

Differentiating Organic and Natural Farming – A Comment

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The natural farming (NF) is highlighted in recent days with increase in recognition of pioneer workers in natural farming in India with their proven natural farm as well as with retaining the capacity to meet their goal over the decades. Besides that, increase in progress at institutional level such establishment of natural farming university, changing the name of National Center for Organic Farming to National Center for Organic and Natural Farming, Ghaziabad, India also signifies the development of natural farming. This initiate and intensify the discussion about difference between organic farming (OF) and natural farming. On real and board sense both terminologies are umbrella terms encompassing different forms of indigenous agriculture or modern agriculture with ecological bias. In fact, the natural farming was also earlier treated as one type of organic farming and is defined as ‘organic farming with special emphasis on soil health through compost and use of microbial preparation. At present organic farming is composed of biological farming, permaculture, natural ecological farming, alternative agriculture, integrated intensive farming system and biodynamic farming; while natural farming is composed of *Homa* or *Agnihotri* farming, zero budget natural farming, *Panchagavya* farming, vermiculture farming, fertility farming and *rishi krishi* or spiritual farming. Even with these variations in the competents of NF and OF, both are mainly based on the indigenous farming or traditional farming. The evolution of concept of organic farming started in different part of the world with consideration of agrochemical residue free food and safe food followed by natural resource health. This concept was evolved simultaneously in scientific community as well as by the stake holders with lead taken by scientific community. The concept gets wider recognition all over the world which leads to its spread over time and further development of standards and market infrastructure. In case of NF the evolution in India is a public movement with initiation of NF started in world by Mosonobo Fukuoka in his book “One Straw Revolution” followed by its promotion by different workers in Japan and several adjoining Asian countries. The Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) can be considered as immediate precursor of natural farming in India as its concept and component are more or less similar as that of the NF. In India the natural farming popularized by different farmers/ pioneer workers in different status of India; while the NF is still in initiation stage as there is less availability of well accepted information on different aspects as well as lacking in the complete production processing including market infrastructure and policy for certification development. With respect to present status, the organic farming is practices on 10.17 million ha. area which is certified under national programme on organic production (NPOP); while in NF area estimation started from 60,000 to 2 lakh ha with an estimate of 1 million ha area at present. The prospects of O.F. are related with increasing the standards up to the international level as well as increasing the area under certification as recommended by NPOP. The harvesting export potential and increasing domestic market for organic products by making them cost



effective are other area of development in OF as there are well developed standard available for OF. In case of NF, the prospects and scope are very huge in India and world as well as there is less work done for standard development for different component of NF, initiation of NF, training and awareness, infrastructural development, certification and marketing. The OF is explained by three major conditions such as no or very less use of agrochemicals, strict ban on genetically modified crops to affect production system and ban on use of antibiotics to affect the production system. In case of NF, it is chemical free traditional farming method and considered as agroecology based diversified farming system which integrates crops, trees and livestock as functional diversity. The in-situ productions of inputs are essential for NF with active and essential integration of animal components as well as perennials. The principles of organic farming are set and written as principles of health, care, ecology and fairness. In case of NF, diversified cropping system, efficient natural resource recycling, recycling of on-farm generated biomass, use of local plant, animal and microbial sources and ITKs based on them as raw materials and innovative practices developed on farmers field considering present cropping system/ patterns, local climatic condition, altitude, soil quality, severity and variability of insects-pests and diseases, etc. In NF use of bioinputs such as *Beejamrutha* and *Jeevamrutha*, plant protection using different bioinputs, mulching and *Whapasa* condition are treated as objectives; while in case of OF use of organic inputs, non-chemical weed control, biological pest and diseases management and following standard procedure as set by certifying agency is treated as components. In this way both types of farming are sensitive to ecology and natural resources; while are differing several components, objective and practices as well as present status and hence should be treated as separate concept to increase clarity of understanding to scientific community and stakeholders.

Keywords: Components, natural farming, agroecology, diversification.

