



## National Mission on Natural Farming

**For Prelims:** National Mission on Natural Farming, Biomass Mulching, India's Gross Cropped Area (GCA), Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddati, Rainwater harvesting.

**For Mains:** Significance of Natural Farming, Issues Related to Natural Farming.

### Why in News?

The Government of India has launched the **National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)** as a separate and independent scheme to promote **chemical-free and [climate-smart agriculture](#)**.

### What is the National Mission on Natural Farming?

#### ▪ About:

- The **National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)** has been formulated by upscaling the **Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP)** to promote natural farming across the country.

#### ▪ Coverage:

- NMNF will cover a **7.5 lakh hectare area by developing 15,000 clusters**. The farmers willing to implement natural farming on their field will be **registered as cluster members**, each cluster shall comprise **50 farmers or more with 50-hectare land**.
  - Also, **each cluster can fall into one village** or spread across 2-3 nearby villages under the same gram panchayat.

#### ▪ Financial Assistance:

- Under NMNF, farmers will receive a **financial assistance of ₹15,000 per hectare per year for three years** for the creation of on-farm input production infrastructure.
- However, the **incentives would be provided to farmers only when they commit to natural farming** and have actually taken it up.
  - If a farmer defaults or does not continue with natural farming, subsequent instalments shall **not be disbursed**.

#### ▪ Web Portal for Implementation Progress:

- A **Web portal** has also been launched for the **promotion of natural farming with information on the implementation framework**, resources, implementation progress, farmer's registration, blog, and so on.

#### ▪ Master Trainers:

- The agriculture ministry is undertaking large-scale training of **master trainers, 'champion' farmers and practising farmers** in the techniques of natural farming through the **National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) and National Centre of Organic and Natural Farming (NCONF)**.

#### ▪ Establishment of BRCs:

- The Centre intends to set up **15,000 Bhartiya Prakritik Kheti Bio-inputs Resources Centres (BRCs)** to provide easy access to bio-resources wherein cow dung and urine, neem and bioculture play an important role.
  - These **bio-input resource centres** would be set up alongside the proposed

15,000 model clusters of natural farming.

## What is Natural Farming?

### ▪ About:

- **Natural farming** is a **chemical-free farming method** based on locally available resources.
  - It promotes **traditional indigenous practices**, which give freedom to farmers from externally purchased inputs.
- The major stress of natural farming is **on-farm biomass recycling with biomass mulching**, use of **on-farm desi cow dung-urine formulation**, managing pests through diversity, on-farm botanical concoctions, and exclusion of all **synthetic chemical inputs directly or indirectly**.

### ▪ Significance:

- **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.
- **Increased Farmers' Income:** Natural Farming aims to make farming viable and aspirational by increasing net incomes of farmers on account of cost reduction, **reduced risks, similar yields, incomes from intercropping**.
- **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.
  - It improves soil health and in turn **increases productivity**.

### ▪ Issues:

- **Lack of Irrigation Facility:** Only **52% of India's Gross Cropped Area (GCA)** is irrigated at the national level. Even though India has made significant strides since independence, **many farms still rely on the monsoon for irrigation**, limiting their ability to plant more crops.
- **Lack of Readily Availability of Natural Inputs:** Farmers often cite the lack of readily available natural inputs as a **barrier to converting to chemical-free agriculture**. Not every farmer has the time, patience, or labour to develop their own natural inputs.
- **Lack of Crop Diversification:** In spite of the rapid commercialization of agriculture in India, most farmers assume cereals will always be their main crop (due to skewed **Minimum Support Prices** in favour of **cereals**) and **ignore crop diversification**.

### ▪ Other Initiatives to Promote Natural Farming:

- **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY):**
  - The NMNF is an upscaling of the **Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddati (BPKP)** which is a sub-scheme under **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)**.
  - PKVY provides financial assistance to farmers who want to adopt organic farming practices and encourages them to use eco-friendly techniques for pest management and soil fertility management.
- **Climate Smart Agriculture:**
  - **Climate smart agriculture** is an integrated approach to managing landscapes—**cropland, livestock, forests, and fisheries**—that address the interlinked challenges of food security and climate change.
  - It aims to tackle three main objectives: **sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes, adapting and building resilience to climate change**, and reducing **greenhouse gas emissions** wherever possible.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

#### Q.1 How is permaculture farming different from conventional chemical farming? (2021)

1. Permaculture farming discourages monocultural practices but in conventional chemical farming, monoculture practices are predominant.
2. Conventional chemical farming can cause an increase in soil salinity but the occurrence of such

phenomenon is not observed in permaculture farming.

3. Conventional chemical farming is easily possible in semi-arid regions but permaculture farming is not so easily possible in such regions.
4. Practice of mulching is very important in permaculture farming but not necessarily so in conventional chemical farming.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below.**

- (a) 1 and 3
- (b) 1, 2 and 4
- (c) 4 only
- (d) 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

**Q.2 Which of the following is the chief characteristic of 'mixed farming'? (2012)**

- (a) Cultivation of both cash crops and food crops
- (b) Cultivation of two or more crops in the same field
- (c) Rearing of animals and cultivation of crops together
- (d) None of the above

**Ans: (c)**

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### **Mains**

**Q.1** What are the present challenges before crop diversification? How do emerging technologies provide an opportunity for crop diversification? **(2021)**

**Q.2** How has India benefited from the contributions of Sir M. Visvesvaraya and Dr. M. S. Swaminathan in the fields of water engineering and agricultural science respectively? **(2019)**

**Source: PIB**

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