



## A GREEN REVOLUTION IN THE HILLS

Shailja Sharma<sup>1\*</sup> and Rishav Kumar<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, CSKHPKV Palampur

<sup>2</sup> M. Sc Scholar, Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, CSKHPKV Palampur

The serene landscapes of Himachal Pradesh, often referred to as the "Land of the Gods" are undergoing a quiet yet powerful transformation. Moving away from the chemical-heavy practices of the past, the state has emerged as a national leader in Natural Farming. This shift is not just about returning to tradition; it is a calculated move to ensure food security, protect the fragile Himalayan ecology, and double the income of the humble hill farmer.

### Natural vs Organic

While the terms are often used interchangeably, there is a technical distinction that has shaped Himachal's policy.

- **Organic Farming:** Often relies on external biological inputs like vermicompost and organic fertilizers purchased from the market.
- **Natural Farming:** This method, championed by the state through the Prakritik Kheti Khushhal Kisan Yojana is based on the principle of "Zero Budget". It uses on-farm resources primarily the dung and urine of indigenous cows to create powerful natural growth stimulants like Jeevamrit and Beejamrit.

### Why Himachal Pradesh?

The state's geography and climate make it uniquely suited for chemical-free agriculture.

- **Fragile Ecosystem:** The Himalayas are sensitive to the soil degradation caused by synthetic fertilizers. Chemical runoff often pollutes the fresh mountain springs that provide water to millions downstream.
- **Small Landholdings:** Most farmers in Himachal are smallholders. For them, the high cost of chemical pesticides and fertilizers often leads to a cycle of debt. Natural farming reduces these input costs to near zero.

- **Health Concerns:** With rising cases of lifestyle diseases and cancer in the region, there is a growing local and global demand for "pure" Himalayan produce.

### Government Initiatives and Progress

The Government of Himachal Pradesh has been proactive in institutionalizing this shift. As of early 2026, the progress is remarkable:

#### The Prakritik Kheti Khushhal Kisan Yojana

Launched to promote Subhash Palekar Natural Farming (SPNF), this scheme has trained over 3 lakh farmers. Currently, more than 2.2 lakh farmers are practicing natural farming across approximately 38,000 hectares of land.

#### Key Support Measures:

- **Cow Subsidy:** To encourage the use of indigenous breeds (like Sahiwal or Gir), the state provides a grant of up to ₹30,000 for farmers to purchase a Desi cow.
- **Resource Stores:** To assist those who cannot prepare all inputs themselves, the government has helped set up "Natural Farming Resource Stores" in villages.
- **MSP and Marketing:** In a historic move, Himachal introduced a dedicated Minimum Support Price for naturally grown crops. Brands like "Him-Bhog" have been launched to help farmers get premium prices in urban markets.

### The Science of the Soil: Key Components

Natural farming in the state revolves around four main pillars that restore the soil's natural microbiome:

1. **Beejamrit:** A seed treatment using cow dung and urine to protect young plants from fungi and soil-borne diseases.

2. **Jeevamrit:** A fermented microbial culture (made from dung, urine, jaggery, and pulse flour) that acts as a catalyst to increase the number of earthworms and beneficial bacteria in the soil.
3. **Mulching:** Covering the soil with crop residue to retain moisture and prevent weed growth.
4. **Waaphasa:** Creating a condition where both air and water molecules are present in the soil, reducing the need for heavy irrigation.

### ***Economic and Environmental Impact***

Research from the Solan and Hamirpur districts shows that while there might be a slight dip in yield during the first year of transition, the net profit increases because the farmer no longer spends money on expensive chemicals. Furthermore, intercropping growing pulses or vegetables alongside main crops like Apples or Maize provides a steady secondary income.

### ***Success in the Apple Belt***

The apple industry, the backbone of Himachal's economy, has seen a significant shift. Orchardists in Shimla and Kullu districts are now using natural concoctions to manage pests like Scab and Mite. Naturally grown apples are found to have a longer shelf life, better colour, and higher sugar content, making them favourites for export.

### ***Challenges and the Way Forward***

Despite the success, challenges remain:

- **Labor Intensity:** Preparing natural inputs and managing weeds without chemicals requires more manual labour.
- **Certification:** While the state has introduced the CETARA-NF self-certification tool, international certification for export remains a complex process.
- **Awareness:** Reaching the remote tribal belts of Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur requires continuous extension work.

The state's vision for 2026 and beyond is to make Himachal Pradesh the first 100% Natural Farming State in the world. By integrating traditional wisdom with modern scientific validation, Himachal is proving that agriculture can be both profitable for the farmer and gentle on the planet.

*\*Corresponding E-mail:  
shailjasharma567@gmail.com*