NO Tobacco, grow organic food for a healthy living

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Situation of tobacco growing in Bangladesh

• Over 100,006 acres of land are used for growing over 90,000 MT of tobacco in Bangladesh, per year [Agricultural Wing of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)].

• Three varieties of tobacco leaves are grown Virginia, Motihari and Jati. Virginia (or FCV) is the major tobacco leaf variety (80%) followed by Motihari and Jati variety. Motihari is used for making smokeless tobacco products.

• British American Tobacco Company (BATC), Japan Tobacco International (JTI) are major sponsors, Philip Moris International (PMI) sponsors national tobacco companies to provide the leaves.
WNTD, 2023 Theme: We need food, not tobacco

• Yes, very true. Tobacco kills and food saves lives. So we need food.
• Tobacco kills 161,000 people per year who use tobacco.
• Tobacco is grown in the fertile land suitable for food production.
• So it replaces major food crops including rice, pulses, potato, mustard, wheat.
• It also prevents rearing of livestock and poultry, fish production is also hampered.
• Farmers face food insecurity in tobacco growing areas.
One tobacco crop prevents cultivation of at least 6 different major food crops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>crops</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
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<th>Oct</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Tobacco</td>
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<td>Boro Rice</td>
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<td>Oil seeds</td>
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<td>Spices</td>
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<td>Vegetables</td>
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Farmers’ rationale for tobacco is profit, but.....

• Farmers were made to believe ‘Tobacco brings cash income, one can buy food with cash’, but that is a myth

• Actual situation is
  ❑ Labour cost 21% higher in tobacco than food crop
  ❑ Cost per hectare 119% higher in tobacco than food crops
  • Is it profitable? No

It also creates

• Soil degradation
• Water contamination
• Over use of pesticides
• Deforestation
• Use of family labour, children
• Company control over farmers
• Health effects due to exposure to agro-chemicals & nicotine
Shifting to food crops is possible, but which way?

- It can happen in two different ways:
  - Tobacco to modern agro-chemical based food crops – monoculture
  - Tobacco to organic food farming – mixed cropping – biodiversity

We do not have to move from one toxic to another. We must remain healthy.

- Industrial and chemical-based agriculture does not help farmers reduce cost and face health problems except nicotine

In chemical-based agriculture:
Consumption of pesticides and fertilizers is high

Yearly consumption of Pesticides 45172.43 metric kilo litre (2009)
Source: Agricultural Year Book/BBS

Yearly sales of chemical Fertilizers 3682670 metric tons
(source: AYB/ MOA)
UBINIG strategy was to shift in an organic production - Nayakrishi

- Nayakrishi, meaning new agriculture is a biodiversity-based farming practice with no use of pesticides, fertilizers, no laboratory seeds
- An ecological farming system presupposes Availability of a farmer seed system: Farmers must know about various crops, the right time to seed and steering through the seasonal and climatic variance.
Transition and Substitute crops: Tobacco & food crops

The transition period: June to November, Substitution to Tobacco: Nov- April

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oct/Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
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<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>FARMERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco in the field</td>
<td>Tobacco Marketing</td>
<td>Other crops, mostly rice, or no crops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>Cash Income at a time</td>
<td>Indebtedness with tobacco companies</td>
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<td>Substitute crops, mostly mixed &amp; diversified crops, harvested at different times</td>
<td>Transition crops: rice, jute, vegetables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less expenditure, less hard work, continuous income</td>
<td>Less expenditure, continuous income Other cash income as well</td>
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The Tobacco farmers

The General farmers and those going out of tobacco
### Substitute Crop Combination in year 1 and year 2
During the tobacco growing season – An example of farmers in three areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Mixed Crop Combination Year 1</th>
<th>Mixed Crop Combination Year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cox’sbazar</td>
<td>Potato + French Bean</td>
<td>Potato + French Bean (Rangima Shim)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Potato + French Bean + Felon</td>
<td>Potato + French Bean + Sweet gourd</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Potato + Tomato + Felon + Coriander</td>
<td>Potato + French Bean + Felon + Tomato</td>
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<td>Bandarban</td>
<td>Potato + French Bean</td>
<td>Potato + French Bean + Felon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Potato + French Bean + Felon</td>
<td>Potato + French Bean + Sweet gourd</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potato + Tomato + Felon + Coriander</td>
<td>Potato + French Bean + Sweet gourd + Coriander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kushtia</td>
<td>Potato + Maize + Lentil</td>
<td>Potato + Maize</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potato + Wheat + Coriander</td>
<td>Potato + Wheat + Coriander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potato + Garlic + Coriander</td>
<td>Potato + Maize + Garlic + Coriander</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Farmers wanted to change to

- 1. Better soil condition
- 2. Availability of Food, Fodder and Fuel
- 3. Incur Less labour cost
- 4. Have own food stock
- 5. Better market for crops
- 6. Can keep seeds in hand
- 7. Less production cost
Farmers say ‘goodbye to tobacco’ and go back to their own food crops - to mixed crops
Follow mixed cropping of vegetables (eggplant, okra,) red amaranth, stem amaranth, Jute, black cumin, Corn and cattle fodder

- Maximum utilization of small piece of land
- Diverse crops helps increase soil fertility
- Lesser pest attack
- Food tastes better
- Get uncultivated partner crops as food and fodder

It is not harmful to anybody but brings more life & joy for all life forms
Good bye tobacco, We need healthy food