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### Case study of a natural farming farmer in Andhra Pradesh

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#### Abstract

The present study focused on the successful adoption of natural farming practices by Mr. Boya Ravi, a 32-year-old farmer from Obulapuram village, Dhone mandal, Nandyal district, Andhra Pradesh. Conducted as a case study in 2023-24, the investigation aimed to explore the process and outcomes of natural farming through a detailed observation of Ravi's agricultural journey. Ravi transitioned to natural farming in 2015 after attending a training session by Padmashri Shri Subhash Palekar. He began with groundnut crop, experimenting with organic formulations like jeevamrutham and intercropping techniques, which resulted in satisfactory yields. Over six years, Ravi expanded his natural farming practices to mangoes, vegetables, and intercropping, became a pioneer in his village. Ravi utilized a variety of natural farming practices, including jeevamrutham, beejamrutham, and various botanical formulations to enhance crop health and yield. His innovative use of social media for marketing, particularly through Facebook, allowed him to sell his produce at premium prices, earning him recognition both locally and beyond. Ravi's success has inspired other farmers in his region to adopt natural farming methods, creating a ripple effect of sustainable agriculture. Looking forward, Ravi aims to expand his farming practices, continue experimenting with new techniques, and further improve his marketing strategies. He suggested increasing consumer awareness about natural farming produce to boost demand and encourage more farmers to adopt these practices. Through his dedication, Ravi aspires to create a self-sustaining agricultural ecosystem that benefits his family and the broader community.

**Keywords:** Case study, natural farming, farmer, techniques, marketing

#### Introduction

In the ever-changing landscape of Indian agriculture, the quest for sustainability and improved farmer well-being has become essential. Natural farming, an agricultural practice that emphasizes harmony with nature, gained significant momentum in various parts of India, particularly in Andhra Pradesh. This method focuses on reducing dependency on chemical inputs, enhancing soil health and promoting biodiversity, thus making it a sustainable alternative to conventional farming.

Natural farming, widely recognized as an innovative agroecological practice, is a low-input, climate-resilient and cost-effective farming system. It relies on natural herbs and locally available resources to create inputs like insect repellents, fungicides and pesticides, significantly reducing the need for artificial fertilizers and industrial pesticides (Laishram *et al.* 2022) <sup>[2]</sup>. So far, the organic and natural farming movement in India has largely been led by farmers

and civil societies (Khurana and Kumar, 2020) <sup>[1]</sup>.

In India, natural farming is promoted through the Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati Programme (BPKP), which is part of the centrally sponsored scheme, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY). BPKP focuses on encouraging traditional indigenous farming practices that minimize reliance on externally purchased inputs. The approach primarily relies on on-farm biomass recycling, with a strong emphasis on biomass mulching, the use of cow dung-urine based formulations produced on the farm, periodic soil aeration, and the complete exclusion of synthetic chemical inputs (MANAGE).

Indian agriculture is in urgent need of transformation due to the escalating agrarian crisis, increasing water stress, and stagnating yields despite the rising use of chemical inputs. Policies promoting Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) were been showing promising results for farmers in Andhra Pradesh (Niti *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[3]</sup>.

Thus, considering the importance of natural farming in the current context, it was felt necessary to conduct a case study on one of the successful natural farming farmer in Andhra Pradesh for creating awareness about natural farming.

### Methodology

The present study was conducted in the year 2023-24 and Case study method was followed in the present investigation. Case study helps to explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation. Andhra Pradesh was purposively selected for the study as the locale is nationally and internationally known for natural farming and was dominant with more area under natural farming in India. The study was conducted for a day with a successful natural farming

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Name of the farmer                | Boya Ravi                                    |
| Age                               | 32 years                                     |
| Education                         | Intermediate                                 |
| Land holding                      | 3.66 acres                                   |
| Natural farming experience        | 6 years                                      |
| Crops grown under natural farming | Mango + intercropping, Vegetables, Groundnut |

### Transition to Natural Farming

In 2015, his interest in sustainable agriculture was aroused when he heard about natural farming on FM-Radio. This newfound interest led him to attend a 10-day training session in Guntur conducted by Subhash Palekar, where he learned about natural farming models, intercropping techniques and various organic formulations. This training marked the beginning of his journey into natural farming, where he applied the principles he learned to his own fields, starting with groundnut. He conducted experiments to test the efficacy of Jeevamrutham, a bio-fertilizer, with different soil types in its preparation viz., Forest soil, *Putta mannu* (Pure soil), Natural farming soil, Conventional farming soil, using a reference plot in 20 cents of his land of ground nut field and found out that yield was a bit higher in the treatment with Jeevamrutham made with using forest soil.

### Crops cultivation under natural farming

He follows natural farming practices in mango crop and vegetables. He is the first farmer to grow intercrops in mango which also acts as live mulch in his village and earned substantial income. The mango varieties are Banginapalle and Amrutham. He grows ridge gourd, tomato and bajra in june then sorghum, horsegram, blackgram, greengram and cowpea in october.

### Natural farming practices followed

Jeevamrutham, Beejamrutham for seed treatment, Saphthadhanyankura kashayam at fruiting stage, Egg Aminoacid/ Panchagavya at flowering stage, Agniastam against mango leaf webber, Neem seed kernel extract and dashaparni kashayam. He rarely uses brahmastram and neemastam. Cow dung+cowurine+hing solution used as prevention measure. Sour buttermilk effective against fungal diseases and can be mixed with coconut milk for flowering. Vavillaku kashayam used in vegetables. Ummetha kashayam is effective against chilli thrips. Pre Monsoon Dry Sowing (PMDS) / Navadhanyalu were been proved

farmer. The natural farming farmer was interviewed personally and data was recorded as per the farmer's response.

### Results and Discussion

#### Profile of the natural farming farmer

Mr. Ravi's journey into the world of agriculture began early in his life. Growing up in Obulapuram village, Dhone mandal, Nandyal district, he was deeply influenced by the agricultural practices of his community. Despite the challenges, his passion for farming and commitment to staying in his village led him to take up farming as a full-time occupation. Living with his elderly parents, he became the primary caretaker of the farm, driven by the desire to sustain his family and contribute to the agricultural heritage of his village.

effective as green manuring.

#### Marketing and Recognition

To market his produce, he leveraged social media, specifically through Facebook ID "Natural farming-Prakruthi Vyavasayam". Through this platform, he sold Banginapalle mangoes at ₹100 per kg and Amrutham mangoes at ₹150 per kg in the year 2022. His innovative approach to marketing had allowed him to reach a broader audience and fetched a premium price for his naturally grown produce. This success in marketing, coupled with his sustainable farming practices, garnered him significant recognition in his community and beyond.

#### Community Impact and Future Aspirations

Ravi's contributions to natural farming have had a ripple effect in his village and the surrounding areas. By sharing his knowledge and assisting fellow farmers with natural farming formulations, he has become a resource person of sustainable agriculture. His success has inspired many other farmers to adopt natural farming practices in the region. Looking ahead, he aspires to expand his natural farming practices and continue experimenting with new techniques to enhance crop yield and improve soil health. He is also focused on further improving his marketing strategies to reach out to more consumers and promote the benefits of natural farming. His ultimate goal is to create a self-sustaining agricultural ecosystem that benefits not only his family but also the broader farming community. Through his dedication and innovative practices, he hopes to leave a lasting legacy in the world of natural farming.

**Suggestions offered by the farmer to strengthen natural farming:** Increasing consumer awareness regarding the natural farming produce could help increase in demand which in further could fetch better price for the produce, in turn might grab interest among the farming community towards natural farming.

## Conclusion

The case study highlighted the importance of continuous learning, experimentation, and community engagement in achieving agricultural sustainability. Ravi's journey served as a model for other farmers, illustrating how dedication to natural farming can lead to economic resilience and environmental stewardship. His vision for expanding natural farming practices and promoting consumer awareness reflected a forward-thinking approach that has the potential to drive significant positive change in the agricultural landscape. Through his work, Ravi is not only securing a better future for his family but also paving the way for a more sustainable and prosperous farming community.

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