

HOW PROJECT SAFE IS TRANSFORMING FARMING AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH IN INDIA

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Agriculture employed more than 50% of the Indian workforce and contributed to 20.3% of the country's GDP as per the Indian Economic Survey. As such the history of agriculture practices in India dates back to the neolithic period. In a unique and transformative move to address sustainable farming and streamline occupational health and safety, a joint initiative by BASF Nunhems & [CHD Group](#) called Project SAFE (Safety and Farm Efficiency) was initiated to strengthen occupational health safety for farmers in Karnataka and Maharashtra. [Edward & Cynthia Institute of Public Health](#) (ECIPH) provided technical support to strengthen the occupational health mandate by integrating policy-based risk informed interventions.

The project was divided into different layers wherein at the initial stage the gap analysis from farm to home was assessed through population-based sampling technique and various practices adhered to by farmers was understood from a public health stand-point. This itself threw light on the huge lacunae on farm safety practices and occupational health needs of farmers which served on risk informed planning and subsequent capacity building. Farm practices such as spraying of pesticides in the direction of wind, not using personal protective equipment, not following scientific approaches when it comes to safe disposal of waste and other gaps were studied.









Subsequently, over 1205 farmers from different regions of Karnataka and Maharashtra were trained in occupational health and safety while working on the farms in the first of its kind initiative in the country linking to public health security and human development. Importance of using personal protective equipment, hand-washing, safe disposal of waste, first aid while at the farm, safety from snakes and other insects, timely health prevention and other aspects were discussed.

The next phase involved construction of phytobaths for seed chemical treatment and management, capacity building of growers on safety nets at the farms during chemical management. About 30 farmers were identified to initiate the construction of phytobaths for the seed chemical management and safe disposal and trained in this regard.

The health profile of farmers was carried out and their health conditions assessed from a preventive

perspective. Poster promotional, wall art and digital campaigns around farm efficiency, farm safety, food security, occupational health safety and decoding climate induced public health consequences were carried out at different places.