorial. The rich and diverse soil profile of India has been providing a wide range of grains, fruits and spices to the entire world with annals of history speaking about the food related trades that India was doing with different countries and kingdoms. Dark soil of deccan, red soil of coasts, loamy soil of river-beds and humous soil of hills and diverse geo climatic zones made this country a centre for agriculture. With opportunities in agriculture in abundance, our predecessors explored and developed wide range of crops and food related knowledge too. Agriculture production along with other trades made India the '*Soney ki Chidia*' or the Golden Bird.

However, history also informs us, how our agriculture and food distribution collapsed under the British Raj and the country saw repeat incidences of famine and hunger between 18<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. An article in Wikipedia reports that - 'The late 18th and 19th century saw an increase in the incidence of severe famine.<sup>[fn 3]</sup> Millions died from 1850 to 1899 in 24 major famines; more than in any other 50-year period.<sup>[29]</sup> These famines in British India were bad enough to have a remarkable impact on the long term population growth of the country, especially in the half-century between 1871–1921.<sup>[30]</sup> '

By the time British left India, the agriculture and food distribution system was in complete shambles and food crisis was staring right in the face of the country. We had millions to feed but not enough was growing. 'Partition of the country in 1947 left India with 82% of the total population of undivided India but only 75% of the cereal production. The surplus province of Punjab was partitioned and West Punjab, which had a well-established network of irrigation canals, went to Pakistan, Sind province, which too was a surplus province also went to Pakistan. These two provinces together used to supply about one million tons of foodgrains to other provinces in undivided India. At the time of independence, thus, the new nation India started its tryst with destiny with lots of handicaps as far as food security was concerned'<sup>1</sup>.

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India promptly dealt with the situation by setting up a Food Commission, doing heavy imports of food grains and rationing of food distribution so that all could be equally fed.

Year after year, a lot of efforts were made to strengthen India's food sovereignty, the country, was still importing food and seeking food grain support through UN programmes. This is when Sir Norman Borlaug in the year 1970 helped India launch the famous Green Revolution which, over a period, catapulted the scenario of agriculture in India. High yielding food crop varieties, external inputs to enhance production like urea and synthetic fertilisers were extensively promoted by agriculture extension services of the government. And with the passage of time, entire landscape of agriculture in India changed to a considerable extent. Past four decades have seen a spurt in various external applications available in the market that claim to boost the production – pesticides, growth-promoters agents, quality enhancing synthetic chemical

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/x0172e/x0172e03.htm>

based products etc have stormed the market. Local seed varieties have been largely replaced by high yielding hybrid seeds that produce more and increase shelf life of the agri product. In nutshell, agriculture in India has been industrialised.

Presently India is growing basic food crops like rice, wheat, pulses, sugarcane etc. in sufficient quantities, but, what this industrialisation of agriculture has taken away is - fertility of soil, traditional know how of agriculture, that was largely dependent upon seasons, soil quality, organic or natural fertilisers, traditional varieties of seeds that were since centuries being grown in this soil and seed sovereignty.

Modern technology in agriculture, hybrid varieties, synthetic fertilisers etc. that was seen as a boon for Indian agriculture and food production has made farming very expensive and largely dependent upon external market-based inputs. With increasing family size, decreasing land holding, increasing urbanization, changing climate – agriculture for many farmers is now a burden on their economy and a big reason for exodus from villages to urban centres in search of assured income. ‘According to the Census 2011, every day 2,000 farmers give up farming. Income from farming has already lost the prime spot in a household’s total earnings. In 1970, three-fourths of a rural household’s income came from farm sources. After 45 years, in 2015, it is less than one-third. Most of the households now earn more out of non-farm sources. The irony, though, is that a majority of Indian youth still live in rural areas where agriculture is the dominant and default source of livelihood by inheritance.’, reports a publication by [Down To Earth](#)

## 2. **Re-emergence of traditional agriculture and livelihoods –**

In a country that is struggling to double its farmers’ income by 2023, raise employment among largely unskilled and unqualified rural youth, it is imperative for the government to motivate rural youth to engage in on farm and off farm livelihood opportunities in their villages. The growth model adopted by our nation four decades back relied heavily on technology, however what is now getting analysed is that technology does bring growth but fails to result into generating much employment.

Besides the growth that India is doing in the technology and IT arena that largely requires youth who are professionally qualified and can handle such work portfolios, India also needs to look at the future of about 70% youth that does not meet the eligibility criteria of such white and blue collared jobs. These are youth that are living in or around rural areas, connected with agriculture (being many a times a fixed source of income for their families) Therefore, government must invest in promoting agriculture, beginning from resurrecting pride on Agriculture, to making agriculture sustainable and priceworthy.

India has all the potential to become largest food supplier of the world with a number of soil types, climatic zones, agro-diversity and cultivable land size, however, what is missing is a lack of vision for doing so. The whole world is turning towards sustainable development and that goes true for agriculture as well. There is a growing urgency of turning our agriculture more

sustainable, less cash intensive and more dependable on immediate resources with farmers. Buying seeds from private companies, fertilisers, pesticides, growth promoters, various chemicals for enhancing the look and shelf life of fruits is leading farmers to bankruptcy. Too much investment on farming which is incrementally growing, as it is being realised by farming community that use of synthetic fertilisers over these years has reduced the natural fertility of soil; and uncertainties of climatic conditions is causing heavy losses to farmers. Besides this, the government is doing nothing much to increase the prices of crops, barring few crops covered under Minimum Support Price System. As per the central government, MSP is decided taking into consideration the various expenditure incurred by farmers in growing a crop plus any expenses on loan or interest against land etc. However, purchasing at MSP is largely in Mandis by the government's system of procurement of grains listed for MSP criteria. And as per the data of NSSO, roughly 10% grains are sold at MSP in Mandis. The slackness of government machinery of procurement results in sale of grains at whatever prices prevalent in the wholesale market because farmer has hardly enough space to store the produce, and there is always a risk of prices plummeting when the season is over.

Modern farming is also promoting monocropping culture wherein single crop is grown by large number of farmers, and if the production is good in the season, prices drop. Monocropping and repetition of same crop by farmers in every season also causes soil fertility to deplete. Use of synthetic fertilisers, high water intake crops is resulting in depletion of water table, deterioration of bio diversity of soil which is proving detrimental to soil and water health.

It is high time, the government, its departments associated with development of agriculture, farming community and academicians from agriculture universities and Rural Livelihood Mission must come together and mull over the critical situation. Agriculture, in India, needs far sightedness, a vision that makes it sustainable, climate resilient, diverse and profitable for farmers. We must not forget that it was not the poor agriculture technique that pushed us into the hands of hunger and scarcity of food, it was rather the deliberate attempt by our colonisers to create hunger and famine like situation in India for obvious reasons. India was always rich in agriculture know how, production, crop and bio-diversity and was able to feed its own people besides exporting its food items to the rest of the world. Moving back to sustainable agriculture that is traditional, least dependent on external inputs and easy to practice by farming community is the need of the hour.

Realising the crisis, Government of India in 2004 established a [National Centre of Organic Farming \(NCOF\)](#) to implement National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF). The programme started with 7 regional centres established across different states of India. Later, the project merged into the Central Sector Scheme "National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)" under program component Soil Health Management. Currently National Centre of Organic Farming, Ghaziabad and its 9 Regional Centres located at Bengaluru, Bhubaneshwar, Gandhinagar, Ghaziabad, Imphal, Jabalpur, Nagpur, Panchkula and Patna have been functioning under NMSA. The key objective of NCOF is - to promote organic farming in the country through technical capacity building of all stakeholders including human resource development, technology dissemination & strain supply. The very important function of NCOF is to implement the low-cost organic certification programme called – Participatory Guarantee

System or [PGS India](#). The programme is targeted to cover small scale farmers who are practicing organic farming and bring them under organic certification so that they can sell their farm produce labelled as 'Certified Organic under PGS India'.

Startup India Economic Survey (2014-15) estimated that 300 million youth will enter the labour force by 2025, and there is a need to accommodate the growing proportion of economically active population. India needs to create at least 10 million jobs every year for the next 10 years to gainfully employ India youth and meet their aspirations<sup>2</sup>. Since there is also a realisation of the fact that youth in India is not educated and trained enough to meet the requirements of setting up manufacturing enterprise, it is extremely important to explore livelihood opportunities in rural areas itself. This is also to prevent distress or forced migration of rural youth to urban centres in search of job and boost local economy by infusing money into local markets.

[Scheme of Fund for Rejuvenation of Traditional Industries](#) (SFURTI) is an initiative launched by [Ministry of MSME](#) in the year 2005 to promote Cluster development. [Khadi and Village Industries Commission \(KVIC\)](#) is the nodal Agency for promotion of Cluster development for Khadi. Not much was achieved in the initial years of its launch, however past few years have seen a lot of action being done in activation of this scheme. The scheme focusses on promoting bamboo products, leather, handicraft, wood based products besides promoting food processing work using small scale production of traditional food.

With the outbreak of Corona Pandemic in the year 2020 which put a screeching halt to the economy of India as there was a global breakdown of economy and business, Modi government at the centre announced a campaign called '[Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan](#)', a Rs. 20 lakh crore economic package to support small industries that generate employment at local level. The voice for 'Vocal for Local' has also gained a high pitch and the whole effort is to promote small scale work across small towns and rural hinterland of India so as to generate employment and push money into market.

Sustainable, local, traditional is now picking up the trend in India and this is much needed variation along side the big growth formula of technology driven development, as the former is going to fulfil the job needs of millions of youth of this country who are still very close to their native rural landscape and in fact this is the only way to retain people in their own homeland otherwise the urban centres of India will burst beyond their seams if rural to urban migration continues in this pace.

### 3. **Why Organic farming is seen as a wise response to changing climate and tackling its impacts in agriculture production**

Indian Council of Agriculture Research, ICAR published a [Base paper on Organic Farming](#) in the year 2015 which opened with the following information about Organic Farming - 'Organic farming aims for human welfare without harming the environment and follows the principles

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[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332632643\\_Empower\\_MSMEs\\_for\\_Providing\\_Sustainable\\_Livelihood\\_with\\_Increased\\_Export\\_Competitiveness\\_in\\_India](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332632643_Empower_MSMEs_for_Providing_Sustainable_Livelihood_with_Increased_Export_Competitiveness_in_India)

of health, ecology, fairness and care for all including soil. The modern concept of organic farming combines the tradition, innovation and science. Although, history states that the movement for organic way of life recognized in 1905, it could gain ground after realizing the ill effects of modern agriculture in the late 1990's. In 1905, the British botanist Sir Albert Howard, often referred to as the father of modern organic agriculture, documented traditional Indian farming practices, and came to regard them as superior to conventional agriculture science. During 1940, In Japan, Masanobu Fukuoka, a microbiologist working in soil science and plant pathology, quit job as a research scientist, returned to his family's farm, and devoted the next 30 years to develop a radical no-till organic method for growing grain, now known as "Fukuoka farming". Many other practices such as Rishi krishi, Natueco farming, homa farming, panchagavya krishi and bio dynamic farming are associated with organic agriculture.'

Organic farming is not just a method of growing food, it is the whole approach that is adopted by an organic farmer that makes this farming most suitable as far as sustainable agriculture is being seen now.

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Moments ([IFOAM - Organics International](#)) is the worldwide umbrella organization for the organic agriculture movement, which represents close to 800 affiliates in 117 countries. IFOAM in 2008, defined organic farming as – "Organic Agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems, and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic Agriculture combines tradition, innovation, and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and good quality of life for all involved."<sup>3</sup>

It has identified 4 basic principles of Organic Agriculture – "The Principles of Health, Ecology, Fairness, and care are the roots from which organic agriculture grows and develops. They express the contribution that organic agriculture can make to the world, and a vision to improve all agriculture in a global context."<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, Organic farming is not new to India where organic inputs like cow dung, neem manure, extracts from different plants to do away insects, crop cycle rotation, mixed cropping and heirloom seeds were always a part of the farming practices. Farmers had the skill to predict weather and pest attack events and traditional methods of seed selection and seed promotion were widely practiced. Farming was sustainable as there was a cyclical farm based ecology. Cattle rearing was a compulsory feature in all households and farmyard manure was largely homebased. While farms produced food for all and fodder for cattle, cattle in turn gave milk, farm labour and manure to the farms. Agriculture was largely for consumption first and then surplus was sold in the local market. All these features made agriculture sustainable and that is the need of the hour.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ifoam.bio/why-organic/organic-landmarks/definition-organic>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ifoam.bio/why-organic/shaping-agriculture/four-principles-organic>

When the whole world is working towards achieving [Sustainable Development Goal](#) SDG – 12 of Responsible Consumption and Production, the onus is on India to lead the way and establish to the world that our traditional (now known as organic) farming methods can actually help the world community realise this goal. We must consciously promote such ecologically beneficial practices in our farming that grow healthy food, promote bio diversity, make soil rich, water table rise and give profits in the hand of farmers.

#### **4. Role of Social Enterprises in promoting sustainable agriculture and grass root based livelihood models.**

Organic/ traditional/ sustainable agriculture as the name suggests is extremely rooted to the ground. It follows the principles of nature and shares its benefits with all – soil, air, water and people and animals dependent on it. Therefore, this type of agriculture will put environment and people before profit. And, quite understandable, it does not follow a typical profit oriented business model that is directed by rising growth charts in terms of profits and scale of operations.

##### **What is a Social Enterprise?**

'A social enterprise or social business is defined as a business that has specific social objectives that serve its primary purpose. Social enterprises seek to maximize profits while maximizing benefits to society and the environment. Their profits are principally used to fund social programs.

The concept of a social enterprise was developed in the UK in the late 1970s to counter the traditional commercial enterprise. Social enterprises exist at the intersection of the private and volunteer sectors. They seek to balance activities that provide financial benefits with social goals, such as providing housing to low-income families or job training. Funding is obtained primarily by selling goods and services to consumers, although some funding is obtained through grants. Because profit-maximization is not the primary goal, a social enterprise operates differently than a standard company.

While earning profits is not the primary motivation behind a social enterprise, revenue still plays an essential role in the sustainability of the venture. Sustainable revenue differentiates a social enterprise from a traditional charity that relies on outside funding to fulfill its social mission. This goal does not mean social enterprises cannot be profitable; it's simply that their priority is to reinvest profits into their social mission, rather than fund payouts to shareholders.<sup>5</sup>

In order to promote sustainable agriculture models guided by principles of organic farming, it is extremely important that some niche market be developed where the buyer is equally sensitive towards the kind of food s/he is buying and wishes to connect with the farmers who are growing it. The consumers respect the hard work that goes behind honest farming and therefore are ready to pay the farmers better value for the produce. In the absence of any exclusive marketplace promoted by the government for organic/ natural produce, the onus

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-enterprise.asp>

lies on such business entrepreneurs who can set up this producer buyer platform and create a win-win situation for both. This is where the role of social enterprises comes in.

Social enterprises run by entrepreneurs who put the objective of social change and social impact in the centre and then build a business model is the need of the hour. In such business models, the profits are shared by all stakeholders/ shareholders who comprise of the work ecosystem. Nature of profit in a social enterprise is not only measured in terms of money earned, it is also measured in terms of the change that is brought in by running such a business. For example - in organic farming or sustainable food production, it can be measured in terms of improved incomes of farming community, increase in job opportunities in local area, change in mind set and approach of farmers towards agriculture, increase in soil fertility, richness in bio-diversity, increase in quality of food grown, reduction of risk in farming, positivity in outlook of farming community towards agriculture, safe food for consumers, direct connect of consumers with the food that they eat, sense of belongingness to food and its grower, gratitude and respect for farming.

#### **5. Setting up of an Agro-based social enterprise by Satat Sampada –**

Satat Sampada, (which means Nature Forever) was founded by Jyoti Awasthi and Harjeet Singh in the year 2016 with the purpose of addressing some of the key problems that have plagued the present food system. While India is still largely an agrarian economy with billions of mouths to feed, agriculture is dying because of various factors like – shrinking landholdings, high production costs, low soil fertility, poor market price and on top of these, unpredictable impacts of climate change. All these factors are forcing marginal and smallholder farmers to migrate in search of a living in urban centres. Cities, with their limited infrastructure and poor planning fail to give these migrants a decent living and housing.

Thus two key problems – challenges being faced by farmers and distress migration by rural youth to escape poverty, were the trigger-points that pushed the duo to establish this social venture that could address both the problems in some way, at the same time producing safe food for consumers.

#### **Satat Sampada works on the following objectives –**

1. To promote agro-ecological practices that sustainably enhance productivity, protect environment and make agriculture climate resilient.
2. To assist farmers, particularly women and small-holders, in acquiring new knowledge, skills and resources for making agriculture economically viable and ecologically sustainable.
3. To produce and market organic and environment friendly products that promote a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.
4. To offer expert advise on sustainable development, agriculture and environment friendly solutions.



**Etawah** is located alongside two major rivers – Yamuna and Chambal and few small rivers criss-cross the district in several places. Although there are rivers in vicinity, the district does not have many waterbodies in villages. The district gets 90% rains in monsoon season while the remaining year generally remains dry.



[Photo of Ravines in Etawah](#)<sup>6</sup> - Ravines of Etawah are usually turned into plain area by the land owner farmers for agriculture purpose

An organic farm developed by Satat Sampada<sup>7</sup>

The southern part of the district where we work is largely occupied by ravines with uneven and undulating sandy loamy to clayey surface. Ground water condition is also poor and with limited rains during the year, large part of agriculture is heavily dependent on ground water. Agriculture in Etawah is generally a very run of the mill kinds where farmers just grow two crops every year and repeat the same crops in every season. Common crops grown are – Pearl Millet (Bajra), Sorghum (Jowar), Wheat, Mustard. Some farmers grow pigeon-pea, but that is on a very small scale. Due to limitation of water and hardly any efforts visible to recharge ground water, there are hardly any practices of Horticulture.

Due to shrinking land holdings, lack of interest by farmers in doing diverse cropping, horticulture, and maximising output from the land by doing unconventional farming, youth is not interested in taking up farming. Delhi, NOIDA and Gwalior in the vicinity, they prefer moving to these urban centres and join some sundry work rather than toiling in the field.

**Lalitpur** district is located in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. Lalitpur district is generally a rocky area which has a highest ground in the extreme south with scraps of the vindhyan plateau. The district is drained by river Jamni and western part has river Betwa and its tributaries. The hilly and undulating terrain helps create seasonal drains. Soil in this district is typical of Bundelkhand region which is red and black, formed of different types of rocks characteristic to this region. Most part of the district is therefore left for afforestation purpose as not much can be grown in the soil which has gravels and lacks organic matter.

## IMAGES

Lalitpur, as other parts of Bundelkhand region, had a very well designed rain-water harvesting system developed by the Kings who ruled the region. However, with passing of years and due to lack of any maintenance, the system got obliterated. Decades of negligence of the local and state governments have made this once water rich region, water stressed. Poor development in agriculture, optimal use of soil, lack of water for irrigation and lack of awareness about animal husbandry and other means of earning livelihood has made this district a huge source of distress migration.

Both the districts represent the story of many such locations in India, where agriculture has failed due to natural and man-made reasons including lack of sincerity towards agriculture, enterprise and risk-taking initiatives by youth and encouragement from the government.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b2/Ravines\\_in\\_Etawah.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b2/Ravines_in_Etawah.jpg)

<sup>7</sup> Picture from the records of Satat Sampada

This is the reason why Satat Sampada chose to work in these locations. We wanted to pose a challenge in front of us and see if we could establish some model that could sustain and also motivate other farmers to learn and join the change process.

In both the locations, Satat Sampada promotes growing of local crops with organic inputs only. So while in Etawah, we grow all regular crops like Pearl Millet (Bajra), Corn (Makka), Mustard, Wheat, Sorghum (Jowar), Barley (Jau), we have also laid emphasis on growing pulses and legumes that can be grown successfully without much ado in this soil and climate. In Lalitpur, since we began our work with vegetable grower communities, we have focused on growing all possible vegetable crops whatever can be produced successfully in the Bundelkhand climate. Besides this we have promoted pulse and legume cultivation too, as it is very essential to the soil health and fertility.

#### **Key Areas of Our Work –**

- **Agriculture Production**
- **Marketing**
- **Consumer Awareness**
- **Supporting Self Help Groups in setting up their own organic farming unit**

#### **Agriculture Production -**

- Organic Farming -
  1. Trying new agriculture practices and combinations in organic farming and diverse cropping.
  2. Growing grains, oilseeds, cereal crops, fruits etc.



Organic Mustard Plantation



Organic Banana Plantation

- **Promote ORGANIC Farming and Organic Certification -**
  3. Reach out to farmers to promote organic farming practices in our work area.

4. Farmer mobilization, group formation and registering them under Government of India's Organic Certification Programme.
5. Regular monitoring, handholding and quality check



Awareness Sessions on Organic Farming with Farmer groups in Lalitpur and Etawah, Uttar Pradesh

### **Training and certification programme for farmers on Organic Farming –**

Since the enterprise believes that organic farming does not require any external input and it should be based on all organic inputs available readily with farmers, our emphasis is on training farmers on preparing natural inputs using available cow dung of Indian local breed of cow, cow urine, local herbs, flowers, jaggery, clarified butter (Ghee) etc. and prepare a number of inputs that provide additional nutrition to the fields for growth of healthy crops.

Thereafter, we organize farmers in small groups of 5 to 10 and register them under Participatory Guarantee System ([PGS India](#)), Govt. of India's organic certification programme. PGS India is a three year long certification programme for organic farming wherein farmers are registered as a group and their farming practices are closely monitored by the facilitating agency for three years. Farmers are allowed to sell their organically grown produce, once they register under PGS India programme, however, they have to label it as 'Under Conversion' produce. After 3 years of rigorous monitoring and hand holding, the farmers and their group are given the Organic Certificate. This allows them to brand their produce as Organic. This type of certification has barely any cost and is eligible to be sold in domestic market.

So far we have formed 5 such groups and several more are in the process of getting registered. They are namely –

1. Gopalpura Satat Jaivik Krishak Samooh
2. Rajpur Satat Jaivik Krishak Samooh
3. Chambal Ghati Satat Jaivik Krishak Samooh
4. Nagaji Satat Jaivik Krishak Samooh
5. Devamata Satat Jaivik Krishak Samooh

These groups are in different stages of organic certification but as per the government's norms, their produce can be sold since they are not using any synthetic fertilizers and any other chemical any more.



Members of PGS Groups in a training programme by Satat Sampada

### **Case Study of Deva Matat Satat Jaivik Krishak Samooh (Organic Farmers' Group)**

Bundelkhand is an arduous and drought prone area of Uttar Pradesh. On one hand scarcity of water is making farming practices more difficult, on the other hand, conventional farming practices are costlier, more dependent on external inputs that must be purchased from market and also require more water. This is the main reason why this region has big problem of distress migration to urban centres. Farmers especially small and medium farmers do not wish to continue agriculture and therefore promotion of organic farming becomes all the more relevant in such circumstances.

When most of the youth are quitting farming and even parents are no more interested in pushing their children to pursue agriculture, 26 year old Jagbhan Kushwaha of village Targuwan district Talbehat, decided to learn the occupation of his father, i.e. farming.

Jagbhan participated very enthusiastically in the awareness meetings and training session organized by Satat Sampada team in his village. Learning about the advantages of organic farming, Jagbhan convinced his family members and neighbours to learn this farming and thus he successfully formed a farmers' group. Satat Sampada team helped them to form an organic farmers' group for organic certification - PGS group along with their brothers and relatives which is now registered as **Deva Mata**

#### **Satat Jaivik Krishak Samooh.**

Jagbhan and his group members have been regular supplier of about 25 to 30 types of seasonal vegetables to Satat Sampada. They also grow various lentils, pulses, Peanut, Sesame seeds, spices etc in planning with Satat Sampada and earn a very handsome amount from their farm produce.

Jagbhan also informs us that ever since they switched to organic farming, water requirement for farming has gone down by 25%. Their farms have become more productive and soil health is in excellent condition.

Jagbhan is now working as field coordinator with Satat Sampada and is responsible for sending their fresh organic veggies to Delhi on daily basis.

*“My group is earning around 2 Lakh Rupees per month collectively from sending vegetables to Delhi. We are also helping other farmers in registration process through Satat Sampada. It is a matter of pride for my group to send vegetables outside our city” says an exuberant Jagbhan*

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### **Training to Women Self Help Groups**

Satat Sampada is also providing hand holding support to Self Help Groups functional in the Block (administrative unit) and training them on growing organic vegetables. There is a block level federation of .....Self Help Groups namely – Sheetala Matat Svayam Sahayata Samooh, with whom our team is collaborating closely. The purpose is to help them start their organic vegetable production so that they can utilise the government’s loan assistance which is given to such Self Help Groups for generating livelihood and earning more.



Women of SHG Federation participating in a training programme on nutrition garden, training organized by Satat Sampada with support from an NGO initiative on Organic Farming – BhoomiKa



Green House set up by Sheetla Matat Self Help Group with technical assistance from Satat Sampada



Women from SHG Federation participating in a Block level programme with their food products

**Case Study of Rachna Singh**



**(Rachna Singh representing her federation at a Block Office**

**Programme)**

Ms. Rachna Singh, age about 35 years, wife of Prem Singh and mother of two children is a very active woman who has been running the Self Help Groups (SHG) in her Block Chakarnagar for the past several years. Rachna is the president of the Self Help Group Federation at Block level and the fulcrum of the group too. Because of her and few other active members of these women Self Help Groups, their federation has received Rs. 22 Lakh as loan amount from the government. The purpose of this loan is to help women members of these SHGs in setting up some micro – enterprise of their own so that they can earn livelihood and enhance their overall family income. Since the groups have been actively doing interloaning and also taking up some petty work by using the money available with the groups, the groups are active and therefore now have the responsibility of spending the allocated money such that the principal amount is deposited back in the Self Help Group's account.

For past few months, Rachna along with other group members were struggling to decide on one such trade that all the women could easily take up and it could also generate good revenue for them. The federation held several rounds of discussion with the field team of Satat Sampada in their village.

Later it was decided that the federation will set up their organic vegetable farm in village Gopalpura. With technical support from Satat Sampada, the group set up their green house, a small nursery to grow seeds and later also took about half an acre farmland on lease to set up the organic vegetable garden. 12 types of vegetable seeds were sown in the nursery and simultaneously the land was getting developed as per the norms of organic farming. Unfortunately, COVID 19 pandemic struck the district from the month of March onwards and almost all the women suffered from the disease. While some got infected themselves, while in several others' homes, there were serious illness and even death. Rachna herself was not able to recover from the ailment for more than a month. This sudden calamity proved destructive to the organic vegetable nursery. There was no one to take care of the plants and during this period of struggle, the nursery completely failed.



No matter what, Rachna's spirits are not dampened. Now that the villages have recovered from the pandemic, she has once again brought the women into action. The nursery is being spruced up and the women are ready to rebuild the farm activity once again.

Satat Sampada is supporting them in this initiative. Along with growing vegetables, women have also decided to start their nursery preparation work. From this Monsoon season, they will also start selling nursery of plants at the Block level.

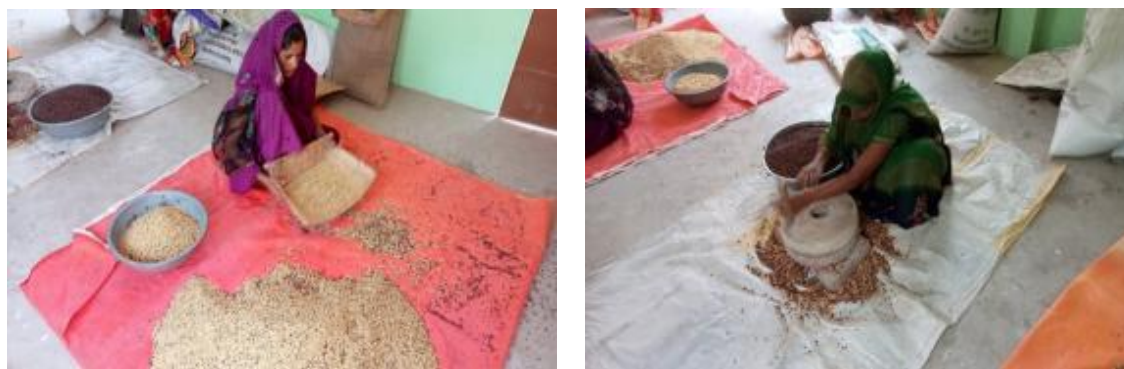
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- Food processing through traditional methods
  6. Hand processing of pulses, cereals following traditional zero energy methods
  7. Reviving traditional foods by rediscovering recipes and helping the women to prepare them.

#### **Setting up Processing Unit in Etawah –**

Satat Sampada has set up a small Processing Unit in Etawah wherein they process pulses. (Processing of pulses means splitting certain pulses like Green Gram, Black Gram, Pigeon Pea, Red Gram and convert these into different variants. Such pulses are consumed as part of main meal in India. Besides this the unit also produces various flours like – Wheat, Maize, Sorghum, Barley, Gram, Pearl Millet etc. In order to revive traditional foods, the enterprise also makes various natural mixes for health drinks from these grains. These are all traditional recipes consumed in India since ages.

The uniqueness of this unit is that except production of wheat flour which is made in large quantities, rest everything is done by women on traditional manual devices like winnower, stone grinders, mortar etc. These devices do not require any electricity, therefore they are real examples of green production that provides livelihood to women in the village.



Daal Making by traditional method where women are engaged. Such products are more nutritious and great on taste and women earn their livelihood



Women at work in Satat Sampada's Processing Unit – Humans replace machines with our intervention

### Marketing –

#### **Developing Market for organic produce –**

When Satat Sampada started its work in the year 2016, the domestic market was just getting set up. These were still temporary marketplaces set up in high end malls, specialty stores with select brands promoting organic food among affluent class of the society. Due to no or very limited access to consumers, lot of small and big enterprises ventured in this arena, experimented, lost their investment and left midway. There was and still is complete absence of any specialized market places where small farmers can directly sell their organic produce. In such a scenario, the enterprise set up its own consumer outreach in Ghaziabad, a city in the National Capital Region, in the year 2017.

Satat Sampada has touched the following milestones in the journey of market development of organic products.

### 1. Awareness Camps and free distribution of organic food samples -

Organic products were introduced among urban consumers by holding awareness programmes in residential societies, schools, institutions, hobby groups etc. along with free distribution of vegetable samples to consumers.



Free Distribution of Organic Food Samples among urban consumers in Fairs and Events

### 2. Retail Outlets for easy outreach to consumers

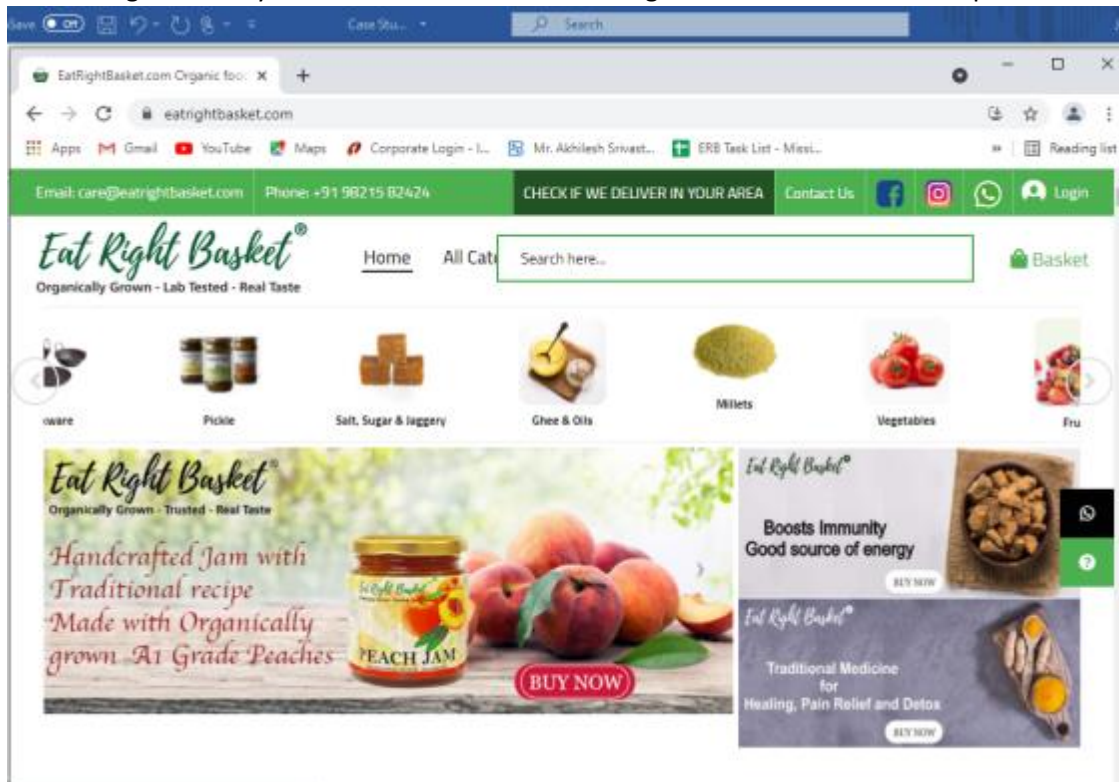
Satat Sampada opened up three retail outlets in Indirapuram, a bustling residential mini-city in Ghaziabad, a district bordering Delhi. The retail outlets were in the name of Satat Organics. Since the founders of Satat Sampada were a resident of this locality too, it was thought that the enterprise should test the waters from this location. From the year 2017 till June 2018, the enterprise ran three outlets and was able to set up a name in the sphere of organic food.



### 3. E-Commerce Platform – Eat Right Basket

Experience gained through consumer interaction, it was realised that since the consumers of organic food are scattered all over the places, it is difficult to reach out to them through the model of retail outlets. Hence in July 2018, the enterprise moved onto a home delivery-based model through an e-commerce platform – Eat Right Basket. ([www.EatRightBasket.com](http://www.EatRightBasket.com))

This platform largely sells the in house products of Satat Sampada, however it also showcases some exclusive products of young entrepreneurs who in their own capacity are working with farmer groups and producing niche vegetables, cash crops etc and also women's groups that are making some very traditional food items that bring taste and nutrition to the plate.



Screenshot of the Website – Eat Right Basket

#### **6. Scaling up the enterprise – growth trajectory of the enterprise and also the future of organic market in India.**

Market analyses says that the Indian organic food market attained a value of USD 849.5 million in 2020, driven by the rising health consciousness. Aided by the supportive schemes by the government, the industry is expected to witness a further growth in the forecast period of 2021-2026, growing at a [CAGR of 20.5%](#). The industry is projected to reach USD 2601 million by 2026.

Although the data track looks upbeat and this growth may reach upto 24% by the year 2026, farmers are yet to realise the potential of organic agriculture and its salability. While farming segment in southern parts of India like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra etc. are seeing a large number farmers taking up organic farming practices and more and more entrepreneurs are experimenting with a range of products that are traditional foods of different parts of India, A lot is yet

to be achieved in the northern part of the country. Water rich Indo gangetic plains are still depending upon conventional farming, belching out sugarcane, wheat and rice, there is a huge potential that is yet to be realized.

Government of India's PGS Organic certification programme can actually do wonders by promoting zero cost organic certification among small and medium farmers, however there has to be good coordination between organic enterprises, certification bodies and farmers. The agriculture extension work of the agriculture department like Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) needs to work in close coordination with Organic Boards and departments. The PGS India unit has opened up an e-market place for uploading details of certified organic farmers so that they can sell their produce to pan India buyers, orientation of farmers towards tactfully handling these negotiations etc. with traders needs to be undertaken by the government departments.

As far as trajectory for Satat Sampada is seen, this enterprise is a low growth venture. A lot depends upon trust of consumers on the whole supply chain. Therefore the path should be treaded with slow yet firm steps so that we can build an organic network of farmers and consumers and achieve the objectives of Satat Smpada.

### **Opportunities and Challenges of working with Farmer Groups and Self Help Groups**

As a social enterprise on organic farming and rural livelihoods there is a huge opportunity of working with farmers and Self Help Group members, as the landscape is wide open and agriculture in itself is so diverse that there is a lot to work and explore. Farmers are worried about declining fertility of land, cost intensive modern farming and poor value of their crops in the wholesale markets. Organic farming, on the face of it, certainly brings a lot of traction to farmers as it is least dependent on external inputs, low on cost and adds fertility to soil in the long run.

Similarly, Government of India has been pushing a lot of money as loan for production into the bank accounts of Self Help Groups. The thrust is more post first phase of COVID 19 pandemic, as COVID-19 proved that if villages are self-sustained, such pandemics and loss of livelihood in urban areas will not put negative impact on rural India. The whole stress is now on strengthening local enterprises, local economy and sustainable livelihoods. So, in this front too, neither finances are an issue nor is the will.

However still, there are challenges in delivering results with farmers as well as SHGs. Why so? Interestingly, while farmers are deeply concerned about the declining prospects of conventional farming and consider farmland as a failed investment, any shift to adopt organic farming, which is manageable with available resources, is still seen with a lot of doubt. Decades long use of urea, fertilisers and pesticides by farmers have completely taken away their trust on bio fertilisers and traditional agricultural practices. They are competing to grow more yield with every passing year, for which, they do not mind using more synthetic fertilisers year after year. With poor price of agriculture produce, farmers want to grow more so that it adds to some more revenue.

Organic farming requires the following things –

- trust on traditional practices,
- patience – as fertility of land takes some time to show better results
- hard work – farmers need to be very alert and agile with all

- preparedness - Farmers need to be well equipped with all bio-fertilisers, herbal insect repellents etc. These are all made by the farmers on their fields.
- timeliness - S/He must be alert about the timing of their use in fields. Framers have to keep monitoring their crop for any type of insect or disease attack and respond in the most timely manner.
- Since there is no use of weedicides (weed removing chemicals), fields require manual de-weeding, which to many appears very cost intensive as they have to hire labourers for the work.

On top of these, sudden withdrawal of synthetic fertilisers and growth boosters certainly hits the productivity which goes down by 30 to 40% in comparison to conventional (fertiliser based) farming. This is also one very crucial factor because of which large number of farmers show reluctance in switching over to organic farming. There is certainly some amount of risk of losing production and even crop, if they fail to manage pesticides or administer bio-fertilisers in prescribed time. Small holder farmers, who do not have much to fall back upon, find it even harder to adopt organic farming.

For social enterprises like Satat Sampada these challenges make things even difficult as a lot of time needs to be spent with farmers in persuading them to get started with organic farming. However, once they build the trust on this farming and enterprises like ours, gradually the process starts snowballing.

Similarly working with Self Help Groups is also a roller coaster ride due to following reasons:

1. In absence of any role models in neighbouring communities and lack of exposure to small businesses, SHGs find it difficult to articulate their plans in terms of setting up micro-enterprises.
2. Not all women are equally ambitious and enterprising. Many a times, most women would like to simply follow few leaders while some would not even participate in group activities due to various conditions.
3. Since they handle all the house chores and also share work in the agriculture field, it become a drudgery for women to do activities in SHGs.
4. Project ideation, financial planning, managing fund flow and profit and loss analysis – all this is a huge challenge for the SHGs in absence of overall education status, financial literacy and exposure.
5. Market feasibility of products that they make, market linkage, quality control and standardization of products – all these crucial aspects of an enterprise also remains a huge challenge for SHGs.

Having mentioned this, these are exactly the areas where a social enterprise can help the SHGs. Satat Sampada has been working with the federation of women SHGs in Chakarnagar and has helped them in ideation of several small business ideas to begin with.

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