

# Organic Farmers and Farms In Madhya Pradesh

## RAJU AND SHALINI TITUS

Rishi Farm, Titus Farm House, Bhopal Road, Hoshangabad – 460 001, Madhya Pradesh. Cell: 9179738049. Ph: 0757 4280084 email: rajuktitus@gmail.com

The Titus farm is situated on the outskirts of Hoshangabad, just a kilometre and half from the city, on the Bhopal highway. Raju, Shalini and family live in a small house, surrounded by the farm. Once a government servant, Raju decided to follow his heart's desire to adopt a natural lifestyle which brought them to this idyllic place. Their experiment of organic farming which they have termed 'Rishi farming' goes much beyond the idea of merely tilling the land with ecological considerations. Rishi farming is a way of life that involves an enduring commitment of the entire family to nature and an increasing dependence on the forces of nature.

The land which was once considered to be barren and useless is now totally transformed in accordance with the hallowed principles of organic farming. There are a variety of trees whose branches are packed with birds of every colour and a rich and varied insect life. Initially the 12 acre farm could barely provide a few kilos of food grains. To their good fortune, around that time the prophet of organic farming, Masanobu Fukuoka, was visiting India. He stayed with Raju's family on his Rishi farm. This meeting proved to be fortuitous, for Fukuoka taught Raju some of the secrets of organic farming.

The weeds on the farm posed a real problem to begin with. Fukuoka advised Raju to use this growth to the advantage of his farm as weeds contain vital organic wastes like plants, grasses, leaves, dead wood, insects, earthworms and various kinds of biological waste. Although dubbed as 'garbage', this is nothing short of tonic for the land. To destroy this is like destroying the life support system of any land. Fukuoka's genius lay in recognising this.

Raju's success lay in following this advice faithfully. Raju did not cut this 'parasite'. Instead they crushed this growth with their feet and spread it across the field. This proved to be good manure for the land. The crop which has derived its nourishment from the 'biological garbage' speaks for itself and underlines the efficacy of this parasite.

Sowing of the seeds on the farm takes place on unconventional lines. Unlike the majority of farmers, Raju does not follow a seasonal ritual of sowing. His sowing for the Kharif seasons begins much earlier when he covers his seeds with mud. These mud balls are then spread on the field, covered by dry grass and sticks. Great care is taken while these seeds are covered to ensure that some amount of sunlight and air reaches them. As the rainy season breaks, these seeds germinate and sprout on the bed of biomass, so carefully arranged before. Sometimes, the seeds are just thrown as the first rain descends. More or less, the same technique precedes the Rabi crop but extra care is taken to ensure the adequacy of irrigation. If, for some reason, the sowing is delayed, then sowing of corn seeds as well as cereal seeds is done simultaneously by hand. The strength of this kind of farming lies in the biomass accumulated in the field over the years. In the initial stages however, this biomass was not enough; but over a period of time the quantity has increased substantially, enriching the land with manure and enhancing crop productivity.

Earthworms found in the soil are the true collaborators in his experiment of organic farming. They breed in the biomass produced on the farm and make the soil porous and soft. This increases the soil's capacity to absorb more water and contributes to its productivity. The usefulness of earthworms is being exploited by some who sell them for a lucrative price in the market. Raju abhors the idea of vermiculture devoid of supportive farming and based on purely profit motive. Similarly he does not subscribe to the idea of high breed variety of earthworms.

Raju and Shalini's success story is a hopeful sign for those for whom farming is a full-time profession.  
(Source: Yogesh Diwan)

## DEEPAK SUCHDE

Bajwada, Post Nemavar, Taluka Kathegaon, District Dewas - 455 339, Madhya Pradesh. Ph.:0214 3281527, Cell: 09329570960, Email: deepaksuchde@gmail.com, Web: www.natuecofarmingscience.com

After establishing the marvel of 10 gunta (1/4th acre) farming in Panvel, Maharashtra, Deepak Suchde moved in 2006 to Madhya Pradesh. Having proved and established many theories and having perfected the technique of making the richest nutrient soils through his various experiments he wished for a small farm of his own. Not being a domicile of Maharashtra and not wanting to circumvent the laws of the land, he had to take a decision to move to Madhya Pradesh to realise his wish. It is indeed a matter of irony that a man who has contributed significantly to natural-ecological farming in the country had to move lock stock and barrel to farm a piece of land for himself.

Suchde has a 6 acre farm which he has purchased under the umbrella of Malpani Trust of Panvel, Maharashtra. On this farm is a 10 gunta plot that provides for a sustainable life.

The basic principle of Natueco (natural and ecosystem based) farming that Deepak Suchde is the proponent of is built on the premise that it is possible to create a micro climate within 10 guntas of land for farming which can meet a family's (of five members) entire requirement to live a comfortable life of self sufficiency. The only external input is the requirement of about 1000 litres of water per day which Suchde says is a basic human right anyway.

The secret behind this technology is that, through the principles of Natueco farming, maximum micro nutrients can

be generated and made available from within the farm itself. There is no need for any external inputs except water.

Through the Ganga Maha Mandal, he is working closely on ways to provide succor to children who would otherwise be lost to malnutrition. A majority of these children belong to tribal belts where biomass is easily accessible and in plenty. Says Suchde, 'It is in this area, I have established the farm and proved that, just 1 gunta of land (1081 sq. ft) is sufficient to provide a family of five members with all its nutritional needs.' In the backdrop of deaths due to malnutrition, Suchde's experiments and technologies holds great hope for the rural poor of this country and the world who can avoid the death of their children by practicing Natueco farming.

According to Natueco farming principles almost any terrain can be farmed - roof tops, barren rock and derelict land. All one needs is, access to plenty of biomass, cow dung, cow urine and a small quantity of jaggery and water. Cowdung, cow urine and a small quantity of jaggery are fermented for three days to get what is known as amrit pani in Natueco farming. Then green and dry crushed biomass is pickled in the amrit pani for a couple of days. The drained mass now teeming and crawling with soil microbes is layered with a little earth and wood ash (from the domestic wood stove) and piled one foot high. In 45 days this turns into puffy, light, nutrient rich compost which is called 'masala mithi' in Natueco.

Generally, the productive root system of plants and trees is only 10 inches deep. The deep and wide, spread of the root system is mainly for anchorage. So technically, a foot deep of 'masala mithi' is very adequate to supply plants with all the nutrients they need. Suchde has proved that after the initial setting-up costs, a Natueco farmer needs no cash to buy anything from outside. All grains, vegetables, fruits, herbs, oilseeds and fuel wood for a family of five can be generated on farm. The surplus can be sold to generate a small cash income.

A typical 10 gunta plot has the following broad design. Tall trees are planted along the edge. A border of vetiver hedge prevents soil run off. One gunta each is assigned for a family homestead, a workshop and store, space for cattle and chicken, fruit trees, paddy and other grains, a nursery, water storage, cotton and fibre plants and fast growing fuel wood trees. Half a gunta each are reserved for spices and oilseeds. In about a year's time this model can stabilize to start providing for a five member family.

ICRISAT, Andhra Pradesh has tested samples of soils nurtured under Natueco farming placing on record that these soil samples are the best tested so far by them, for their rich microbial and farm nutrient value. The same reports have come for a farmer's field in Nasik, Maharashtra who has emulated the Natueco principles. A visitor to Deepak Suchde has succinctly observed that these principles are very relevant for solving the following three problems faced by the world today. 1. Increasing the input energy in farmlands and reducing the output in terms of energy losses. 2. Using this vital science to deal with health problems due to lack of food as a consequence of poverty. 3. Tackle the issue of decreasing organic carbon from the soil resulting in poor food and improving the water holding capacity of the land.

Deepak Suchde attributes all his contributions to the divine power and sincere work done by the late Prof. Shri S.A. Dabholkar and offers all his services as dakshina to his Guruji and to humanity.

He also offers short and long-term courses in Natueco Farming with apprentice facility. For details, contact him directly.

(Source: Communication with OIP, Web-resource)

## **SHYAM BAHADUR NAMRA**

Ankur Farm, Post Jamudi, Anuppur, District Shahdol – 484 224, Madhya Pradesh.

Ankur farm is situated in an Adivasi bahul in Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, nine kms from the road that goes to Udgam Amarkantak from Anuppur railway junction. Its area is approximately five acres. It was established in 1977 by Shyam Bahadur Namra and Anuradha Singh with a view to teaching the adivasis conventional farming.

However, although the income was good in the beginning, later on, as expenses kept going up, profits kept decreasing. There were other problems as well. The efficacy of the pesticides used was diminishing and so more poisonous pesticides had to be used.

Till 1987 chemical fertilizers, pesticides and high yielding modern seeds were used. In the beginning there was good income, the locals were positively influenced, vegetable farming was undertaken on a large scale in around 100 villages and Anuppur became one big vegetable mandi. Chemical fertilizers had to be increased every year. The soil started becoming hard and coarse. The number of earthworms started diminishing and soon were as good as gone. The birds either stopped coming to the area or they started dying.

Then, in the first week of December 1984, the Bhopal gas tragedy happened. Sevin, manufactured by Union Carbide was the major pesticide being used by farmers. Anuradha and Namra decided to stop using pesticides but as a result, their entire crop was destroyed by pests. They then began to search for literature on organic farming and to take a closer look at some experiments on natural farming. They saw that farming could be done in an entirely natural way and decided to try it out on their farm.

In the first year, maize, barbati, brinjal, tomato and okra were sown. Brinjal was quite weak, so were the tomatoes. Then the maize and barbati was attacked by a pest called maho. The attack was so severe, they thought the crop would be ruined. However, one week later, big ants and flies invaded the field and put an end to the maho attack. The Namra family were finally convinced that nature has a way of dealing with problems and they decided once and for all that

they would never again use chemicals or pesticides.

Since then there has been no ploughing. The practice of compost making has been stopped and wastes are spread directly in the fields. Seeds are germinated and sown after making a simple depression in the soil with a shovel. These practices have yielded the following benefits:

1. Earthworm population has increased. All kinds of birds are around all through the day eating insects and pests.
2. Although the yields are not yet equal to those from chemical farming, there is an increase in the yields every second year. The crops look so green and healthy that doubting villagers even accuse the Namras of using chemical pesticides on the sly. The yields are so tasty that demand for them in the market has increased. Fewer plants are affected by disease.
3. Lesser irrigation is needed. The water retaining capacity of the soil has increased. When the crops on other farms are destroyed by lack of or excessive rainfall, the Ankur farm experiences less damage.
4. Cracking and erosion of the soil has stopped. The porosity of the soil keeps increasing every year.

There are some problems which have to be tackled – one of which is that many new grasses have taken root which are difficult to remove and how to stop their growth is uncertain.

The Namras have noticed however that unlike the sweeping influence that the chemical farming methods used on this farm earlier, had on neighbouring farmers, this new way has not caught on. But farmers are beginning to think positively about it. Besides, since there have been no subsidies, etc. for this kind of farming, financial problems have to be faced. Also, there has been no campaign to popularise it. Due to local political conflicts, people are spreading wrong information and so many farmers are confused. However, as expenses for farmers using chemical fertilizers and pesticides are increasing and the number of new diseases and pests are also increasing, the farmers are forced to take a look at nature's way of farming.

(Reported by Lorry Benjamin)

#### **FRIENDS RURAL CENTRE**

Rasulia, Hoshangabad – 461 001, Madhya Pradesh.

The Friends Rural Centre is a 45 acre complex. In 1980, inspired by Fukuoka's book 'The One Straw Revolution,' Partap Aggarwal started an experiment in natural farming here. The Centre publishes the Hindi edition of Fukuoka's book.

#### **G.V. PARANKAR**

PO Rondha, Gram Swarajya Ashram, Village Karajagaon, Betul District – 460 002, Madhya Pradesh.

On his 15 acres farm, Patankar has set up a basic education school. He is a strong supporter of khadi and village industries. He has been an ardent advocate of organic farming all his life. He has never used chemicals on his own land. He is actively involved in the cow protection campaign initiated by Vinoba Bhave and has learned and practised various efficient compost making techniques.

(Source: Communication with CSE, 1993)

#### **S.S. CHITWADGI**

Bharat Forestry Consultancy, 156/A, Indrapuri, Bhopal – 462 021, Madhya Pradesh. Phone: 0755 2586586, Fax: 755 2786912, Email: mangeshi@sancharnet.in/ edss156@yahoo.com

Active promoter of organic farming. Conducts environmental awareness camps supported by Govt. departments.

#### **ARVIND SARDANA**

Eklavya, 33 Saket Nagar, Dewas – 455 001, Madhya Pradesh. Phone: 07272 223496 Email: eklavyad@sancharnet.in  
(Source: Communication with OIP)

#### **CHITTAROOPA PALIT**

Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sangathan, 16 Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Alirajpur, District Jhabua – 457 887, Madhya Pradesh.

Chittaroopa has been working with the Narmada Bachao Andolan for nearly 20 years and is also actively involved in seed collection and networking.

(Source: Lorry Benjamin)

#### **DAVID KADAM**

Director, Swissaid-India

Networking and support to organic farmers and promoter groups. (Source: Lorry Benjamin)

**JANAKLAL THAKUR**

Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha, Dilli Rajahara, Durg District, Madhya Pradesh.  
Popularising organic farming.  
(Source: Lorry Benjamin)

**DR MOHANLAL CHORDIYA**

Post Dileepnagar, Ratlam – 457 001, Madhya Pradesh. Phone: 07412 30081  
(Source: OIP Archives)

**MAHAPRASAD BARKADE**

Post Chada, Tehsil Dindori, District Mandla, Madhya Pradesh.  
(Contact: Rajesh Malviya, Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development, Khamla, Nagpur – 400 025, Maharashtra.)  
Works with organic farming and related issues covering at least 10 villages.  
(Source: Lorry Benjamin)

**NITI and RAKESH DIWAN**

Kasera Mohalla, Hoshangabad – 461 001, Madhya Pradesh.  
Cell: 09826066153 and 09424467604  
Niti Diwan is involved with popularising organic farming and networking while Rakesh writes on organic agriculture and related issues for Dainik Bhaskar.  
(Source: Bharatendu Prakash)

**RAM KUMAR CHAUDARY**

Gram Seva Samiti, Post Raisalpur, District Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh.  
The Gram Seva Samiti along with Suresh Diwan are actively involved in educating farmers on organic farming methods, compost making etc. They conduct regular trainings and farmers' meetings.  
(Source: Lorry Benjamin)

**SHAILAJA KALLE**

Shailaja Kalle is based in Chourai near Jabalpur but has set up an organic farm on one and half acre land along with Usha Rao in Machnoor, Andhra Pradesh. She works between Machnoor and Chourai. Apart from farming herself, she helps other organizations and individuals on issues related to organic farming.  
(Sources: Lorry Benjamin and ARISE)

**S.K. SINGH**

Sambhav, 19, New Vivekanand Colony, Balwant Nagar, Gwalior – 474 002, Madhya Pradesh. Networking.  
(Source: Lorry Benjamin)

**BIORE ASSOCIATION**

Mandleshwar Road  
Tehsil: Kasravad, Dist. Khargone, MP  
Contact: Rajeev Baruah  
Ph: 07285-200014, 09826074664  
(Source: Brochure)

**SHASHI SAIL**

Chhattisgarh Mahila Jagriti Sangathan, A-38 Housing Board Colony, Shankar Nagar, Raipur – 492 007, Madhya Pradesh.  
Popularising organic farming and Chattisgarh campaign against Syngenta.  
(Source: Lorry Benjamin)

**ALL INDIA BIODYNAMIC AND ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION**

51 Swastik Nagar, M.O.G. Lines, Indore 452 009 Madhya Pradesh.  
Contact Person: V.B. Karmarkar, 301, 'VINEET,' 16/3 Old Palasia, Indore 452 018, Madhya Pradesh.  
The primary objective of the AIBOFA is to protect nature and the environment by promoting biodynamic and organic

farming practices, thereby producing organic food for betterment of human health.

Its other objectives include promotion of research in connection with biodynamic and organic farming systems, publishing books and other mass media material, organizing training courses, demonstrations and field trials, providing professional advice to farmers, inspecting and certifying farms and organic and biodynamic products as per national and international standards.

At present the association is working with the government of Madhya Pradesh for promotion of organic agriculture in the state and in organizing trainings for farmers, and field officers of department of agriculture. So far more than 3000 farmers and workers have been trained. The association has published a practical guide on cow based agriculture in Hindi titled 'Goyme Vaste Lakshmi' meaning prosperity is in cow dung. 12000 copies have been sold to farmers and extension officers/workers in the government and NGOs. It costs only Rs.30.

AIBOFA also prepares annually the Biodynamic Agriculture Planting calendar which is very popular among the farmers throughout India.

Shri V.B. Karmarkar after serving the department of agriculture for more than 38 years, retired as Joint Director for Agriculture. The government of Madhya Pradesh created a special post of Deputy Director (Organic Farming) in the year 1994 and posted Shri. V.B. Karmarkar on this first ever official post for promotion of organic farming in the state of Madhya Pradesh. He is actively working for the cause of organic farming. He has expertise in soil and water management, watershed management and command area development. He has written many articles in regional agricultural magazines/weeklies and was founder editor of Ahimsak Kheti published from Indore.

(Source: Communication with OIP, leaflet)

### **BIOFARMING VILLAGES of MADHYA PRADESH**

Data on various composting techniques relevant to the states' 12 agro geographic regions, the field area covered and contact addresses are available for viewing on [www.mp.gov.in/biofarming](http://www.mp.gov.in/biofarming)

(Source: World Wide Web)

### **SARVAMANGALAM NATURAL PRODUCTS PVT. LTD**

Bhatowli Village, Near Kalidham, Gwarighat, P.O. Jabalpur - 482 002, Madhya Pradesh. Ph: 0761-2419320(O), 4917371 (R), Fax: 0761-2665562, Cell: 0930017226, Email: [padmini.shivkumar@gmail.com](mailto:padmini.shivkumar@gmail.com), Web: [www.indiamart.com/sarvamangalamnaturalproducts](http://www.indiamart.com/sarvamangalamnaturalproducts)

Regd Office: Tolichowki, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

All Types of Organic & Herbal Products, Plant Promoters & Herbal Pesticide, Sericulture – Producer

Contact: Dr. (Mrs.) Padmini Shivkumar, Director

(Source: Brochure)

### **MAIKAAL bioRe (India) LTD**

14, Signal Vihar, Mhow – 453442, Madhya Pradesh. Ph.: 07324-274664/272714, Field Office: 07285-232284/231935, Email: [mbil@sancharnet.in](mailto:mbil@sancharnet.in)

Contact: Rajeev Baruah, Managing Director

(Source: Brochure)

### **DR. AMIT KUMAR JHA**

Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (JNKVV), Adhar Tal, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. Cell: 09425469854, Email: [amitagrewa@rediffmail.com](mailto:amitagrewa@rediffmail.com)

Scientist.

(Source: Bhartendu Prakash)

### **ASHISH MOHAN SHARMA**

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Organic farming promoter.

(Source: Bhartendu Prakash)

### **AJEET SINGH**

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Organic farming promoter.

(Source: Bhartendu Prakash)

**BHUPENDRA SURYAVANSHI**

M.P.C.S.T., Vigyan Bhawan, Nehru Nagar, Bhopal - 462003, Madhya Pradesh. Cell: 09827227168, Email: Bhupendra\_suryavanshi@yahoo.com  
Scientist  
(Source:Bhartendu Prakash)

**GAURAV KHARE**

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Promoter  
(Source:Bhartendu Prakash)

**MILIND KHANVILKAR**

BAIF, E-7/65, Arera Colony, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Cell: 09424502144, Email: khanvilkar.milind@rediff.com  
Promoter  
(Source:Bhartendu Prakash)

**SAHJEEVAN**

40, Rao Colony, Shahdol 484001, Madhya Pradesh.  
Contact: Dr. Girdhar Mathankar

**DR. NARENDRA N. MEHROTRA**

Executive Director, M.P.C.S.T., Vigyan Bhawan, Nehru Nagar, Bhopal – 462003, Madhya Pradesh. Cell: 09329564569, Email: nnmehrotra@gmail.com  
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(Source:Bhartendu Prakash)

**MS. VANDANA SHARMA**

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(Source:Bhartendu Prakash)

**DR. ANAND RAI**

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Promoter  
(Source:Bharatendu Prakash)

**MADHAVASHREM SANSTHAN**

Sehore Road, Bairagarh, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

**GANDHI SMARAK NIDHI**

Gandhi Bhawan, Chhatrasal Crossing, Chhatarpur – 471001, Madhya Pradesh.