

Author: India

Committee: Environment

Issue: An eco-farming revolution

In the last 50 years, agriculture has undergone a profound transformation, developing new technologies that allowed farmers and big companies to produce more and more. In India, the Green Revolution started in the early sixties. This movement contributed to the modernization of the country and faced lots of problems. But now, India is conscious that this model of intensive farming is no longer the solution to the problems of agriculture, because it is, indeed, the problem of agriculture in the future.

Population growth is the biggest issue that concerns our country. It should see its population increase by a third to reach 1.6 billion by 2050, becoming the most populous country on the planet. As a consequence, all these people have to be fed. However, the techniques used in our time have been proved harmful both for the environment and for our own health. India is one of the biggest “farms” in the world and it is why our country is conscious of the problem that affects agriculture nowadays, and so, a contributor to eco-farming.

Over half a million organic farmers live in the country, the highest number of organic producers anywhere in the world. For this reason, Organic World Congress will be held in New Delhi in November 2017. The National Centre of Organic Farming, forming part of the Ministry of Agriculture, assures “India has emerged as the single largest country with highest arable cultivated land under organic management. India has also achieved the status of single largest country in terms of total area under certified organic wild harvest collection.”

However, India maintains that the development of organic and ecological farming will be only possible with the contribution of all governments, especially those of much more important countries, like the European and demographic powers. More controls are necessary in order to regulate this food system with people and farmers at its heart. The Organic Farming Association of India (OFAI) remains today the only national membership-based association of organic farmers, organic farming promoters and as well as green stores. Because the eco-farming revolution starts with local farmers, India considers themselves as the first ones that have to be helped, and this will be easier if an international association such as the OFAI promoted by the UN existed.

Another important factor for developing this food system is the consumers. In our time, most of organic production is destined to developed countries or only for self-consumption. Ethical values have to be promoted within cities, even if citizenship have never visited the countryside, they have to be conscious of what farmers are exposed to. For everybody, it is also a question of food safety, given the poisonous chemicals in the form of pesticides and fertilisers that find their way to the fruits and vegetables we consume daily.

Although, in market-marginalized areas, organic farmers can increase food production by managing local resources without having to rely on external inputs or food distribution systems over which they have little control or access.

Finally, in the so-called Green Revolution areas, like India, conversion to organic agriculture usually leads to almost identical yields, so an eco-farming revolution wouldn't really affect the economy. India is already one of the biggest organic farming producers, but our objective is to increase this agricultural system for a global benefit.