

# A Perspective on Agriculture

Questions arising from the farmers agitation and burning agricultural fields



Stubble burning across Punjab, Haryana and UP



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## **Background:**

<https://www.indiatoday.in/diu/story/breath-of-fresh-air-punjab-stubble-burning-farm-fire-reduces-in-2023-2469028-2023-11-29>

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/sc-punjab-stubble-burning-aap-farmers-9018269/>

The reports of stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana and UP stands counterpoised to lengthy farmers agitations fearing lack of remunerative prices from agriculture if government withdrew its support of farmers through the MSP and PDS ushering in a new age of Corporate driven agriculture. While elections put a stop to the adamant stance of the government the questions related to Corporate control of agriculture and related questions of sustainability have not gone away. High production in pockets, dependence on the MSP and a distribution system based on the PDS governs decisions across the country as more than 40% of the farmers find agriculture unviable yet continue to practise for lack of other options. In interviews related to heavy input agriculture and its side effects, farmers were clear that it was harmful and hence if given the choice did not engage in it for household consumption which is mostly organic. Clearly individual choices and market based choices do not face the same logic.

## **The case for indigenous foods**

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/wildedible.pdf>

This presentation above identified 230 wild edible species from 4 regions of Gujarat, udaipur and other arid regions of Rajasthan and from arid region of Andhra Pradesh. If taken seriously it points to between 30-50% of the food being wasted as a result of commercial orientation and agriculture and argues for a different kind of production system that restores the importance of local species and in tandem with the article below argues about the relevance of the ecosystems approach to farming.

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Valuation-of-Ecosystems\\_-IELA\\_Habitat\\_Case-studies-from-different-States.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Valuation-of-Ecosystems_-IELA_Habitat_Case-studies-from-different-States.pdf)

## **The animal husbandry/ agriculture food linkage**

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Land-Use-in-Rajasthan\\_-A-Perspective-on-Animal-Husbandry-and-its-centrality-to-the-ecology-of-Rajasthan.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Land-Use-in-Rajasthan_-A-Perspective-on-Animal-Husbandry-and-its-centrality-to-the-ecology-of-Rajasthan.pdf)

The essence of this paper indicates that not always agriculture can be made central to the production system. While the linkages with forest and fishing ecosystems have still not been pinned down fully by us, there is sufficient pointers in the paper above indicating a different approach to the land use from the Corporate concerns driving land use. These have been the basis for IELA recommendations to the task force on grazing ecology.

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/IELA-recommendations-to-the-task-force-on-grazing-ecology.pdf>

### **COVID and its implications for relooking sustainability**

This study done by Gayatrai Seva Sansthan, indicates that at a time of crisis, migration back to the village and family labour on one's own land assume significance.

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/GSS-Situational-Analysis-of-Child-Labour-Study-Findings.pdf>

Observations in other regions also indicate that in the absence of a clear cut strategy for eco-restoration, local value addition and enhancement of employment potential at the local level it is impossible to find realistic solutions for communities dependant on natural resources for survival.

### **Way forward**

[http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ecosystems-approach-to-land-use-ecology-and-livelihoods-in-Rajasthan\\_A-policy-brief.pdf](http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Ecosystems-approach-to-land-use-ecology-and-livelihoods-in-Rajasthan_A-policy-brief.pdf)

As mentioned above, the need for an ecosystem approach to sustainable land use is very much the need of the hour.

<http://ielaind.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Report-of-the-BRP-Training-Programme-conducted-at-Bambora.pdf>

The report on the training programme for pasturelands outlined above provides a glimpse of the approach that can be followed, expanding it to include detailed discussions on the significance and relevance of other natural resources available within the village and the development of appropriate democratic village level governance, conservation and implementation bodies that can provide the collective leadership and wherewithal to put this in practise.