

## World Food Day: JICA enhances India's Agricultural Practices

*~ In its endeavor to strengthen food supply via efficient methods of cultivation in India ~*

**New Delhi, October 16, 2020:** As per the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report 2020<sup>1</sup>, India accounted for 22% of the global burden of food insecurity, the highest for any country, in 2017-19. In addition to the existing food burden of the country, the pandemic of COVID-19 worsen the situation of food security and income level of the farmers in the country as the supply chain has been seriously damaged by the social distancing measures and sudden stagnation of the economy. In this backdrop Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) commemorated World Food Day, to reiterate its commitment towards building a smooth food network in India through its projects in agriculture sector.

**Speaking on the occasion of World Food Day, Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, JICA India said,** "The outbreak of COVID-19 has hampered the supply chain process for essentials including food products. JICA aims to disseminate and inculcate agricultural best practices in India, through its agriculture and irrigation projects under ODA loans and training programs in India. Moreover, JICA has facilitated supply of food products to the end consumer, in its endeavor to ensure food security for all and stable income generation for farmers. JICA will keep supporting the sector to achieve more resilient food supply system and contributing India to become more self-reliant. ."

For the agricultural sector, JICA has supported 24 projects including technical cooperation and ODA loan projects which amount to 271 billion Japanese Yen (approximately INR 19,000 crore) since 1981/82. These agricultural projects have a two-pronged approach i.e. optimize land capacity and increase productivity as well as increase the farmer's income. This approach helps in creating a self-sustainable mechanism for the dependent communities. Estimated total irrigated area is 1 million ha, and number of beneficiaries of the projects will be more than 1.1 lakh families in the recent 2 decades.

One such project is the Himachal Pradesh Crop Diversification Promotion Project being run in collaboration with JICA (HPCDP-JICA project). Due to lack of irrigation facilities, the farmers were completely dependent on the weather and used to grow only wheat and maize crops. Distressed by the weather, many farmers in the village had started to quit farming. Amidst frustration and despair, the HPCDP-JICA Project has brought a new hope to these farmers, by way of infrastructure development of modern irrigation, farm access roads and collection center and various training programs to transfer improved agricultural techniques. Along with the modern irrigation and agricultural implements it also made mulching sheets and improved seeds available. By doing this, the farmers' tendency towards vegetables and other cash crops started increasing and the income of the dependent farmers has increased almost five times due to HPCDP project. Estimated number of beneficiaries under the project will be approximately 4,320 families.

Food availability, supply and affordability are critical in order to improve food security. JICA aims to facilitate food availability through sustainable agricultural practices, supply through an established supply chain network and affordability by improving income generation. Such activities are exemplified in "Andhra Pradesh Irrigation and Livelihood Improvement Project (Phase 2)" under the lockdown period. The project officials and the consultants for implementation of pilot value chain development of selected

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<sup>1</sup> [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000117811/download/?\\_ga=2.262188741.854084085.1598210713-1475771515.1598210713](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000117811/download/?_ga=2.262188741.854084085.1598210713-1475771515.1598210713)

crops under the project, devised an innovative way to ease the supply chain bottleneck, where the consumers can directly purchase naturally ripened mangoes from the farmers. JICA’s aim in India is to create a self-reliant nation that reduces its food insecurity from the highest to the lowest in the world. Under the pilot initiative, more than 3 million tons of mangoes have already been sold.



**About JICA**

Established, by a specific law, as an incorporated administrative institution under the Government of Japan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) aims to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation, as a sole Japanese governmental agency in charge of ODA implementation. JICA is the world’s largest bilateral donor agency. JICA works as a bridge between Japan and emerging countries, and provides assistance in forms of loan, grant and technical cooperation so that the emerging countries can strengthen their capabilities.

JICA India Office Web: <https://www.jica.go.jp/india/english/index.html>

JICA India Brochure:

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