



Contextual Understanding of Conventional Farming, Organic Farming and Natural Farming



Conventional Farming :

Follows an inclusive/integrated approach to agricultural production. Gives freedom to farmers to decide what to grow and how to grow. Allows use of both chemical as well as organic and natural inputs. Permits cultivation of hybrid crops, GMOs and traditional/local varieties. Well equipped to tackle pest epidemics. Achieves high productivity (yield). Cost of production per unit is low and the output price stays competitive in the trade. Largely contributes to food security. Practiced in **98%** of the farmlands globally. Over **99%** of internationally traded agricultural products comes from conventional agriculture.



Organic Farming:

Practiced all over the world in the past- till early 1900s. Now in its new avatar, it is highly regulated- from production to marketing. Allows only use of organic manures and certain natural and organic pesticides. Only organic seeds must be used. Disallows use of hybrids and GMOs. Requires more labour and resources. Productivity (yield) would be **~30-40%** less compared to conventional farming. Labelled to differentiate the output, caters to niche market and fetches higher price. Practiced in about **2%** of the farmlands globally now. Its share in the international agricultural trade is **1%**.



Natural Farming:

Also known as Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF). Mimics nature and disallows human supplied inputs. Allows use of only on farm/in house available resources making the net cost of farming equal to zero. Simply put, it is not external input-driven farming. The productivity (yield) fluctuates. According to natural farming philosophy, the plants get **98%** of their nutrient requirements from the air, water and sunlight. Owning indigenous cow is a prerequisite to practicing natural farming. Production and marketing remain unregulated/uncertified (unlike organic farming). Not recognized as niche product and therefore the output does not fetch premium price.

Many have incorrect/incomplete understanding of these concepts. Hence, this contextual explanatory paper.