



MR. VINAYAK PATIL

Recipient of the Award for Application of Science and Technology for Rural Development - 2003

Born: August 19, 1943

Education: Secondary School Certificate

For the last 30 years, Vinayak Patil has done pioneering work in the field of agro-forestry on a co-operative basis. He established the Nashik District Eucalyptus Growers' Cooperative Society in 1983. Fifteen million eucalyptus trees have been planted by the Nashik Society so far. Since 1983, over 25 Tree Growers' Co-operatives have been formed in the State of Maharashtra alone and many more are in the process of formation.

The Eucalyptus is a crop that can grow with little irrigation even under uncertain rainfall conditions. At the same time, it can provide good returns without intensive supervision. Being a new venture, Patil had to face several unanticipated hurdles and had to generate innovative ways of coping with them. He has successfully marketed the agro-forestry output in an efficient way. He has received no financial support from anyone for this venture. The entire support from the farmers was received on a voluntary basis and with enthusiastic member participation. Farmers from other States like Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh have approached for his guidance for forming Tree Owners' Co-operative Societies.

The Maharashtra State Federation of Agro-Forestry Co-operatives, the first State Level Federation of its kind in India, was formed by Vinayak Patil in 1983. The Federation renders technical support to the co-operatives. High quality plants have been evolved through tissue culture and have been supplied to the farmers for planting.

Vinayak Patil has done pioneering work in the promotion of Jatropha cultivation in the country. This has provided an alternative cropping pattern which may help to mitigate the energy and oil crunch and thus save foreign exchange. A research project in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Petroleum for conversion of Jatropha oil into diesel fuel has been initiated. The introduction of Jatropha will go a long way in the production of raw materials for industry. Jatropha oil is an environmentally safe, cost effective, renewable source of non-conventional energy and a promising substitute for diesel, kerosene and other fuel oils.

Patil has also pioneered an agro-forestry project in Egypt and has provided consultancy on nursery plantation technology of both eucalyptus and Jatropha.

The Agro-forestry pattern developed by Vinayak Patil will also be useful in the development of wastelands in our country. India has over 90 million hectares of wastelands. These wastelands, if developed, will provide fuel wood, fodder, fruits, fibre and oils. It would also generate gainful employment for the rural poor.

Vinayak Patil has moved all over India to explain the introduction of agro-forestry for sustainable development. He has received tremendous response from farmers who have introduced agro-forestry on their degraded lands. He has also shown how wastelands could be brought under tree cover and thus help to restore environmental balance.

Patil has also undertaken research for evolving high quality planting materials. Salt tolerant facilities have also been evolved. He has set up an organisation for preparing seedlings through tissue culture.

The lands which were abandoned due to water-logging or salinity have now been brought under the newly developed varieties. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations has highly commended the work of Vinayak Patil in agro-forestry and has mentioned it in a book entitled "Marketing in Forestry and Agro-Forestry by Rural People".

