

Bolegaon - Dist Nilanga

The villagers of Bolegaon speak about the effects of **climatic changes on village life...**

The agriculture was badly affected after the drought in 1972. The situation became worse because of the drought and when earthquakes would occur we were affected adversely. It was only when the monsoons favored us were the yields were good. The yield of our crops was good the year before but because of the pests and various diseases we did not get any thing from the affected crops. Rain in the region was scattered. Our neighboring village received rains but our village did not get any. The environment is affecting us badly. As trees were cut down on a large scale the rainfall also reduced.

Before the trees were thick and green, but now there are few tree left as they have been axed in large numbers. We had plenty of eucalyptus trees in our village, but they got cut after the earthquake. Our yield of mangos has also reduced considerably low. We used to get plenty of mangos before. Now, the air is polluted and we have Congress grass and Babool trees everywhere. As the climate is changing, seeds are changing as well.

There are advertisements by the company which are promoting seeds which yielded up to two and a half times more crops per acre than earlier varieties of seeds. In order to gain an advantage and grow crops, farmers turned to hybrid crop varieties. With the exception of 'Moong' farmers utilized all hybrid varieties of seeds promoted by the company. The farmers however became greedy about crop yield and invested more. In reality however, the company's sunflower seeds only yielded 1 or 2 budlets whereas the old homegrown varieties yielded 4 to 5. As the seeds changed, so did the fertilizers and pesticides, and together brought unknown side effects. The expenditure also increase due to climate changes, and the yield did not reach out expectations. Sowing the company's seeds also required more investment and labor, and slowly we drifted away from the good old organic variety which we used to grow before.

Cattle / animal wealth

The mixed breed (hybrids) varieties of cattle are increasing, as the mixed breeds have a higher produce, which made them more attractive to purchase. We used have a lot of ghee and milk in our homes before and we were healthy because of this. Nowadays the cattle is bought to earn money. Not a single drop of milk is keep at home. The milk which is produced is sold to the dairy, and if anyone makes ghee, they sell it to earn money.

Needs and wants increased

As our income increased so did our needs. Our homes have cars, clocks, TV sets, and our food and lifestyle have undergone change as well. Before there used to be just a single brand of washing soap and women would go to the canals to wash cloths but now there are different types of detergents to wash cloths. Nowadays I was a different shirt everyday when before I only had two pairs of clothing. We would eat hot 'bhakris' with curd and groundnut chutney before but now there is no milk to make curd at home.

Most of the income that comes from agriculture is not in proportion to the investment today, which results in a constant effort to earn more and more money out of every endeavor. As there is not a high level of education in the villages, employability and regular income are poor. As a result of this, families have begun to migrate and nearly 100 families from villages have settled in Bhiwandi. There is no awareness about organic farming or growing vegetables and fruits, so the villagers are not inclined to it. Even though there are television programs on farming and agriculture, the villagers are not interested, and watch dance, music and TV serials.

The world is suffering from inflation and it becomes exhaustive to make ends meet and cover household expenses everyday. When problems arise many villagers blame it on God and stay quiet, pray and send money to the temple. The rates of oil, tea, sugar, groundnut are increasing every day. How can we afford vegetables, dal and milk. They are all so expensive and life is very difficult.