
Achievements of MIDH Scheme at HRS, Yercaud and Success Story of a Women Farmer in Yercaud

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ABSTRACT

The Front-Line Demonstration (FLD) on organic farming of black pepper, implemented under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) at the Horticultural Research Station (HRS), Yercaud, has been effectively operational for over a decade. This initiative has played a pivotal role in promoting awareness and adoption of organic spice cultivation among farmers. By showcasing practical, eco-friendly farming techniques under real field conditions, the FLD serves as a vital platform for knowledge dissemination and capacity building. The demonstration continues to attract and benefit a wide range of visiting farmers, reinforcing sustainable horticultural practices in the region. For over 22 years, a woman farmers Mrs. Premalatha and her family has nurtured a 3.4-hectare plantation in the serene hills of Semmanatham, Yercaud, Tamil Nadu. While organic practices were followed intuitively in the early years, a deeper commitment to organic farming began around five years ago. Through training at HRS, Yercaud, exposure to demonstration units, and learning from experienced farmers, she gradually transformed her approach. This journey has led to healthier crops, enriched soil, and a thriving ecosystem. A recent harvest of 2.70 tons of green pepper from 342 vines marks a

significant milestone. More than a livelihood, the land has become a place of learning and inspiration, reflecting the rewards of mindful, patient cultivation.

INTRODUCTION

E MIDH STANDS FOR MISSION FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF HORTICULTURE

MIDH scheme was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India in the year 2014 with the objectives of, promoting holistic growth of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa, and bamboo.

Key activities supported by MIDH are

- Nursery development and planting material support.
- Area expansion of horticultural crops.
- Rejuvenation of old and unproductive orchards.
- Protected cultivation (greenhouses, shade nets, etc.)
- Integrated pest and nutrient management.
- Post-harvest management and cold chain development.
- Market infrastructure development.
- Capacity building and training for farmers.
- Technology dissemination through frontline demonstration of organic farming.

ORGANIC FARMING IN SPICES

Organic farming in spices is an eco-friendly and sustainable approach that avoids synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms. It emphasizes natural inputs, biodiversity, and soil health, making it especially suitable for high-value crops like spices.

KEY SPICES GROWN ORGANICALLY IN INDIA

Black pepper

- Often grown in mixed cropping systems (e.g., with coffee or arecanut).
- Benefits from organic mulching and composting for better yield and quality.

Turmeric

- Known for its medicinal value; organic turmeric has high market demand.
- Intercropped with pulses or ginger.

Ginger

- Requires well-drained soil and partial shade.
- Needs proper organic rhizome treatment before planting to control diseases.

Cardamom

- Grows well under forest canopy, making it ideal for organic shade farming.
- Requires good organic pest management practices (e.g., neem-based sprays).

Chillies, cumin, coriander, and fennel

- Cultivated mainly in arid and semi-arid regions.
- Organic methods include using vermicompost, cow dung slurry, and biopesticides.

CORE ORGANIC PRACTICES

Soil health management

- Use of compost, green manure, and crop rotation.
- Avoidance of synthetic chemicals to preserve beneficial microbes.

Pest and disease control

- Neem oil, garlic-chili extract, and biological controls like *Trichoderma* and *Pseudomonas*.
- Trap crops and pheromone traps.

Weed control

- Manual weeding, mulching with organic residues, and cover crops.

Certification & traceability

- Must follow National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) standards.
- Certification through agencies like APEDA, ECOCERT, or INDOCERT.

ADVANTAGES OF ORGANIC SPICE FARMING

- Higher premium prices in domestic and export markets.
- Sustainable for long-term soil fertility and biodiversity.
- Safe for consumers and farm workers.
- Reduced input cost over time.

CHALLENGES

- Initial yield may be lower during the conversion period.
- Organic inputs may be less readily available.
- Certification is time-consuming and costly for smallholders.
- Requires more labor and careful monitoring.

MARKET & OPPORTUNITIES

- Global demand for organic spices is rising (especially in EU, USA, and Japan).
- India is a major exporter and can leverage its biodiversity and traditional knowledge.
- Scope for value-added products: organic spice powders, oils, and extracts.

Front Line Demonstration (FLD) is an important extension tool used in Indian agriculture to introduce and promote new agricultural technologies and practices directly to farmers under real field conditions. Front Line Demonstration is a method of showcasing the latest agricultural technologies or innovations on farmers' fields with active participation, to demonstrate their practical viability, profitability, and sustainability. These demonstrations are conducted under

the direct guidance of scientists from Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) or research institutions / stations

OBJECTIVES OF FLD

- To demonstrate newly released crop varieties, production, and protection technologies at farmers' fields.
- To educate farmers about improved practices and technologies by comparing them with traditional methods.
- To collect feedback from farmers for further improvement or adaptation of technology.
- To bridge the **gap** between research and field-level application.

FEATURES OF FLD

- It has to be conducted on real farm fields (not in research plots).
- Involves direct participation of farmers.
- Implemented with scientific support and monitoring.
- Inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and plant protection chemicals are often provided free or subsidized.
- Includes data collection on yield, cost, and returns.



FLD on organic farming in black pepper at HRS, Yercaud

The Front-Line Demonstration (FLD) on organic farming of black pepper, implemented under the MIDH scheme at the Horticultural Research Station (HRS), Yercaud, has been successfully operating for over a decade. This long-term initiative has significantly contributed to creating awareness among farmers on organic cultivation practices. It continues to serve as a valuable platform for disseminating knowledge and demonstrating organic farming technologies to the numerous farmers who visit the station.

Success Story of women farmer in organic black pepper production - Impact of Intervention by HRS, Yercaud

Name of farmer: Tmt. Premalatha
 Address: Akshara Farms, Semmantham, Yercaud
 Mobile number: 9566357866
 Age: 54
 Size of land holding: 3.5 (in acre) (Pepper in 1.5 acre)

Before intervention

Crops	Benchmark (Baseline period 2022 - 23)			
	Area (Acre)	Production (kg) From 342 pepper vines	Gross income (Rs.)	Net income (Rs.)
Pepper	1.5	1710 kg green pepper 488 kg of dry pepper	341600	131600

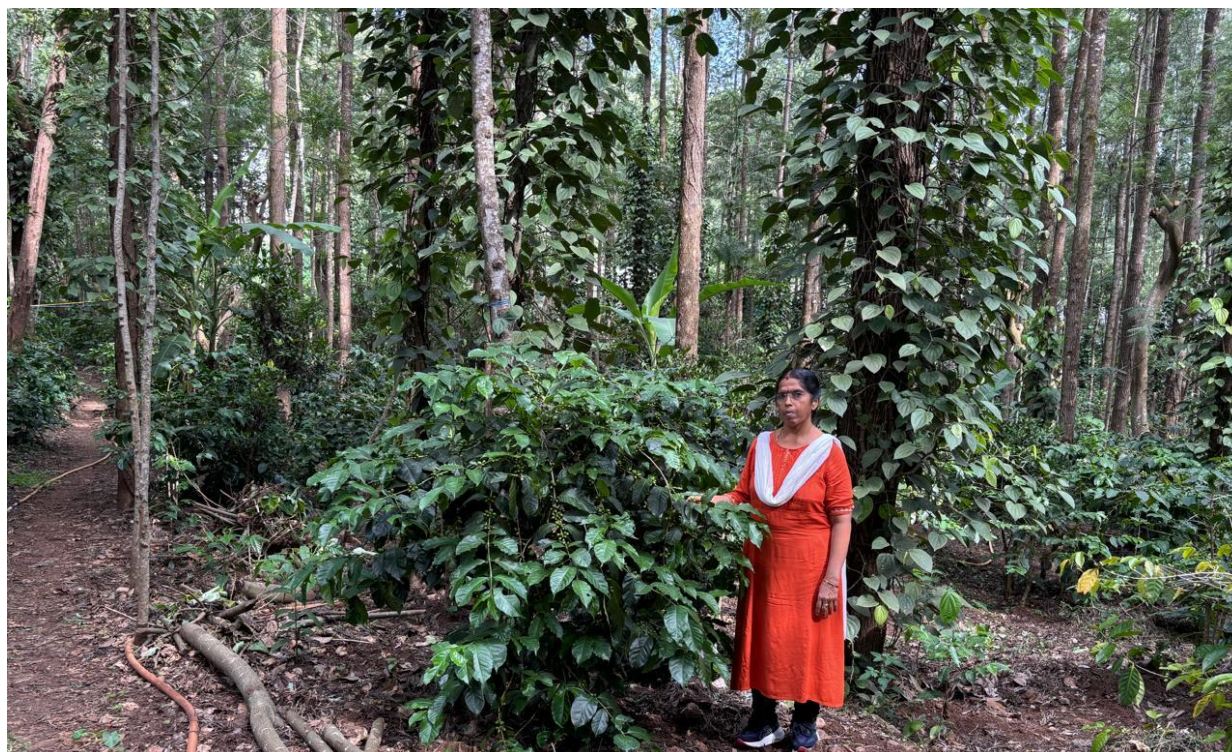


After intervention of following organic farming techniques - status in 2024-25

Component description		Period – 2024 - 25			% Increase over base year	
Names	Area (Acre)	Production (kg/acre)	Gross income (Rs.)	Net income (Rs.)	Production	Income
Pepper	1.5	2736 green pepper 738 kg of dry pepper	442800	232800	51	77

IMPACT IN WOMAN FARMERS PREMALATHA'S WORDS

Nestled in the tranquil hills of Semmanatham, Yercaud, Tamil Nadu, our 3.4-hectare plantation has been home to my family and me for the past 22 years. Together with my husband and our two daughters, we have cared for this land with love, resilience, and a deepening sense of purpose. In the early years, we followed organic practices in a simple, intuitive way. But it wasn't until about four or five years ago that I truly committed myself to understanding the deeper principles of organic farming. What began as a curiosity gradually blossomed into a passion. I immersed myself in reading, attended trainings conducted at HRS, Yercaud and witnessed the organic demonstration units located at HRS, Yercaud, many workshops, learned from experienced farmers, and began observing the land with greater attentiveness. With every



passing season, I felt myself evolving alongside the crops I nurtured. The transformation has been real and rewarding. This March, we harvested 2.70 tons of green pepper from 342 pepper vines a significant milestone that reflects the steady progress of our farming journey. Healthier plants, enriched soil, and a more vibrant ecosystem are the quiet, yet powerful, rewards of this shift. For me, this land is far more than a means of livelihood it is a classroom, a sanctuary, and a wise teacher. Every day I step into the fields, I am reminded of how much we can grow when we remain open to learning. I hope our story inspires others to reconnect with the earth and to believe in the quiet strength of patient, mindful cultivation.

Pepper vines with good bearing after following organic farming techniques



Good appearance and quality of spikes of pepper in organic fields



CONCLUSION

The Front-Line Demonstration (FLD) on organic farming of black pepper, implemented under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) at the Horticultural Research Station (HRS), Yercaud, has successfully transformed a woman farmer, Mrs. Premalatha, into adopting organic cultivation. This shift has resulted in an impressive increase in black pepper yield by up to 51% and income by up to 77%. This clearly demonstrated that by showcasing practical, eco-friendly techniques under real field conditions, the FLD at HRS, Yercaud serves as an effective platform for knowledge dissemination and capacity building of farmers and farm women. The initiative continues to inspire and benefit numerous visiting farmers, thereby reinforcing the adoption of sustainable horticultural practices across the region. The demonstration clearly proves that by showcasing practical, eco-friendly farming techniques under real field conditions, the FLD at HRS, Yercaud serves as an effective platform for knowledge dissemination and capacity building. It continues to inspire and benefit a wide range of visiting farmers, thereby reinforcing sustainable horticultural practices in the region.