

## **Spreading the Wings of Organic Farming from a Single Farm to Thousands: Varanashi's efforts of two decades**

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### **Abstract**

*Varanashi Farms (VF), which was practicing conventional farming during 1980s, shifted to organic in 1991, due to bad and ill effects of chemicals. Encouraged by its successes, VF, a certified organic mixed farm, started spreading the message of organic and sustainable agriculture. Varanashi Research Foundation (VRF), an R & D unit, was born in 1994 to promote eco friendly and sustainable agriculture. Since 2002, workshops, trainings, demonstrations, and other extension activities became the regular events of the organic movement by VRF. Moving further ahead, VRF took up the responsibility of converting a village of 347 farming families into organic with the help of government of Karnataka, and achieved a success of 77.5% conversion to organic in 3 years. The movement has not stopped there. The Varanashi's are now extending the wings of organic agriculture to the neighboring two districts, where 1800 farmers who want to be 100% organic have been identified. VRF is organizing the Internal Control Systems (ICS) and organic certification for these farmers. VRF is also conducting an annual organic conference, wherein one best organic farmers from the locality is chosen and honored with 'Varanashi Farmer of the Year' award. Besides spreading the organic farming message, VRF is working in the line of marketing the organic produce both inside and outside the country. For all these activities, VRF is recognized at National and international level.*

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.