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It's Business as Usual: Never Ending Family Farming

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There is a tradition in India, where agriculture is being practiced as a profession. More than 70 per cent of the population depend on it. This has been practiced for generations together. Even a piece of land has been ploughed for generations after generations to produce food and it continues. We talk about climate change but a farmer after sowing the seed; he prays the almighty for good showers. He just recollects what the rainfall was during last cropping season, and for this time, he predicts it may improve or it may recede. He is well acquainted for this climate change.

Brenda Schoepp (an inspirational speaker and creative writer) rightly said “My grandfather used to say once in your life you need a doctor, a lawyer, a police man and a preacher, but every day, three times a day you need a farmer”. It applies not only to the writer alone, but also for every human being living on earth. The farmer is the one who feeds millions and millions all over the world and makes their life simple and easier. Food production globally is declining at a

rapid pace. The thrust for infrastructure and rapid urbanization is acquiring productive agricultural land and making it fragmented day by day. The Alarm bells started to ring when there was decline in precipitation and increase in temperature and occurrence of natural disasters at regular intervals in the past decade. We guess and wonder climate change has become a bizarre word and everywhere there are



Husband ploughing the field and wife broadcasting the seeds, never ending family farming

used to be the brainstorming sessions, conferences and seminars all over the world. The vagary of climate change has to be fought not by an individual but by all together.

We as the researchers, by reviewing literature and discussing with other colleagues, understand what exactly climate change is and it's direct bearing on farming and the farmer. As our part of the research program at Central Agroforestry Research Institute, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh (India) on integration of trees into agricultural landscapes i.e. agroforestry, we went to our watershed village and out of curiosity we used to ask our farmers, how they perceive climate change and what they understand. They replied like this “what will be the rainfall this

growing season? And whether his well or pond will get recharged or not? And what the produce he exactly expects from his field. He understands and has already sensed the effects of climate change. But for him the business is as usual since he has to feed his family. There is a tradition in India, where agriculture is being practiced as a profession. More than 70 per cent of the population depend on it. This has been practiced for generations together. Even a piece of land has been ploughed for generations after generations to produce food and it continues.

As per his calendar the farmer schedules his preparations by collecting stored seeds of last year, by the time pre monsoon showers start during June, he will be ready with his plough and seeds. Head of the family and all other members of family are involved in this activity. After sowing the seed, he prays the almighty for good showers. He just recollects what the rainfall was last cropping season. This time he predicts it may improve or it may recede. He is well acquainted for this change.

As a researchers we wonder, what steps we have taken to mitigate the menace of climate change and how best we are prepared to convince the farmer. Whether we are ready to face the challenge of climate change on farmer's behalf or else how best we can train him and make him ready to face. There is a need for a collective action to tackle this menace of climate change. The best way is, storing of the seeds at low temperatures, conserving germplasm and developing high yielding and drought resistant varieties. Promotion of low moisture loving crops instead of moisture loving crops. More and more rainwater harvesting structures need to be established and water has to be conserved on watershed basis. Growing of diversified crops rather than monocrops is need of the hour. We asked them to plant trees all along the boundaries, bunds etc so that they may serve as an investment in disguise for the next generation. We asked them to love their profession and requested never to leave this. Community farming or village farming is another way out. Awareness about the vagaries of climate change has to be created at the grassroot level. Never wonder what farmers expect from researcher like us, just he needs good advice, quality seeds, how best he can optimally utilize his piece of land. He never loses his courage, agriculture is his profession and he worships it. He doesn't know other profession and we hope he never stops this and would pass his baton generations after generation. Never mind what will be the vagaries of climate change in future but for him this is his business as usual.