



Green farming

When I was a young man, an elderly person in my village used to tell often, that your bank account will be written in red ink if you do not practice polyculture in your agriculture system. Every small inclusion on the farm plays an important role in improving the economic status of the farmer. On our 4 acre farm we have a bore well. Though it has a capacity of yielding only 2000 gallons per hour, we are still able to save some good amount of money, since we have integrated tree cropping, animal husbandry, agro forestry and bee keeping using minimum external inputs.

We had only 30 silver oak trees on the edges of our land among many other forest species which are still growing. We sold the 30 silver oak trees for Rs. 90,000 without incurring any expenses. With that experience, we have planted 300 of them on the edges, two years back. Fifteen years from now, they will fetch enough money to provide technical education for 2 of my grand children. We have 20 drum stick trees which fetch Rs. 5000 annually growing along the fence. We have 150 meters long and 6 meters wide trenches to drain excess water. There are many types of trees - 100 teak, 6 jack fruit, 2 bamboo, 10 Arjuna (Mathi), 120 coffee, 50 black pepper and many more. They give fruits, 500 kgs of fuel, 2 tonnes of green fodder and shed around 20 cubic meters of dry leaves. Thirty years from now, we will be able to receive around twenty five lakh rupees apart from the trees acting as wind breaks, creating micro climate, hosting birds and other predators.

Among 16 year old sapota orchard, we grow ragi, foxtail, jowar, tur, papaya and also vegetables. Parallel to edge row of silver oak, we have 50 coconut trees among which we have 20 avacado (Butter fruit) trees, 25 arecanut and black pepper and few other bushes. Six cows and 10 goats are fed by fodder from these trees. Cow dung and their urine is fed into gobar gas plant which provides enough cooking gas, and slurry used as compost (25 tones a year). We have an azolla tank which yields 8 kgs of azolla every day to supplement concentrate feeds for cattle worth rupees two hundred. Since we produce almost every thing for our consumption, our expenses are minimized. Thus, we are self reliant. More than anything else, the health of the family members and our animals is very good. The secret of our sustainability is recycling all the crop residues in building up humus content. This is very necessary to host soil organisms, preserve moisture and provide oxygen for roots. Most importantly, preserving our own seeds, using biological pest control methods, producing enough manure to meet our own plant nutrient requirements, has been very helpful.

Lastly, involvement of our family members in agriculture and also our simple life style has led us to lead a honourable life. It is with a lot of concern to my farmer community that I have started a small training centre called as “Parashara Jaivika Krishi Gurukula” to instill knowledge and practical experience in chemical free and external input free farming. We need such centers in every district of our country to save the soil, environment and provide food security with toxic free nutrition. At the end, I want to remind the administration, our agriculture scientists and mostly my farming community to grow more of micro-milletts which are resistant to drought, pests and need less plant nutrients and inputs. Unless we promote and practice family farming and green farming, the future of all of us could end in misery and distress.

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