

## **Empowering Farmers to Tackle Crop Residue Burning: A Multi-Stakeholder Approach by SBI Card and CII Foundation**

Assandh, Karnal, Haryana, 3 March 2023: To promote sustainable agricultural practices, the CII Foundation and SBI Card jointly organized a Farmer Outreach Event in Village Mardan Heri, Assandh, Karnal, Haryana. The event witnessed the presence of several dignitaries, including Mr Shyam Singh, Block Agriculture Officer, Assandh, four village Sarpanchs and other key stakeholders.

Over 300 farmers attended the event. The primary objective of the event was to create awareness about the alternative methods to manage the crop residue other than burning it, latest technologies, and practices which can improve farm productivity and enhance the income of farmers.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Shyam Singh, Block Development Officer, Assandh, highlighted that the block Assandh witnessed significant reduction in stubble burning in the last season, and was one of the best performing blocks in the state of Haryana. He credited this success to the efforts made by the farmers in the project area, who had adopted viable alternatives to stubble burning.

He also lauded the efforts of CII Foundation and SBI Card in organizing the event and pledged the Agriculture Department's continued support for such initiatives. He also emphasized the importance of such events in promoting sustainable agriculture practices and improving the lives of farmers.

The farmers also shared their experiences of adopting recommended ecological methods like in-situ straw management, Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR), etc. 60 progressive farmers at the event were honored with certificates to further promote crop residue management in the farmlands.

To underscore the problem of stubble burning and advising farmers against burning crop residue, the Sarpanch, village Mardan Heri, Kuldeep Singh said, "Although we know farming like the back of our hands, as we are farmers, the expertise and support CII Foundation and SBI Card has brought is highly appreciable. Panchayat has been taking steps to ensure that the farmers in the region are aware of the harmful effects of stubble burning and are actively encouraged to adopt more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices."

Gulab Singh, Sarpanch, village Thal, stressed that not burning stubble is a collective responsibility of all the farmers. He added, "After adopting the project, not only have the farmers protected the environment, but have also shielded their families' health."

The CII Foundation and SBI Card have partnered to adopt 20 villages of Assandh, Karnal, since 2021, helping farmers to adopt zero stubble burning approach. Mass awareness campaigns and trainings

were organised with support from the Agriculture Department, 63 farm equipment were made available in the villages and 13,500 plantations were done in the region in the span of 2 years.

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