

Learning Network on Agroecology and Food Systems

Context and Objectives

India's agriculture is at a crossroads. On one hand, the country faces an agrarian crisis marked by ecological degradation, farmer distress, and nutritional insecurity. On the other, a groundswell of community-based organisations (CBOs), farmer collectives, and research groups are championing agroecology and sustainable food systems across the country. These efforts are rooted in diverse contexts—tribal, rainfed, peri-urban, and irrigated—and are generating a wealth of grounded knowledge. However, this knowledge often remains fragmented and inconsistently shared across regions and sectors. There is a growing recognition that peer-to-peer learning, knowledge exchange and collaborative research are essential to scale agroecology and food systems transformation.

At the same time, rapid technological, policy, and economic developments are taking place in the Indian agriculture sector. From genome-edited crops to agricultural trade policy shifts, the larger ecosystem within which agroecology and food systems actors operate is changing rapidly. There is an urgent need to understand and respond to such developments, which can have significant implications and impacts on the everyday work of such organisations.

To address both these objectives, the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture is starting a **Learning Network**, which can be a platform for organisations working in agroecology and food systems to share their experiences and learnings as well as discuss policy and technological developments. In the long-term, we plan to offer courses based on our own experiences of facilitating agroecology and sustainable food systems that will be open to all. In offering such courses, we hope to collaborate with other members of the Learning Network, and build a collectively owned and operated model of learning accessible to all. We believe that this can play a catalytic role in enabling knowledge exchange, collective capacity building, and policy advocacy grounded in field realities.

To start with, we plan to revive our initiative of the **Knowledge Spectrum Series (KSS)** — initiated in 2023 by the **Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA)** and the **Krishna Sudha Academy for Agroecology (KSA)**. The KSS also aimed to co-create a learning network anchored in practice, dialogue, and collective inquiry.

The Knowledge Spectrum Series - Journey So Far

The Knowledge Spectrum Series was designed as an open online platform to facilitate meaningful dialogue on Indian agriculture and agroecology. The sessions brought together practitioners, scientists, policy watchers, and community leaders to unpack key challenges and emerging opportunities, while addressing frequently asked questions (FAQs) and debunking widespread myths.

Over the past year, KSS has hosted a diverse set of webinars, accessible here:

 [Knowledge Spectrum Series Playlist on CSA's YouTube Channel - Krishi TV](#)

Topics covered included:

- Foundations and distinctions of organic and natural farming practices
- Learnings from the NGGB Scheme in Chhattisgarh
- Understanding the Agri Infrastructure Fund (AIF)
- Role of Nitrogen in Plant-Soil Systems
- Direct-Seeded Rice (DSR) - Its practical perspectives
- Regenerative agriculture and systems thinking
- Grant for Agroecology Program (GAP) and funding strategies

Each session was structured around a **4-week calendar**, with:

- Speaker/Expert identification and outreach
- Promotion through social media and email networks
- Registration and reminder communications
- 1-hour live webinars (30–40 min talk + 20 min interaction/Q&A)
- Post-session video uploads and informal alumni engagement

Relaunching the KSS: Co-Creating the Next Phase

Building on the learning and momentum from the previous phase, we now invite diverse stakeholders to co-create the **next chapter of the Knowledge Spectrum Series**. The vision is to deepen inquiry, connect more voices from the field, and build a growing network for knowledge exchange and capacity building.

Proposed focus areas include:

- Gender, youth, and leadership in agroecology
- Community-led innovations in pest and soil management
- Climate resilience and agroecology
- Local markets and alternative food networks
- Emerging technologies and their implications
- Financing and policy advocacy for sustainable food systems
- Agricultural Trade Negotiations and their implications
- Collaborative research and farmer-led experiments
- Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and agroecological enterprises

Relaunching with Bio-Input Resource Centres

For our first discussion of the renewed Knowledge Spectrum series, we wanted to discuss the topic of **Bio-Input Resource Centres**. On April 23 this year, the government announced guidelines for the setting up of bio-input resource centres (BRC) under the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF). A target of establishing 10,000 need-based BRCs had also earlier been announced as part of the 2023-24 Budget. In 2023, the government had also announced its intention to set up a national-level, distributed network of BRCs, with 1 BRC per 50 ha cluster, during the period from 2022-23 to 2025-26.

Despite the focus on BRCs, under the revised NMNF scheme, financial support of only Rs 1 lakh will be provided to each centre. Many have argued that this would not be sufficient to cover the infrastructure and maintenance costs of even small-scale BRCs. However, the scheme and financial support provide opportunities to build on previous and ongoing efforts by farmer entrepreneurs, collectives and civil society organizations. It also allows us to address challenges that have been associated with BRCs and build robust and sustainable bio-input value chains.

The inaugural Learning Network session will address these relevant issues, as well as provide a practical introduction to the processes involved in setting up and running a BRC. It will also introduce participants to different BRC models and explain relevant government guidelines and schemes in detail. We hope this session will also allow participants to expand their networks and share their own experiences and learnings.



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The discussion will be hosted online, with speaker presentations and a panel discussion. Please find more details below:

Topic: Setting Up Bio Resource Centres (BRCs): All You Need to Know

Mode: Krishna Sudha Academy for Agroecology Zoom Platform (Online)

Date: 12 July, Saturday

Time: 3:00 - 4:30 PM

Registration: Register [HERE](#)

Speakers:

G.V. Ramanjaneyulu - Executive Director, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA) and Krishna Sudha Academy for Agroecology (KSA)

Bhairava Kumar - Programme Manager, Farm and Training at Krishna Sudha Academy for Agroecology (KSA)

V. Abhishekam - Founder & Agripreneur, AJ Bio Resource Centre, YSR Dist. Andhra Pradesh

Resources

Please find below a list of resources on bio-inputs and BRCs:

1. [Centre releases guidelines for setting up bio-resource centres to aid natural farming transition](#) - Down to Earth
2. [Centre to aid farmers in setting up 10,000 Bio-Resource Centres to promote natural farming: ICAR - The Hindu](#)
3. [\[Commentary\] Challenges in scaling natural farming with bio-input resource centres](#) - Mongabay India
4. [Summary of the Union Budget 2024-2025](#) - Press Information Bureau
5. [Promotion Of Natural Farming 2023](#) - Press Information Bureau
6. [Bio-input Resource Centre](#) - Natural Farming Technical Process Manual by NCNF
7. [The promise and potential of Bio-input Resource Centres \(BRCs\): Scaling-Up Grassroot Innovations](#) - IRMA
8. [A 4-Day Residential Course on Setting Up a Bio Resource Centre \(BRC\)](#) - A popular and currently in-demand course at our academy, Krishna Sudha Academy for Agroecology. Completed 3 batches in 2025-26, and the 4th one is running currently.