

Building Organic Institutions in Nepal:

Transformational Organic Leadership Perspectives

Sundar Kumar Sharma and Ravina Sharma

Sharma and Sharma are emerging leaders in global organic movements. Mr. Sharma is one of the IFOAM Organic Leadership Course (OLC_2013/14) participants.

Summary

It is really challenging to transform the conventional trends of farming and consumption trends in Nepal. On the other hand, there is an opportunity to make use of the traditional ecological knowledge of the indigenous farmers for augmenting newly emerged organic farming practices. In this scenario, transformational organic leadership is needed to build organic institutions in Nepal.

Background

Organic farming practices are becoming popular in Nepal. But, they are confined within a small scale. Family farming models are found to be the sustainable models for organic farming in Mountains of Nepal. "Family" is an autonomous institution which is highly effective for sustainable organic farming in Nepal. But there is domination of conventional trends of farming and consumption over newly emerged organic practices. To overcome the domination of conventional trends over the newly emerged organic practices, there is need for a transformational organic leadership in building organic institutions which can bridge the traditional ecological knowledge and practices of the indigenous farmers with newly developed organic farming practices. In this context, organic institutions are needed to manage organic knowledge and practices.

Main chapter

Indigenous farmers are the great resources for traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). TEK is really effective for ecosystem management process in farming. Ecosystem management process is the main principle of organic farming. With this realization, there is need to transfer traditional ecological knowledge to newly emerged organic practices. Knowledge and innovations of the indigenous farmers augment the benefits of the organic farming practices.

The major challenge is to transform the conventional trends of agricultural farming and consumption. There is challenge to transform the non-organic actors and structures which are dominating the agricultural production and trade sector. There is lack of organic education, due to this situation there is lack of public awareness and there is lack of proper knowledge management process and procedures. Finally, there is lack of research and development works in organic farming.

In this context, institutional arrangement is needed to transfer the knowledge from the old generation to new generation. Similarly, institutional practices are needed to support the activities of the family-led organic farms which are recently developed in the hills and mountains of Nepal.

Collective organic institutions, which are principally based on the collective action of different classes, generations and genders of local farmers in coalition with the organic developers in agricultural production and trading, can be highly effective to transfer traditional ecological knowledge and practices from old generation to the new generation, to develop organic education and research programs and to engage the emerging organic developers and leaders in policy making for organic agriculture development. In this context, transformational organic leadership is required to transform the non-organic and conventional trends in agricultural practices.

Core messages and conclusions

It is realized that organic institutions have to be built for “organic knowledge management”. Research and development institutions are to be built for promotion of organic education and organic leadership development in new generation. Collective organic institutions will be helpful to grasp the opportunities of growing trends of organic farming and consumption patterns and hence help develop sustainable organic agricultural practices in Nepal. In this context, transformational organic leadership is required to transform the conventional and non-organic trends, stakeholders, agents and structures.