



# Speech of Sri M Venkaiah Naidu, Hon'ble Union Minister at inauguration of a eight day residential workshop on Zero Budget Natural Farming( ZBNF) by Padma Shri Sri. Subhash Palekar organized by Telangana State ZBNF workshop organizing committee and S.A.V.E. Organization at Muchintal Hyderabad on 13th May 2015.

Posted On: 13 MAY 2017 5:35PM by PIB Hyderabad

I am very happy to participate in this training program being given by 'Krishi ka Rishi' Sri Subhash Palekar of the 'Zero Budget Natural Farming model, a method that is creating waves in the farming community in India.

Sri Subash Palekar was born in a small village in the district of Amravati, Maharashtra, son of a farmer; his interest in farming led him to pursue a B.Sc in Agriculture.

Sri Palekar's quest for natural farming techniques led him to the study of forest vegetation. It was here that he discovered the natural system at work in forests which allowed them to develop and nurture themselves, while maintaining healthy ecosystems.

After careful research of the system, Sri Palekar began to mimic the techniques he had witnessed, in his own farm. For a period of six years, from 1989 to 1995, he experimented and verified different techniques, before consolidating them into the 'Zero Budget Natural Farming' technique.

Zero Budget Natural Farming, as the name implies, is a method of farming where the cost of growing and harvesting plants is zero.

This means that farmers need not purchase fertilizers and pesticides in order to ensure the healthy growth of crops

I am happy to share that more than 50 lakh farmers across the country have benefitted greatly from Sri Palekar's teachings and his method of natural farming.

Sri Palekar spends 25 days every month sharing his knowledge of farming through seminar, lectures, workshops and field visits. Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala have also requested him to spend ten days a month in their states, in order to help their farmers develop healthy farming habits.

In 2016, in recognition of his work and the impact Sri Subash Palekar's was creating, the Government of India for the first time bestowed a farmer, prestigious Padamashri Award .

## Friends

India is among the largest producers of food grains, milk, fruits and vegetables, Cotton, spices, sugar, etc. The key challenge is sustainable agricultural growth spurred by both domestic and global demand, delivering profitability to farmers, which

is key to the overall economic progress of the country.

- Ironically, we spend only about 0.50% of our farm GDP on farm research while Brazil spends over 1% of farm GDP on it.

- Private sector share in capital formation in agriculture has been increasing but share of public investment has shown substantial declining trend. As a result, irrigation, power and transport infrastructure in rural areas, critical pillars for healthy farm sector continues to suffer with immense hardship for our farmers.

- Farmers in our country have often felt at risk - at times from crop losses due to natural disasters, at times by falling market prices.

- It was against this backdrop that our government engaged in detailed consultations with states, farmers and insurance companies and came up with Pradhanmantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

- This Pradhanmantri Fasal Bima Yojana has the following highlights:

1. This is the biggest ever government contribution to crop insurance
2. As a result, farmers will have to pay the lowest-ever premium rate and can get the maximum insurance
3. Government will bear the remaining financial burden-even if the Government's share exceeds 90%.It will substantially reduce the premium paid by farmers'
4. There will be only one premium rate for each season for all food grains, oilseeds and pulses - removing all variation in rates across crops and districts within a season - Kharif - 2% ; Rabi - 1.5% and 5% on commercial/horticultural crops
5. Farmers will get full insurance cover - there will be no 'capping' of the sum insured, and consequently, claim amounts will not be cut or reduced
6. For the first time, inundation has been included under localized risk cover
7. For the first time, post-harvest losses arising out of cyclones and unseasonal rain have been covered nationally
8. For the first time, emphasis has been given to mobile and satellite technology to facilitate accurate assessment and quick settlement of claims

- At present, there is a need for a political leadership that supports science. I can assure this august gathering that our government led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will do so.

- The Government is well aware that the capital formation in agriculture and achieving growth rates of 3-4% per annum will be important and has taken enabling measures which can drive agricultural growth. The Jan Dhan Yojana, Rural roads, Agricultural market reforms and use of technology to link farmers to markets will help in meeting of the targets.

- The Government has launched Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) with an outlay of Rs.50,000 crores to enable convergence of investments in irrigation at field level, expand cultivable area under irrigation, improve on-farm water use

efficiency and encourage adoption of precision irrigation.

1. The scheme will ensure access to water to every farm (“Har Khet Ko Pani”) and improving water use efficiency (“Per Drop More Crop”).
2. The scheme is on the lines of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana for building rural roads launched during the time of the last NDA government under Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
3. The new scheme will provide end-to-end solutions in the irrigation supply chain, including the water source, the distribution network and farm-level application

· In view of the food security concerns, our Government has taken a clear and well defined stand at the WTO negotiations so as to continue with MSP operations.

· The government is keen about second phase of Green Revolution and White Revolutions while giving a fillip to Blue Revolution.

· There is compelling need to sustainability to bring down loss of food by improving our post-harvest practices. We need to build a large network of cold storages facilities.

· In nutshell, our farmers need to be encouraged and empowered to produce more to meet the growing and diversifying food needs.

· In this direction, our Government’s approach is to ensure 4‘T’s, Irrigation, Infrastructure, Interest rates and Insurance. We are working on those 4 ‘T’s.

· Credit facility for farming and agriculture has been raised to Rs.10 lakh crore for farmers. Therefore, millions of farmers are getting farm credit from banks at reasonable rates and hence, are relieved from the clutches of private money lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates.

· MGNREGA: allocation to an all-time high of Rs 47,000 crore. The transparent and targeted approach of the government has resulted in creation of more assets through MNREGA works now, which has changed the rural landscape with more water conservation works, farm ponds, micro-irrigation facilities & other useful assets.

· Millions of new farm ponds have been dug and old ones rejuvenated. It has increased agricultural productivity and availability of water

· e-NAM: This is an initiative where all agricultural mandis are linked and farmers can sell their produce at the best price available in any market. It has become the national market for agriculture.

· In terms of Calamity Relief & Crop Damage Compensation, the norms for natural calamities has been revised.

1. Earlier the compensation is given only when 50% crop is damaged, now it is reduced to 32%.
2. Compensation doubled for loss of houses, cattle and other properties in rural areas.
3. In case of death earlier the provision was 1.25 lakhs, now it is 4 lakhs.

**Friends,**

- Indian agriculture has reached a point where it must seek new directions – those by way of strategies, policies and actions which must be adopted to move forward.
- Past experience has shown that speed of poverty reduction has closely followed increases in agriculture productivity.
- No other sector of economy can match growth in agriculture for its impact on broad-based poverty reduction. Creating employment opportunities is vital to reducing poverty and creating growth outside agriculture.
- Sustainable agriculture relies on practices that encourage natural regenerative processes (e.g. nutrient cycling, soil regeneration, and protection of natural enemies of pest and diseases) and maintain ecological equilibrium, preserve biodiversity and safeguard the environment.
- Other measures in the direction of farmer's welfare include:
  1. Soil Health Card Scheme.
  2. Supply of Neem coated Urea.
  3. New Kisan channel launched for the welfare of farmers.

## **Friends**

- Natural Farming as advocated by Shri Subash Palekar include near zero input costs, increase in fertility of the soil year after year the Natural Way, minimising water requirements, excellent yield (higher than chemical/organic farming), lower labour costs and a scientific, spiritual system based on time-tested and vedic principles.
- I have no hesitation in saying that Sri Subash Palekar's Zero Budget Natural Farming has undoubtedly made an indelible mark on farming in India.
- Thank you all

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