



**a toxics-free future**

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## **International SAICM Implementation Project (ISIP)**

In 2010, in an effort to demonstrate SAICM implementation via IPEN Participating Organizations, IPEN launched an International SAICM Implementation Project, also known as ISIP. ISIP aims to mobilize resources for initial enabling activities pertaining to national priorities, in keeping with the work areas set out in the strategic objectives of section IV of the SAICM Overarching Policy Strategy.

In particular, the ISIP supports the Governance objective of SAICM's Overarching Policy Strategy paragraph 26, which calls for enhanced "cooperation on the sound management of chemicals between Governments, the private sector and civil society at the national, regional and global levels."

In addition, ISIP builds on the 2008-2009 Global SAICM Outreach Campaign to raise awareness about SAICM and strengthen collaboration among the public interest, health and labor sectors.

### **ISIP Objectives**

ISIP's four objectives include:

- Promoting the need for sound chemicals management
- Advancing National SAICM Implementation
- Promoting global SAICM implementation by global civil society
- Building capacity among NGOs developing countries and countries with economies in transition

**Title of activity:** Promotion for Chemical-Free Agriculture for Chemical Balance

**NGO:** Parivartan Pariharpur Sansthan

**Country:** India

**Date:** August, 2012

### **Elements of SAICM Covered:**

Promote substitution for highly toxic pesticides including effective non-chemical alternatives (27); Provide training in alternative and ecological agricultural practices, including non-chemical alternatives (51); Encourage industry to extend product stewardship and to voluntarily withdraw highly toxic pesticides which are hazardous and cannot be used safely under prevalent conditions (30); Promote integrated pest and integrated vector management (29); Establish programmes for monitoring chemicals and pesticides to assess exposure (66)

### **Description of:**

**The highly hazardous pesticide(s) registered/sold and/or in use in your country:**

Rajnager block of Madhubani district of Bihar state of India is one of the poorest regions of the country. Agriculture is the back bone of the economy of the area. The farmers used to cultivate rice, wheat, betel and mango, etc. Earlier there was limited use of chemical fertilizer but in recent years the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has increased many folds. Further, as the farmers are uneducated and hardly any information is reaching them, they are over-using the chemical pesticides and fertilizers in a very unscientific manner.

**Alternatives and/or bio pesticides available, if any:**

There are many indigenous materials and techniques available at the local level, which are eco-friendly and economical. The leaf of 'Neem', seeds of 'Neem', leaf of 'Tobacco', etc. can be used in making pesticides and it is effective also. However, in due course of time, the farmers are losing the local wisdoms and are adopting the chemical fertiliser.

**Health and environmental effects of the pesticides:**

In the recent years, the uses of chemical pesticides and fertilisers have increased many folds in the area. However, there is no data and information available to establish linkages on the harmful impacts of the chemical pesticides and fertiliser of the area. Farmers of the area are complaining about the rashes in their palms and spraying of pesticides with a naked hand may be attributed to the fact. Further, the location of the project is very much famous for the betel cultivation, but farmers were complaining about the wilting of the plants due to the impact of chemical fertiliser and pesticides. The quality of betel leaves was also not so good. Farmers were also complaining about the crop loss due to the unscrupulous use of chemical fertiliser.

**Information on pesticide levels in the environment, in food, or in people:**

In India there are an enumerable number of researches being conducted on the impact of pesticides on biodiversity by the academicians and the leading NGOs like Toxics Link, CSE, Kheti Virasat Mission, and Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Voice. But most of the research is being done in the areas of Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi and Maharashtra, which are the high agricultural belts of the country. However, there are no state or region-specific studies on the impact of pesticides in Bihar

**Existing pesticide legislation in your country:**

India has the Insecticides Act -1968, to regulate the pesticides in India. However, a new law has already been in process; "The Pesticides Bill -2008", to replace the existing legislation. The new legislation has better provisions for the management of pesticides.

**Use of IPM and ecological agriculture:**

After the negative aspects of chemical pesticides have come into the lime light, IPM and ecological agriculture is catching up in many parts of India. There are also efforts by Bihar state government to push for organic agriculture in the villages. However, knowledge and information on IPM are abysmally low. The NGOs are playing an important role in changing the behavioural practice of the farmers to get confidence for adoption of ecological agriculture. Recently more farmers are adopting for IPM and ecological agriculture like manure from cow dung.

**Conditions of work:**

The project area is one of the most underdeveloped districts of the country. The literacy rate of the district is abysmally low at 41.9%, which is much lower than the national average. Due to administrative bottlenecks, the farmers and farm labors are devoid of any information on the judicious use of pesticides and fertilizers. In most cases, pesticides are being sprayed with naked hand and without taking any safety measures. Farmers and farm laborers are also not aware of the negative impact of the chemical pesticides and fertilizers. In these circumstances, NGOs' roles are very crucial to educate the farmers for the adoption of IPM and ecological agriculture.

**Project Outcomes:**

**Description of the activity conducted to reduce the threat posed by highly hazardous pesticides and advance this SAICM aim.**

- Formation of 10 Farmer's Clubs (FCs) involving marginal and small farmers in Rajnagar block of Madhubani district of India.

Sl	Name of Panchayat	Name of FCs	No. of members
1	Mangrauni (South)	Raja Salhesh FC	11
2		Pilakhwar FC	12
3		Ram Kisan Club	10
4		Islam Kisan Club	12
5		Vishal Kisan Club	10
6	Raghuni Dehat	Dakshani Kisan Club	10
7		Jagruti Kisan Club	10
8		Rai Kisan club	10
9		Krishak Kisan Club	10
10		Nihar Kisan Club	10
		<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>

- Capacity building of these farmers club.
- Skill Development on ecological agriculture
- Convergence with government departments
- Networking with NABARD, ATMA, Horticulture Department and Agriculture University
- Wall writing in villages
- Interaction with Agro Scientists with members of FCs
- Community education through IEC materials developed by the organization
- Promotion to prepare indigenous fertilizer and pesticides.

**Impact on target groups:**

The target groups in the project were mostly the marginal farmers and small farmers. Initially the farmers were motivated to set up the farmers' clubs. There was constant discussions and networking with the farmers to form farmers' clubs. Setting up of the farmers' clubs helped farmers to raise the issues in a common platform and discuss the cross cutting issues. The farmers' clubs were also discussing the issues of chemical pesticides and adoption of organic agriculture. The farmers shared their success stories on adoption of cow dung as manures in the club, which motivated other farmers to adopt the similar systems. Some farmers have also received the plastic bags for composting. The farmers are also nowadays feeling proud of cultivating organic betel, etc. The success of some of the farmers will help more farmers to use composting as organic manure in future.

1. Small and marginal farmers organized and came to know team work culture.
2. Enhanced ecological farming practices, community education and awareness. Participation and involvement of common mass towards the uppermost problem of agriculture and environment.
3. Indigenous & eco friendly measures of agriculture has been enhanced.
4. Changed behaviours of target groups towards eco-friendly activities.
5. House hold system for the storage of garbage developed.
6. People will be inclined towards the use of compost & vermi compost, eco-pesticides, food security etc.
7. Strong network of farmers, government departments, and people's representatives made and leveraged the schemes.
8. Elected representatives of panchayat were oriented towards the problem by using chemical fertilizers and pesticides and initiated their inclination for its adaptation.
9. Issue highlighted at local level and target groups oriented to combat the problem.
10. Eco friendly agriculture practices, livelihood resources adopted by the society at large.

### **Impact on target policies:**

The concept of the farmers' club is getting more popular day by day. The government is also planning to promote farmers' clubs. At present the farmers' clubs have a limited working sphere. However, in the coming days the farmers' clubs will be able to influence government policies like subsidies on organic manure, better remunerations for their products, etc.

### **Outreach to stakeholders:**

Apart from the farmers, the state horticulture department, Agriculture University and NABARD are the important stakeholders in the project. Net workings have been set up with the relevant agencies to push the issues further. In the future, NABARD has also promised for support to upscale their activities so that more farmers will benefit.

### **Deliverables, outputs and/or products:**

Awareness materials have been developed for the farmers to promote composting. Wall wrings have been done in many places of the villages to promote the issues.

### **Communication Efforts:**

The media were constantly updated about the issues. Even media people were present in the meeting. As the organisation is a very small one and working in very remote areas, media has not given priority to our work.

### **SAICM National Focal Point:**

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### **NGO Recommendations for next steps:**

1. Strong follow-up actions required.
2. Needs to implement such activities in wider area and cover more farmers.
3. More IEC materials are required to be developed.

4. Project should be continued for more time and introduced in broader areas of the same block.
5. Strong networking with other agencies working on the issue should be developed.
6. Periodic workshops should be organized in which participation of members of farms is ensured.