



## Mains Marathon

**Day 20:** How is Zero Budget Natural Farming different from Organic Farming? Discuss the ecological and economic benefits of ZBNF. (150 words)

30 Jul 2022 | GS Paper 3 | Economy

### Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Write the difference between Organic farming and Natural farming.
- Mention the ecological and economic benefits of Zero Budget Natural Framing.
- Conclude suitably.

### Answer:

**Zero budget natural farming** is a method of **chemical-free agriculture** drawing from traditional Indian practices. It was originally **promoted by agriculturist Subhash Palekar**, who developed it in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the **Green Revolution's methods** that are driven by chemical fertilizers and pesticides and intensive irrigation. It is a unique model that relies on Agro-ecology. It aims to bring down **the cost of production to nearly zero and return to a pre-green revolution style of farming**. It claims that there is no need for expensive inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and intensive irrigation.

### The differences between Natural Farming and Organic Farming:

Organic Farming	Natural Farming
In organic farming, <b>organic fertilizers and manures like compost, vermicompost, cow dung manure</b> , etc. are used and added to farmlands from external sources.	In natural farming, <b>manures and fertilizers are sourced from the farm itself</b> , such as cow dung, urine, and crop residues.
Organic farming still <b>requires basic agro practices</b> like plowing, tilling, mixing of manures, weeding, etc. to be performed.	Natural farming <b>does not require any external inputs or practices</b> , as it relies on the natural cycle of the farm.
Organic farming is still <b>expensive due to the requirement of bulk manures</b> , and it has an ecological impact on surrounding environments; whereas, natural agriculture is an extremely low-cost farming method, completely molding with local biodiversity.	Natural farming is <b>extremely low-cost</b> and <b>ecologically friendly</b> , as it does not require any external inputs and is in harmony with the local environment.

### The ecological and economic benefits of ZBNF:

- **Minimized Cost of Production:** It is considered as a cost- effective farming practice with scope for raising employment and rural development.
- **Ensures Better Health:** As Natural Farming does not use any synthetic chemicals; health risks and hazards are eliminated. Food has higher nutrition density and therefore offers better health benefits.

- **Employment Generation:** It generates employment on account of natural farming input enterprises, value addition, marketing in local areas, etc. The surplus from natural farming is invested in the village itself. As it has the potential to generate employment, thereby stemming the migration of rural youth.
- **Environment Conservation:** It ensures better soil biology, improved agrobiodiversity and a more judicious usage of water with much smaller carbon and nitrogen footprints.
- **Reduced Water Consumption:** By working with diverse crops that help each other and cover the soil to prevent unnecessary water loss through evaporation, Natural Farming optimizes the amount of 'crop per drop'.
- **Rejuvenates Soil Health:** The most immediate impact of Natural Farming is on the biology of soil—on microbes and other living organisms such as earthworms. Soil health depends entirely on the living organisms in it.
- **Livestock Sustainability:** The integration of livestock in the farming system plays an important role in Natural farming and helps in restoring the ecosystem. Eco Friendly bio-inputs, such as **Jivamrit** and **Beejamrit**, are prepared from cow dung and urine, and other natural products.
- **Resilience:** The changes in soil structure with the help of organic carbon, no/low tillage and plant diversity are supporting plant growth even under extreme situations like severe droughts and withstanding severe flood and wind damage during cyclones. NF impacts many farmers positively by imparting resilience to the crops against weather extremities.

The **world's population is predicted to expand to approximately 10 billion by 2050**. It is expected that agricultural demand will increase up to 50%, in comparison to 2013, in such a situation a transformational process towards '**holistic**' approaches such as **agro-ecology, agroforestry, climate-smart agriculture, and conservation agriculture is a necessity**. There is a need to Strengthen agricultural market infrastructure and extend the procurement mechanism to all foodgrain and non-foodgrain crops to all States. Implementation of price deficiency payment system for selected crops. There is a need to enact legislation on 'right to sell at MSP' needs immediate attention.

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