

Organic Farming

The invention of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and hybrid seeds have ushered in a new era of agriculture. Now, that man can foresee the outcome of excessive and insensible use of artificial agro-products, at least to a certain degree, the controversy between



Organic farming in Bamhani Base Centre

further and faster development and environmentally imposed limits have become even more pressing and demand for **a sustainable solution**. Furthermore, the farmers' dependency on dubious hybrid seeds not only endangers the environment, but also their financial stability. To give a humane and environmentally friendly input, the Sangam shows **the advantages of organic farming principles**. On its model farm only traditional seeds are cultivated, which can be reused, and organic fertilizer is produced. Thus, both farmers' and the environmental needs are respected.

The future

With the help of local agricultural and social experts the Sangam plans to improve the present facilities and offer training programmes for villagers. Knowing about the difficulties of changing farming methods, the Sangam also wants to support farmers when converting to organic farming.

Get involved

To maintain the existing organic fields and to further promote sustainable organic methods in the region, a solid financial base and your support is required.

Kindly make a contribution in order to help us to achieve sustainable agricultural development in the region.

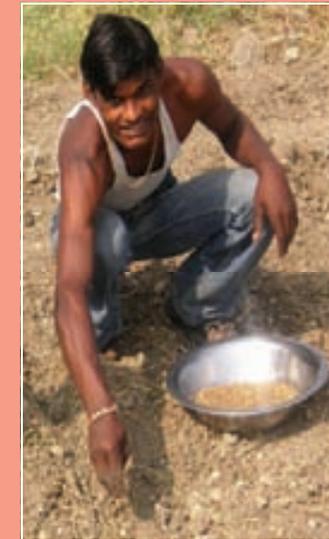
All donations to the Ecumenical Sangam will qualify for deductions under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act 1961 (50 % Income Tax Deduction).



Dinesh, one of the farm workers, with his proud son



SANGAM'S Sustainable Agriculture



- Sericulture
- Water Management
- Organic Farming

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About Ecumenical Sangam

Founded in 1993, the **Ecumenical Sangam** is a non-profit Health and Community Development Organisation aiming to empower the poorer sections of society by the provision of **healthcare, education, awareness raising and long term skill-building activities.**

In Bamhani village, 35 km south of Nagpur, the Sangam runs a Base Centre which includes an Agricultural Model Farm, a Training Centre for Technical and Sewing Classes, a Kindergarten school and a Rural Village Health Centre.



F.l.t.r.: Mamta Hospital, Kitchen Garden and the Sangam's School Building with the Sewing and Technical Classes and the Kindergarten

Through the Base Centre and three Sub-centres in Shedeshwar, Gondwananagar and Narayanpur, the Sangam is working in **45 villages** south of Nagpur.

Water Management

Demand for water has risen constantly resulting in exploitation of the groundwater resources and in pollution of the surface water. This situation has been aggravated by farmers who are mostly **dependent on deep-bore wells**, since rainfalls are highly volatile in the Vidarbha region. Furthermore soil degradation decreases the land's productivity. The farmers insufficient knowledge of appropriate land usage and heavy dependency on artificial agro-products often leads to huge debts causing them to commit suicide. In order to remedy these problems, the Sangam has



Farm ponds and trench lines retain precious water developed a model farm at its Base Centre in Bamhani to educate the farmers about water saving agriculture. The Sangam presents **easily feasible Water Management Measures** like farm ponds, trench lines, bunds, gully plugs, contour lines and drip irrigation. These methods provide the cultivators with a long-term **effective way of overcoming their problems.**

Sericulture

To give an example of a **financial hedge**, the Sangam runs a sericulture project at its Base Centre. Farmers can take advantage of the still growing silk market in India and thus become less dependent on rather risky agriculture. Moreover, growing silk worms is econo-



Silk worms as a reliable source of income, despite the growing unreliability of the monsoon rains mic, as can be seen in the Sangam's sericulture shed. Although only **18 square metres** in size, **24,000 worms** can be farmed there. As to their food, half an acre of Mulberry, the leaves of which they eat, is sufficient to nourish one generation of worms. Given these figures, the corresponding yield is about **40 kg of cocoons monthly**, which earns approximately **Rs. 4,000**. The State of Maharashtra pays about Rs. 90-125 per kilogram, depending on quality. The Sangam also offers regular sericulture training sessions with the help of the National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning, Nagpur.