

# NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON DESI COTTON



## CULTIVATION & CULTURE

24 & 25 FEBURARY 2014, K H PATIL KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA, HULKOTI

### The Organizers:

Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture  
Sahaja Samrudha  
K H Patil Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Hulkoti

ORGANIZERS WEBSITE ADDRESS: [www.kisanswaraj.in](http://www.kisanswaraj.in) / [www.sahajasamrudha.org](http://www.sahajasamrudha.org) / [www.khpkvk.org](http://www.khpkvk.org)



Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)

**K.H.PATIL KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA, HULKOTE**

## NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ‘DESI COTTON – CULTIVATION AND CULTURE’

24–25 February 2014, K. H. Patil Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Hulikote, Gadag

Sahaja Samrudha (<http://www.sahajasamrudha.org/>) in collaboration with the Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA) (<http://www.kisanswaraj.in/>) and the K.H.Patil Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Hulikote organised a two-day workshop on *Desi Cotton - Cultivation and Culture* on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2014 at Hulikote, Gadag district, Karnataka.



The workshop led to interesting and important discussions and outcomes for the participants. This report is an account of the sessions in the workshop. The participants included desi cotton farmers, those who are saving and promoting desi cotton seeds, organisations working to promote desi cotton, producers of handloom cloth and garments, cotton and textile mill owners, representatives of Khadi sanghas and khadi activists, organic farming activists, cotton processing innovators, cotton breeders, and journalists. An exhibition on the diversity of desi cotton was also organised.

Sahaja Samrudha attempts to preserve India’s traditional farming practices and conserve the rich biodiversity of indigenous crop varieties to revive and rejuvenate India’s dying villages. ASHA (Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture) is a large, nation-wide informal network of more than 400 organisations drawn from 20 states of India that came together in 2010 to organise a Kisan Swaraj Yatra across the country to draw attention to issues pertaining to our food, farmers and freedom.



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## DAY 1

**Inauguration** Kavitha Kuruganti of ASHA introduced the workshop. She pointed out that the workshop was aimed at exploring desi cotton seed diversity, production, the post-production processing issues and markets. The two-day gathering would discuss real desi cotton seed diversity, and not just what farmers know of as desi cotton. She also explained that studies show that seed choices by farmers have become irrational. She pointed out that various individuals and groups are working at different points of the supply and value chain, but there has been no concrete attempt to bring them all together to evolve solutions to the current day cotton farming crisis – this includes ones who are working to promote traditional seed diversity, ones who are working with farmers to promote organic cotton farming, ones who are working on micro-, household- and village-level cotton processing units, ones who are into khadi and handloom, ones who are into marketing of organic cotton fabric and garments and so on. The scientists and innovators associated with work at various stages have also not come together onto one platform whether it be breeders or agronomy specialists or ones who are working to promote organic production systems. She said that it was an important effort being initiated through this workshop, to create a common platform for all these different players to come together and evolve a common plan around desi organic cotton production and marketing, from seed to garments.

**Session 1: Setting the context** Organic farmer Jayashankar (Tula Garments, Tamil Nadu) and Ananthoo (ASHA and Tula Garments, Tamil Nadu) explained the cotton value chain. They listed the main links in the cotton chain from crop to cloth, and pointed to the area under cotton cultivation and production worldwide as well as India's cotton production. Information on the four cotton families was provided. Further, detailed statistics on Bt cotton adoption in India, and particulars of desi cotton varieties still grown in the country was shared. An interesting slide in the presentation explained how the price of a cotton shirt was distributed across the people along the value chain. The presentation gave the audience an encapsulated understanding of the cotton value chain.

**Session 2: Cultivation of Desi cotton** Desi cotton growers RS Patil from Gadag, Nagappa Nimbegondi from Haveri and Kallappa from Bellary participated in this session. Nagappa is a well-known seed saver who has conserved 29 desi cotton varieties on his farm in Makari village, Haveri district, Karnataka. One of the main points from these presentations is that traditional cotton cultivation was also in a multi-cropped approach, and therefore, our understanding of productivity in such a context has to be different from the frameworks applied in the modern times.

**Session 3: Processing of Desi cotton** Mani Chinnaswamy, Managing Director of Appachi Cotton, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, which produces a range of cotton products from yarn to fabrics using organic cotton, interacted with farmers. He emphasised the importance of branding desi cotton and products made from it. He pointed out that the focus is on seed for oil and cattle, when there are large markets for fish feed and pet feed as well, since desi varieties are highly rich in protein. If seed is pushed into a profitable industry, farmers will benefit, he pointed out, adding that



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demand has to be created in a different way. People want to know the story behind desi seeds, so such stories should be shared, he emphasised.

Dr. L G Hiregoudar, Head, KH Patil Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Hulikote talked about the legacy of the late K H Patil, who was in the forefront of the co-operative movement in Hulkoti. Shri Patil established the Gadag cooperative textile mill in 1972. As weavers in Bettigeri (the twin town of Gadag) were being exploited by yarn suppliers, he decided to supply yarn to them. In 1981, he started a non-governmental organisation called the Agricultural Science Foundation dedicated to the social, educational and economic development of rural people.

Prahlad Nemade, an organic desi cotton farmer and innovator, gave an inspiring talk on his lifelong work to develop small-scale machines to produce cloth from cotton in his very own house. The total cost of the processing machinery is 5 lakhs, and they successfully implement the multiple and complex steps to produce cotton cloth from cotton. Nemadeji believes that if farmers are able to produce their own cloth, they can free themselves from the exploitative grip of the modern cotton economy.

This session was followed by a visit to the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) unit in Gadag, where the participants could see the multi-step and complex process of producing cotton yarn from cotton.

## **DAY 2**

On the second day of the workshop, a visit to a the farm of desi organic cotton farmer Ashok Halli in Shagoti village of Gadag district led to informative discussions between the participants and farmers on desi cotton.

**Session 4: Desi Cotton Seed Production** Dr. S. S. Patil, a cotton breeder from the University of Agricultural Sciences in Dharwad, spoke about the development of the potential of desi cotton varieties. He pointed out that India is the only country in the world where all four species of cotton are grown. However, while at the time of independence 97% of cotton was from desi varieties, today desi cotton accounts for only 3% of cotton production. Though American hirsutum cotton gave good yields with above average rainfall, Bt cotton led to huge losses in low rainfall conditions, he pointed out. Short-staple coarse fibre desi production has come down drastically in the last ten to twelve years. He pointed out why there was a decline in the area under cultivation of desi cotton. Indigenous arboreum cotton gives good yield in less rainfall, he explained. Unheard of pests have become very important now with the spread of Bt cotton. Further, Dr. Patil explained many aspects of the cotton story in detail to the audience.



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Ramprasad S of Chetna Organic, Hyderabad explained the work of his organisation. Chetna Organic works with small and marginal farmers towards improving their livelihood options and making farming a sustainable and profitable occupation. The organisation works with farmers from the rainfed regions of Maharashtra, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh covering around 35,000 acres.

**Session 5: Khadi and Desi cotton** Santosh Koulagi of the Janapada Seva Trust in Melkote spoke about the corruption and despair in Khadi institutions – the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and the Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB).

Prakash Dongre of the Khadi Board in Gadag spoke about the current scenario in the Khadi industry and future steps that must be taken to rescue it from its contemporary predicament.

**Session 6: Desi cotton in schools** Dr Prakash Bhat, a social activist, spoke about the organisation Charaka, a multipurpose women’s cooperative in Bhimanakone village in Shimoga district of Karnataka. Charaka produces naturally-dyed cotton handloom garments and markets it through its marketing arm Desi across the state. Dr Sanjeev Kulkarni of Bala Balaga, Dharwad spoke about introducing cotton culture in school curricula. He spoke about successful initiatives where school children were encouraged to adopt Khadi.



### **Session 7: Marketing of Desi cotton**

Ananthoo of Tula Garments, Tamil Nadu described the successful initiative of his organisation to produce organic, naturally-dyed, handwoven cotton garments. Tula garments are made from rainfed organic cotton, which is handspun, naturally dyed, and handwoven into handloom cloth, which is manually stitched to produce garments. Ananthoo explained how Tula Garments began its work, and how they produce their unique garments.

After the concluding session which identified action items for the participants going forward, the workshop ended with the singing of the national anthem.



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## ACTION PLAN

1. One field visit will be organized for the farmers under the guidance of Dr. S S Patil.
2. Dr Hiregowdar and Dr Patil will source the breeder seed, to be multiplied by Gudageri and Shagoti farmers (pure Jayadhar cotton and Gaorani seed (for Kallappa))
3. Mani Chinnaswamy, Executive Director of Appachi Cotton- a Coimbatore based Cotton Exporter will support marketing of locally suitable desi variety which will be selected after scrutinizing the potentialities, and will be open for farmers to grow on contract basis.
4. Desi cotton hybridisation training will be given to Basavagowda Patil, Shagoti village, in turn he will teach his own farmers.
5. Buyers will be drawn in as much as possible (Appachi, BioRE) by Dr SS Patil for tapping marketing opportunities of 300 acres of organic Sahana cotton available with Sri Sri Group. Orientation workshop on desi cotton varieties to the group.
6. Omkar Gowda of Savanoor village of Haveri district will devote 1 hectare of his land for High Density Planting of non-Bt short staple cotton varieties for field trials.
7. Dr Sanjeev Kulkarni of Dharwada Sanskrutika Kendra ready to take up an awareness programme in Dharwad – and will explore if a desi cotton documentary can be created.
8. One book on Desi Cotton by KP and Anand Pyati to be brought out soon
9. One meeting of the women's SHG in Shagoti to explore interest in taking up spinning. KVIB's Dr Prakash Dongre to help with capacity building, along with KVK, with women's SHGs
10. Surgical cotton industry – Dr Patil, KP and Dr Kulkarni to bring in people from the industry to meet with farmers before the sowing of desi cotton this season.
11. Tula will come forward to support the women's SHG in Shagoti, with Prahlad Nemade's unit to be set up there.
12. Desi shop space can be used to take up activities to publicise desi cotton varieties – like a shelf of various desi seeds to be displayed there.
13. Savayava Krushikara Sangha in Hegududevan Kote will also explore possibility of reviving Charkha spinning in their area.
14. Explore options for sanitary napkins' markets with organic desi cotton – dr sanjeev kulkarni; Sunanda ji of Desi, along with women's SHG in Shagoti
15. Santosh Prahlad Nemade ready to train other farmers in making of desi cotton lamp wicks. Kallappa of Hadagali village is interested.
16. Technical support for the farmers' group to be given by KVK-Hulkoti for their entire organic desi cotton production
17. In the context of Indian national flag – a collective responsibility have been expressed to link our cotton producers to Bengeri flag making unit. Dr Hiregowdar asserted and will play a major role in paving way for future linkages
18. "Hulkoti Cotton Declaration" to be drafted by Santosh Koulagi and circulated with concerned people and partners to take forward this initiative in a coordinated manner.
19. Regular meetings of concerned partners and involved farmers will held once in three months.
20. Shagoti farmers are showing steady interest in taking up organic rainfed desi cotton cultivation, with technical support from KVK.
21. Sourcing Kharif varieties of Gossypium arboreum with the help of Dr S S Patil from different cotton research stations for field level validation of potential varieties.



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**ANNEXURE I: PARTICIPANTS LIST**

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**K.H.PATIL KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA, HULKOTE**

*Report on National Workshop on Desi cotton – Cultivation and Culture*

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**ANNEXURE II: PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

**DAY 1: 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014**

Time	Activity/Session	Resource Person
9.30 – 10.00 am	Registration /Poster presentation	
10.00 – 10.30 am	Inaugural Address	Kavitha Kuruganti, ASHA
10.30 - 11.00 pm	Current status of Cotton: Setting the context	Jaishankar, TULA Garments, Tamil Nadu Ananthoo Sayanan, ASHA
11.00 – 11.30 pm	Desi Cotton diversity and cultivation: Cotton growers perspective	RS.Patil, Gadag; Nagappa Nimbegondi, Haveri and Kallappa, Bellary dt
11.30 – 1.00 pm	Processing of desi cotton: an attractive market segments with desi or heritage cotton varieties	Mani Chinnaswamy, Executive director, Appachi Cotton, Tamil Nadu
1.00 – 2.00 pm	<b>Lunch</b>	
2.00 – 4.00 pm	Documentation of Desi cotton knowledge	Group Activity
4.00 – 5.00 pm	Small-scale cotton processing machinery: for an innovative rural business climate	Prahlad Nemade, an organic cotton grower, Akola, Maharashtra
5.00 – 7.00 pm	Outdoor Visit: KVIC Unit, Gadag	

**DAY 2: 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014**

Time	Activity/Session	Resource Person
8.30 – 9.30 am	Desi Cotton Diversity Plot Visit	
9.30 – 10.00 am	Breakfast	
10.00 – 10.30 am	Khadi and Desi Cotton	Santho Santhosh Koulagi, Janapada Seva Trust, Mysore Prakash.Dongre, Khadi Board, Gadag
10.30 – 11.00 am	Desi Cotton in Schools	Dr.Prakash Bhat, Social Activist, Dharwad Dr. Sanjeev Kulkarni, Bala Balaga, Dharwad
1.00 – 1.30 pm	Tula: Desi Cotton Marketing Initiative	Ananthoo Sayanan, Restore, Chennai
1.30 – 2.30 pm	Lunch	
2.30 – 3.00 pm	Organic cotton cultivation: Making farming sustainable and profitable	Ramprasad.S, Chetna Organics, Hyderabad
3.00 – 4.00 pm	Desi Cotton Cultivation and Seed Production	Dr.SS.Patil, Cotton Research Institute, Dharwad
4.00 – 5.00 pm	Group Presentation and Action Plan	
5.30 pm	Valedictory Address	Krishnaprasad.G, Sahaja Samrudha, Bangalore



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