

What is zero budget farming? What are its benefits? Pillars of ZBF and current gov initiatives to support it. (300 words).

Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional practices. Promoted by Padma Shree Agriculturist Subhash Palekar, zero budget ~~talk~~ emphasises on use of all the byproducts on farm in order to not fall in debtness of buying expensive fertilisers and machinery. It not only helps in breaking cycle of debt but also curb the harm done to environment.

Pillars of ZBNF :-

- (i) Promotes uses of jeevamutha - made out of cow dung, urine, jaggery, water, flour and soil which enhances microbial culture in soil, helps for aeration and natural fertility.
- (ii) It discourages intensive irrigation and deep ploughing.
- (iii) Promotes aeration of soil, minimum watering, intercropping, topsoil mulching and other traditional methods.
- (iv) Another component bijamita - used for seeds treatment of seeds.
- (v) Use of neem leaves for pest and insects.

## Benefits of ZBNF :-



- (i) ZBNF focuses on zero input cost and maximum utilisation of what is present, it aims for reducing cost spent on expensive fertilisers and machinery and break the debt cycle.
- (ii) Promotes traditional methods of farming by microbial culture, removing toxins from soil, soil aeration and mulching and intercropping for better returns.
- (iii) It produces higher yields and does less ecological harm, restoring ecological ecosystem & health.
- (iv) Promotes regenerative agriculture and provides ensure decent livelihood to small farmers.
- v) Can lead to women empowerment and nutrition.

Current government initiatives -

(i) ZBNF has a big success story in southern states like Karnataka where it started and Andhra Pradesh where it has given good results.

(ii) Government of states like Himachal Pradesh is focusing on promoting ZBNF in order to double farmers' income.

(iii) Government of India in its Budget has decided to give allocation for ZBNF in order to go "back to basics" and provide ways to increase income of farmers.

(iv) Currently, there are no check mechanisms and strategies to really know how much success does ZBNF holds.

(v) More initiatives like ZBNF should be promoted, but its application on large scale is really questionable.

Excellent!