



## **Role of Organic Farming in Livelihood Improvement of Marginal Farmers**

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Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy with more than half of the population depend on this sector for their livelihood, though its contribution to India's GDP is less compared to other sectors. This is mainly due to unsustainable farm practices and therefore, it is essential to revive this basic sector. Organic farming is one such holistic approach to enhance the socio-economic status of marginal farmers and to mitigate the environmental problems caused by unsustainable farm practices. Organic farming avoids/largely excludes the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators and relies on legumes, green manure, crop rotation, crop residues, animal manures, biofertilizers, biopesticides, bioherbicides, botanical extracts, etc.

Agri Biotech Foundation (ABF) in India is a leading nonprofit Organisation in organic farming. ABF earlier carried out the Andhra Pradesh Netherland Biotechnology Programme (APNLBP) for about 12 years and delivered 24 new technologies including technologies that have implications for promoting organic farming. ABF trained men and women farmers, students, Government officials, extension agents etc. on organic farming. ABF wanted to change the poverty scenario and to improve the life of the farmers and to convert the farmers from conventional agriculture to organic agriculture. The technologies popularized by ABF are production and application of biofertilizers, biopesticides, panchagavya, bijamrutam, vermicomposting, coir pith composting, rising of organic vegetable seedlings and vegetable crops. Recently, Agri Bioincubator, an initiative of a-IDEA, NAARM and ABF established under the support of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Government of India, provides a platform for entrepreneurs with innovations in Agri-Biotech and to offer incubation support to startups. A total of three incubates were registered and their technologies include liquid biofertilizers and biopesticides, algal biofertilizers and bio-elicitors for crops disease resistance. This paper explains the case studies of organic farming technologies popularized by ABF to empower the marginal farmers and incubation support to upscale the Agri-Biotech technologies.