

NIT Rourkela Goes The Organic Way

Rourkela: The intensive use of chemical-based fertilisers and pesticides in agriculture calls for a change although most consumers in India are unaware of the harmful effects of such practices. Annually, the country consumes about 500 lakh tonnes of chemical and 320 lakh tonnes of indigenous fertiliser every year but the organic route is still a faraway dream. Realising the gravity of the situation, the National Institute of Technology, Rourkela, has decided to promote organic farming aiming at a better future for farmers in the region. The institute has already hired a subject specialist and has taken up an ambitious initiation to improvise the organic farming research and provide organic vegetables to the students and campus residents.

Training Programme For Farmers

Having been inaugurated by Jual Oram, Union Minister, Tribal Affairs on November 10, the organic farming project at NIT Rourkela is on its way to become a boon for farmers in the region. Professor Debayan Sarkar of Chemistry department, who has been given the charge of looking into the day to day progress of the project along with Professor Nihar Ranjan Mishra of Humanities and Professor Rama Chandra Pradhan of Food Process Engineering, said, “We have set-up a research laboratory to intensify research in organic farming. We have taken this project very seriously. If everything goes properly, we will organise training programmes for farmers which will help them in developing vast knowledge about organic farming.” Prof Nihar Ranjan Mishra further added, “It is because of the hard work of the team led by director Animesh Biswas that organic farming at NIT Rourkela has become a reality. Hope this project can help farmers learn the techniques of organic farming.”

Power Of Organic Farming

A known face in the organic farming business, Uday Chandra Patra of Uday Jaivic Research has been hired by the institute as an advisor for the project implementation. He has been an expert in this field and has developed his own organic farming site of three acres at Kuarmunda, Rourkela along with some other sites. Expressing his strong belief in the power of organic farming, he said, “Many believe that organic farming is only a dream and in reality, without using chemicals and pesticides, one cannot pursue healthy farming but it is a myth. There are certain compositions in organic products and if you mix them, they it will work better than pesticides. Like by mixing up some dry leaves, better food for saplings can be prepared. Nature has the solution for every problem and that is what I am focusing on for this project.”

Better Techniques For Future

The institute aims to improvise the techniques of organic farming by carrying out exhaustive multidisciplinary research which will involve fields like organic chemistry, biotechnology, food process, life sciences, chemical engineering and humanities which exist under one roof at NIT Rourkela.

With satisfactory progress achieved under the project already, the institute now aims to start training programmes and lecture sessions to train farmers of the nearby

locality. The institute administration feels that in near future, this will lead to the creation of lab-to-field technology and a sustainable environment which will be free from harmful fertilisers, thus setting an example for the entire nation.

The faculties are in process of applying to different funding agencies to boost up the project. Director of NIT Rourkela Professor Animesh Biswas said, ‘We have developed the organic farming project. We have taken up the help of a person who is an expert in this field. The main objective is to improvise the techniques of organic farming and make it much easier for the farmers. We will try to encourage the farmers to do more of organic farming so that they can use these techniques in the field.’