

## Promoting Organic Farming in Gorkhey-Samanden: Transboundary Village of Khangchendzonga Landscape-India

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Organic farming ensures economic viability and environmental sustainability offering healthy ecosystems, including biodiversity, biogeochemical cycles, and soil biological activity. Integrating organic farming in ecotourism development is an important component that offers livelihood diversification and economic development of the community viz-a-viz ecosystem management. An initiative is taken to promote organic farming in Gorkhey-Samanden village in KL- India under KLCDI- India programme.

Gorkhey-Samanden is a small forest village bordering Singalila National Park in West Bengal and Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary in Sikkim. A total of 65 households reside in the village and mainly dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood, potato, peas, and maize being the major crops, while some are engaged in operating homestays during the tourist season as the village lie on the trekking route of Singalila National Park closer to Phalut. Phalut is the famous trijunction of the two Indian States-Sikkim and West Bengal with Nepal. On

the trek back from the park, Gorkhey-Samanden often becomes the resting place for the trekkers. At least a night halt is often taken in the homestays of the village. Thus the village has been recognized as potential ecotourism destination offering alternative livelihood option. In this village survey indicated that the farmers are using fewer amounts of inorganic fertilizers as compared to the organic manure. Hence, there is a possibility to encourage organic farming through skill and capacity building on organic farming practices such as vermi-composting, vermi-wash, bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizer use. Thus, promotion of organic farming was realized to ease the situation by increasing crop yield.

To promote organic farming in Gorkhey-Samanden village, GBPNIHE, Sikkim Regional Centre, in collaboration with The Mountain Institute, India; Sikkim Kishan Society, Daramden and Directorate of Forests, West Bengal organized two-days training-cum-field demonstration event under KLCDI India programme on bio-composting and bio-pesticides technologies in which 38 farmers participated. Field demonstration-cum-training to the participants was imparted on vermi-compositing, bio-pesticide, vermi-wash and bio-fertilizers by the experts. Further, under this training programme, four low-cost vermi-composting pits and one low-cost vermi-wash stands were constructed in the farmer's field. Furthermore, using traditional knowledge and available bio/natural resources, ten liters of bio-pesticides as also prepared and its way of using was demonstrated in the farmer's field. The event reflected the process of training and demonstration on skill and capacity building for improving knowledge on organic farming. As an outcome of the training based on analysis of the pre-assessment forms, it was found that most of these topics were unknown for the participants and they did not have much information/ idea about them. The

post-training evaluation indicated that majority of the participants gained knowledge and confidence regarding, various methods and technique of organic farming. It is believed that the process and outcomes of the event would be a landmark for the transboundary landscape programme (KLCDI-India), especially for livelihood diversification and economic development objective and directly or indirectly will support ecosystem management and promote organic farming in the part of KL-India.



Field Demonstration of Vermi-Composting, Bio-Pesticide, Vermi-Wash and Bio-Fertilizer