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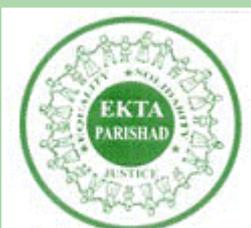
### INTERNATIONAL

**Rural Eco-tourism in  
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### AND ALSO

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*From 5th to 27th February the Tamadi group, partner of Ekta Parishad, launched the pilot tour of its rural eco-tourism project.*

### The Tamadi group/ Ekta Parishad partnership

Ekta Parishad and the Tamadi group created this partnership as a way to help European tourists discover the true reality of rural India. Thanks to this activity, it hopes to contribute to the promotion of rural and Indian culture; to strengthen cultural and social exchanges; to create supplementary revenues for the farmers; to improve housing and lifestyle matters in rural India; and to diversify Ekta Parishad's sources of financing. As far as Ekta Parishad (EP) is concerned, its main objective is mutual learning. EP hopes that its members can compare their ideas with other ways of thinking and acting. It is also important for westerners to realize what is happening in other regions of the world. And the tourists may become aware of what is happening and therefore support Ekta Parishad's mission.

### The pilot tour

There were four Belgians and three French people who tried the pilot tour. After having landed in Delhi, the travellers went to the Mahatma Gandhi Seva ashram (an Ekta Parishad training centre) in Jaura where they were warmly welcomed by Vinod, on behalf of Ekta Parishad, and by Praful, the ashram manager. Then they enjoyed their stay while living daily among the villagers in order to better understand their culture, the way they live, their means of livelihood. The first village that they visited was Shyampur, it is situated 80 km from Gwalior, they also visited other villages like Bajna and Charkha. The eco-tourists also did some sight-seeing and went to see among others Agra, Gwalior, Bhopal...

### What did they think about the tour ?

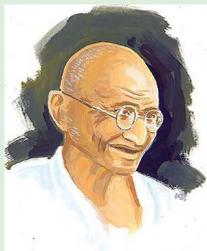


The travellers found that 'they have been welcomed very warmly in the villages' and that it was 'impressive'. They particularly liked the 'true and strong motivation of the villagers'. The rural and solidary tourism approach was a great idea since it made the tourists discover 'the reality of Indian life and their struggle for a better world' and they were able to appreciate the 'impact of Ekta Parishad on the villagers as well as their mobilization'. Both partners have thus successfully met the challenge of this new venture.

Morgane Daget

## An economy serving the poorest

« True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics, to be worth its name, must at the same time, be also good economics... True economics stands for social justice ;it promotes the good of all equally, including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life...»



M. K. Gandhi, in 'Harijan', 9th october 1937.

Ekta Parishad gets its inspiration to campaign and encourage a fairer economic development from the Gandhian model and its three economic principles, which are « Swaraj », « Swadeshi » and « Trusteeship » .

The first principle of *Swaraj* corresponds to the economic independence based on the fulfilment of needs and not on the abundance that is generated by mass production. Seven criteria define this idea of economic independence. The identification of basic human needs and the ways to fulfil them; the use of an environmentally responsible agriculture as a base to create a sustainable economy; the monitoring and promotion of basic education and technical training for communities; the emphasis on production being done by small units to the degree possible; the self-sufficiency of each unit as far as basic needs are concerned; the limitation of economic power concentration; and finally the elimination of poverty and the minimization of wealth. This principle is an alternative vision to the current economic system and it is necessary to free the weakest economies from the dominant position of neoliberal capitalism.

The « Swadeshi » or family economy implies local and traditional means of production, that would be respectful of life and the environment. The prevailing mass-production economic system compels people to leave their villages, their land, their jobs and their houses to go work in factories. Instead of being worthy human beings and members from village communities that respect each other, they simply become the mere parts of a machine. *Swadeshi* avoids economic dependence to external market forces that leave villagers vulnerable.

According to this principle, the villages have to build an economy that would enable them to fulfil the major part of their needs by favouring production and local consumption.

The notion of « Trusteeship » refers to the guardianship of ethics and to the spirituality of the economy. Thus according to this principle, private property should not be an absolute right, but subjected to the common good. The difference is that the revenues from land ownerships must be reasonable and should be reduced to a strict minimum. And finally, production has to be defined by social necessity and not by personal greed. The concept of Trusteeship gives a way to provide the means to transform the current capitalistic order into an egalitarian order. The objective being to place human dignity at the heart of the economy and not material prosperity.

The Ekta Parishad movement is based on these three principles. The youth camps and the *padyatra* (non-violent foot marches) organised through the country encourage landless people, village communities, and the poorest ones to develop and make their own, the ideas of family economies as well as economic and ethic independence. Moreover, various centres affiliated and supported by Ekta Parishad offer, at a local level, models of small scale development economic activity. Some centres are for instance devoted to the development of organic agriculture, like honey or *khadi* production. Numerous centres also offer trainings in various domains that enable village communities to get the necessary know-how to develop new local activities and thus meet their needs with dignity.

From January, 30<sup>th</sup> to February, 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010 in Bhopal, Ekta Parishad organised, together with Gandhi International, an international conference entitled: 'Towards a non-violent Economy'. The three Gandhian principles were the mainstays during this conference, guiding the discussions and the emerging ideas for a better vision of development.

Lou Crevel, Sandy Courjal

# The Zero Budget Natural Farming approach

The green revolution in India has done more harm than good to small and marginalized farmers. Indeed, monoculture and high input agriculture have resulted neither in self-sufficiency nor in the improvement of the small farmers' livelihood, but rather in the suicide of a thousand people.



Mr. Subhash Palekar

In the state of Kerala, the district of Wayanad is well known for its coffee and pepper products. Many farmers have adopted high input agriculture instead of the ancestral traditional cultivation. Many farmers have stopped the cultivation of coffee, because of the lower prices and, instead, have adopted the pepper cultivation in bulk. For a decade, a mysterious disease has decimated the pepper plantations, and this has led to the suicide of 2000 farmers.

Today, many farmers have expressed the will to adopt the Zero budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) approach, not just in the district of Wayanad but also in Kozhikode where the organization "Society for herbal research and development- Calicut" is promoting the ZBNF amongst farmers.

## What is the Zero Budget Natural Farming approach?

According to Mr. Subhash Palekar, the pioneer of ZB NF in India, "Zero Budget Natural Farming means that there will be no production cost for all the crops. In the Zero Budget Natural Farming nothing has to be purchased from the outside. Anything that is required for the growth of the plants are available around the root zone of the plants. There is no need to add anything from the outside".

## The main points of ZBNF are:

(i) Zero budget Farming: the farmers don't need to invest money on seeds, fertilizers and plant protection chemicals, (ii) seed (Beejamrutha) and crops treatment (Jeevamrutha) is made with a mixture produced using the cow dung and urine as the main compounds, (iii) mulching with organic residues and (iv) the plant protection only uses home-made natural pesticides.

The dung used is from Desi cows (local Indian cow breed). It is said that the desi cow dung is richer than the one of crossbred cows. In fact, one gram of desi cow dung contains 300 crores of different useful micro-organisms whereas one gram of crossbred dung contains only 70 lacks of these useful micro-organisms. One Desi cow is enough to cultivate thirty acres using the ZBNF approach.

In rural India, 30 lacks small farmers have adopted the Zero Natural Budget Farming Approach. In the state of Kerala, there are just 200 farmers using this farming approach.

## \* Production of mixture for the seeds and crops treatment:

### Mixture for crop treatment:

- 10 kg of cow dung
- 10 liters of urine
- 2 kg of black sugar
- 2 kg of black gram
- One hand-full of soil
- 200 liters of water

All these compounds are filled into one tank and mixed together twice a day.

After 2 days, the mixture is ready for use, and it can be used for a period of 7 days, after this period, a new mixture will be prepared.

### Treatment of the seeds:

- 50 gram of lime
- 5 kg of cow dung
- 5 liters of cow urine
- One hand-full of soil
- 5 liters of water

The compounds are mixed in a plastic tank. After 12 hours, the seed treatment product is ready for use. For 7 days, the mixture can be re-used once or twice depending on the kind of seeds being used.

Abderrazak Halfaoui

## References :

- ⇒ <http://palekarzerobudget-naturalfarming.com/home.html> (personnal site of Mr. Subhash Palekar).
- ⇒ Action research report on Subhash Palekar's Zero budget Natural Farming; R. Yogananda Babu.
- ⇒ Society for herbal research and development-Calicut.

## Demonstration by Dalits and tribals on the issue of The *Forest Rights Act 2008*.

On March, 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010, more than a thousand Dalits and Adivasis from different villages of the district of Jamui demonstrated in front of the District magistrate's office, demanding forest land ownership under the 2008 Forest Rights Act. The Rally and demonstration were organized by the local people and workers from the Jamui district branch of Ekta Parishad (EP) in Bihar. EP has been working in this area since 2001 after the land right's *pad-yatra* (foot march).

In the beginning, Ekta Parishad identified the problems of the Dalits and the tribals, who had no legal rights on forest land ownership. This was critical because they depended on the forest products and agriculture. EP workers then started to work on building awareness and creating *gram ekai* (village groups whose aim is to become self-sufficient). On June, 20<sup>th</sup> 2009, after the Janadesh March, when the Government of India announced the FRRA2008, EP called all tribals and Dalits of Jamui to Garhi place. Mr. PV Rajgopal addressed the big crowd of around 2500 people that gathered there. They collected the applications of 740 people through the *Gram sabha* (village assembly).

However, the government did not take any serious action on these petitions. More than 10 times, *cadres* (volunteer leaders) visited the Sub Divisional Office (Urban district Office) and the Block office (town council) but there was no result. Then people decided to protest because of the government's slow and inadequate response. The Block level committee (urban district committee) met in January 2010 and decided to call a big rally and demonstration at the district level (ceremonial county level) to demand the implementation of FRRA 2008.

Four blocks (districts) – Khaira, Skandra, Barahat and Jhajha in the district (county) of Jamui asked EP to call the People. The block level committee (district level committee) took on its responsibility to mobilize the community. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 they came and demonstrated

for their demands. More than 1000 people including 650 woman from 61 villages participated. In the absence of the District Collector (prefect), the Additional District



Collector (sub prefect) of Jamui took the memorandum and ensured delegates that the District Administration (ceremonial county administration) would take the responsibility to fulfill EP's demands. These demands are the following –

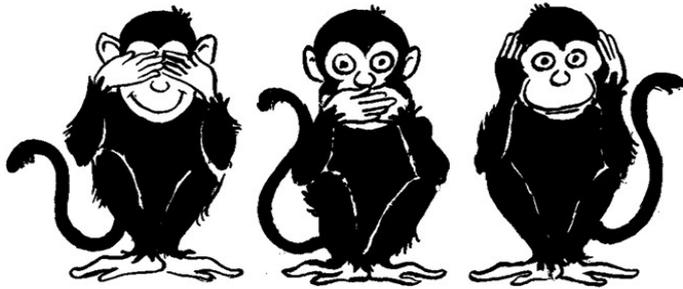
1. To ensure the implementation of FRRA2008 in Jamui
2. To Solve the Issue of land ownership for 740 people, who have submitted their claim form through *Gram sabha*.
3. To ensure a Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) job card to all Dalits and tribals.
4. To ensure Antyodaya (for the development of the marginalized and the poorest) card to all tribes and dalits.
5. To Provide compensation to the affected people of the village of Fulwaria Korasi in the block of Sikandra.

During the event, the *cadres* of all the coming villages decided to organize *Jan Satyagraha Mukhya Sangam* (the Jan Satyagraha leaders meeting) during the third week of April 2010 at Jhajha, where they discussed the progress of FRRA2008 and the preparation of Jan Satyagraha 2012. On this occasion, Mrs Manju Dung-Dung of Ekta Mahila Manch and Mr Pradeep Priyadarshi of EP Bihar were present. All local workers and coordinators were also present.



Ekta parishad Bihar  
Patna, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

## In Brief...



### *In one click!*

#### **Meeting with the India delegation April, 8th 2010**

Read the Karima Delli's speech during the meeting by clicking on the following link (in french):  
<http://www.karimadelli.com/2010/04/08/reunion-de-la-delegation-inde-du-8-avril-2010/>

## April, 17<sup>th</sup>: International day of peasant struggle

April, 17<sup>th</sup> is the international day of peasant struggle, to commemorate the anniversary of the massacre of 19 peasants who fell struggling for access to land in Brazil on April, 17th 1996. They were assassinated by killers in the pay of large landowners. Each year, on April 17th there is a good opportunity for Via Campesina to increase public awareness of worldwide struggle of peasants. To commemorate this date, delegates from different countries met on Plaza del 14 de septiembre in Cochabamba, Bolivia, so that people would not forget this date and that peasant struggle would gather more and more strength. There were different actions across the world in order to mobilize as many people as possible in favour of peasant rights in the whole world.

Find the list of these actions on the Via campesina website :

[http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=903:list-of-worldwide-actions-for-april-17-2010-&catid=26:17-april-day-of-peasants-struggle&Itemid=33](http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=903:list-of-worldwide-actions-for-april-17-2010-&catid=26:17-april-day-of-peasants-struggle&Itemid=33)

Morgane Daget

# You are in **India**, and

⇒ You want to attend a **youth camp** to learn more about youth leadership?

Youth camps		
Date	Place	Contact
From 5th to 8th May	District of Baran, <b>Rajasthan</b>	<b>Maneesh</b> rajpoot2@gmail.com rajpoot.ekta@gmail.com
From 21st to 23rd May	District of Wayanad, <b>Kerala</b>	<b>Fr Stephen Mathew</b> stephen707@gmail.com

## Join us!

«You must not lose faith in humanity.  
Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the  
ocean does not become dirty ».

- Mahatma Gandhi -



### **Ekta parishad**

International Coordination

Gandhi Bhawan

Shyamla Hills

Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh 462002

Phone: 07554223821 - 07552661800

email : jansatyagraha2012@gmail.com

www.ektaparishad.com

« **Well being of the last for the well being of all** »