

# NEWS LETTER

January-March 2026

## Editorial

Dear Friends,

A major highlight of this quarter has been the renewal process of recognition from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi. This recognition is not merely a formal approval - it is a reaffirmation of our scientific integrity, our commitment to research excellence and our growing contribution to the agricultural ecosystem of the nation. It further strengthens the credibility and standing of the ASPEE Agricultural Research and Development Foundation.

Our institutional governance has remained robust and purposeful. The Board of Directors has continued to provide valuable strategic direction, guiding us in key initiatives, collaborative efforts, and farmer-centric programs, including the prestigious ASPEE L.M. Patel Farmers of the Year Award. Their wisdom and foresight have played a crucial role in shaping our journey.

The first quarter of 2026 has been a period of meaningful progress, reflection, and innovation. Despite limited financial resources, the Foundation has demonstrated remarkable efficiency in maximizing its activities, driven by a deep sense of purpose and commitment to agricultural research, farmer welfare and sustainable practices.

We are encouraged by tangible field successes. The bumper sapota yield of 42 tons stands as a testimony to scientific orchard management and disciplined farming practices. Our paddy seed production program, carried out in collaboration with Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, reflects our strong capability in producing and disseminating quality seeds to farmers.

Innovation continues to remain at the heart of our efforts. Tools such as the fertilizer spreading machine and the SRT e-Zebu have been thoughtfully developed to support small and marginal farmers - enhancing efficiency, reducing input costs and ultimately improving farm profitability.

Our diversification initiatives, including oyster mushroom cultivation and solar drying of sapota, highlight our focus on value addition and income enhancement. The encouraging results from these trials indicate strong potential for adoption by farmers. Extension activities such as the Rabi Farmers' Day have further strengthened the bridge between scientific knowledge and its practical application in the field.

Equally heartening is the progress of the Sharad Patel Skill Development Centre at Uchat. Since its inception on 1st December 2025, the center has enrolled 75 students, reflecting an encouraging response from the community. By imparting training in nursing and computer skills, the center is creating meaningful livelihood opportunities for rural youth and farming families.

At the same time, we paused to remember the invaluable contributions of Late Dr. Sharad L. Patel on his first death anniversary. His visionary leadership continues to inspire us every day. The tribute ceremony at Tansa Farm was not just a remembrance, but a reaffirmation of our collective resolve to carry forward his mission of sustainable agriculture and farmer empowerment.

In conclusion, this quarter reflects a harmonious blend of research, innovation, field achievements and institutional strength. As we move forward, the ASPEE Foundation remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing agriculture through science, technology and meaningful engagement with the farming community.

With warm regards,

**Kiran Patel**  
Director

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## Renewal of DSIR Recognition for ASPEE Foundation

ASPEE Foundation has been duly recognized by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), New Delhi, which reflects its commitment towards research and development activities in the agricultural sector. This recognition is a significant milestone that enables the Foundation to undertake scientific research with institutional credibility and avail various benefits provided by DSIR. The current tenure of this recognition is valid up to 31st March, 2026.

In order to ensure continuity of its research initiatives and institutional recognition, ASPEE Foundation has taken timely steps for renewal. A fresh application for DSIR recognition has been successfully submitted online on 13th February, 2026. The application seeks renewal for a further period of three years, covering the duration from 1st April, 2026 to 31st March, 2029.

The renewal of DSIR recognition will further strengthen the Foundation's capacity to continue its scientific work and contribute effectively towards sustainable agricultural development.

## 1st Death Anniversary of Director, Dr. Sharad L. Patel



The Director of ASPEE ARD Foundation, Late Dr. Sharad Patel, passed away on 23rd January 2025, leaving behind a legacy of dedication, vision and valuable contributions to agricultural development. In remembrance of his life and work, his first death anniversary was solemnly observed at the ARDF Office, Tansa Farm. The ceremony was attended by ASPEE staff, who gathered to pay their heartfelt tributes to the departed soul.

The program began with floral offerings and a moment of silence, honoring his contributions and commitment to the organization. Senior staff members shared their memories and experiences, highlighting his leadership, guidance and the impact he had on strengthening the foundation's activities. His vision for promoting sustainable agriculture and farmer welfare was recalled with deep respect. The gathering reflected a sense of unity and gratitude, as all

present reaffirmed their commitment to carrying forward his mission and values.





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## Progress of Sharad Patel Skill Development Centre, Uchat

The Sharad Patel Skill Development Centre at Uchat has made encouraging progress in its mission to support rural youth. Located in a remote area where many boys and girls discontinue education after SSC or HSC, the Foundation took the initiative to establish this centre to create livelihood opportunities for local farming families. The centre aims to provide girls with nursing training and boys with computer skills, enabling them to secure jobs in nearby towns and cities and reduce dependence solely on agriculture. This initiative is expected to improve the socio-economic condition of poor farmers by supporting their children's futures. To facilitate girls' participation, a hostel facility has also been developed. The Foundation is further working on employment tie-ups with nearby industries and hospitals to ensure placement opportunities for trained students. The nursing and computer courses commenced on 1st December 2025. So far, 55 students have enrolled in the computer course and 20 students in the nursing course, reflecting a positive response from the local community.



## Bumper Sapota Production

This year, the farm recorded a bumper yield of sapota fruits, reflecting the success of improved orchard management practices and favorable climatic conditions. During the peak harvesting period from January to March, a total of 42 tons of high-quality sapota fruits were harvested. The fruits exhibited good size, uniformity and sweetness, which enhanced their market demand. Proper nutrient management, timely irrigation and effective pest and disease control contributed significantly to achieving this high productivity.



The harvested produce was efficiently marketed to traders and vendors in Bhiwandi as well as nearby local markets. Due to the superior quality of the fruits, the produce fetched remunerative prices, ensuring better income for the farm. The systematic harvesting and quick transportation helped in maintaining freshness and reducing post-harvest losses. This successful season not only demonstrated the potential of sapota cultivation in the region but also served as a model for nearby farmers.



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“Agriculture is the foundation of India. Protecting it is our duty.”  
- M. S. Swaminathan



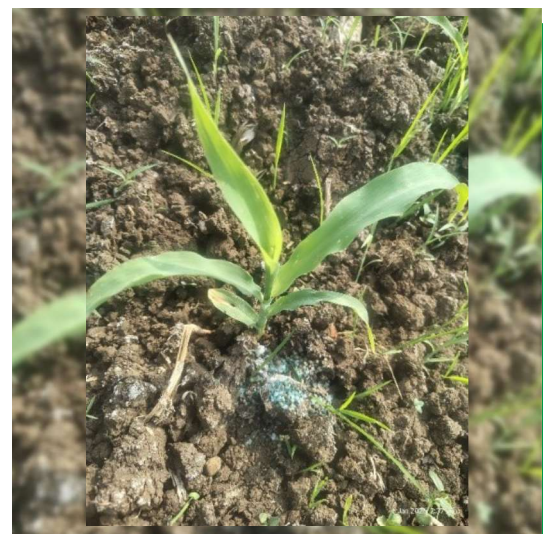
## Fertilizer Spreading Machine Trial



During the current year, ASPEE Foundation has successfully developed an innovative tool for precise fertilizer application near the plant root zone. This machine is designed to improve nutrient use efficiency and reduce wastage during fertilizer application. The tool consists of a fertilizer tank that can be filled with the required quantity of fertilizer. It is equipped with a simple mechanism where, upon pressing a button, a controlled and small amount of fertilizer is released directly near the root zone of the plant.

This targeted application ensures that nutrients are made available exactly where the plant needs them the most, thereby enhancing nutrient uptake. The machine also facilitates timely fertilizer management,

which is critical for achieving better crop growth and productivity. By minimizing fertilizer losses due to broadcasting or improper placement, the tool significantly contributes to fertilizer savings. Moreover, the reduction in fertilizer usage directly lowers input costs, making it an economically beneficial. The tool is easy to operate, labor-saving, and suitable for field conditions.





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## Paddy Seed Production

During the Kharif season of 2025, the ASPEE Foundation successfully initiated a rice seed production program in collaboration with Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli. Under this program, scientific cultivation practices and proper isolation measures were meticulously followed to maintain high standards of seed purity and quality. Regular field inspections, systematic rouging, and continuous technical guidance from experts ensured that the crop complied with all required certification norms.



As a result of these well-coordinated efforts, the ASPEE Foundation produced 24 tons of certified paddy seed of the widely adopted Karjat-3 variety, which was subsequently supplied to the Regional Agriculture Research Centre, Palghar in March 2026.

In addition, the Foundation produced 3 tons of Gujarat-13 paddy seed, which was distributed to farmers at a subsidized rate to promote its adoption.

This achievement not only strengthens the Foundation's capacity in quality seed production but also significantly enhances farmers' access

to reliable seeds, ultimately contributing to improved productivity and sustainable rice cultivation in the region.

## Mango Flowering of 2026

During the current season, mango orchards exhibited profuse and uniform flowering; however, prolonged cloudy weather created favorable conditions for the increased incidence of sucking pests, particularly mango hoppers. These pests pose a serious threat by affecting flower retention and subsequent fruit set. To effectively manage the situation, a second round of plant protection spraying is being undertaken.



This spraying schedule and recommended chemicals are being followed strictly under the expert guidance of **Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth**. Timely intervention is expected to minimize pest damage and ensure better fruit development and yield.



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## SRT - Zebu Machine

A newly purchased five-row Zebu Sowing Machine was introduced at Tansa Farm to promote efficient and mechanized farming practices. The SRT e-ZebU is a multi-purpose, all-electric mini tractor specifically designed for small-scale and sustainable agriculture, including the Saguna Regenerative Technique (SRT). As an electric-powered machine, it offers significant advantages such as zero fuel cost, low maintenance, and eco-friendly operation.

The machine is capable of performing more than ten different agricultural operations, including sowing, digging, weeding, spraying, residue management, and transportation of farm produce. It also supports a range of useful attachments such as a dumper, trencher, and cutter, making it highly suitable for precision farming and improved crop management, particularly in paddy cultivation.



This machine is especially beneficial for small, marginal, and horticultural farmers by providing an affordable mechanized solution that reduces dependence on manual labor. A live demonstration of the machine was organized at Tansa Farm for nearby farmers. A large number of farmers visited the farm to observe its working efficiency and versatility. The demonstration generated considerable interest, and many farmers expressed their willingness to purchase the machine for their own farms.

The machine was also used for sowing moong crop at the farm. It was observed that the sowing operation, which normally requires substantial labor and time, was completed within just one hour. This clearly highlighted the machine's efficiency, time-saving capability, and economic benefits. Overall, the Zebu Sowing Machine has proved to be a highly useful innovation for reducing labor costs, improving timeliness of operations, and enhancing farm productivity.

## Oyster Mushroom Trial

In the month of January, Oyster mushroom cultivation was undertaken on a trial basis at Tansa Farm to explore an additional income-generating activity suitable for small and marginal farmers. The trial was carried out by Ms. Monali Patil and Ms. Tanvi Patil under the technical guidance of Dr. Swapnil Dekhane, who had previously received specialized training in mushroom cultivation from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kosbad.





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For the experiment, high-quality oyster mushroom spawn was procured from the same institution to ensure better yield and performance. The entire cultivation process was conducted in a systematic manner,



including substrate preparation, sterilization, spawning, and maintenance of required temperature and humidity conditions. Proper hygiene and monitoring practices were strictly followed to avoid contamination and to achieve optimal growth. The results of the trial were encouraging, as the oyster mushrooms were ready for harvest within 25 days of spawning. The successful cultivation at Tansa Farm demonstrated the feasibility and potential of oyster mushroom production under local conditions. This trial not only provided practical learning experience but

also opened avenues for promoting mushroom cultivation as a viable supplementary livelihood option for farmers in the region. The ready oyster mushrooms produced at the farm were sold at the rate of ₹300 per kg in fresh form, providing a good source of regular income. It was also observed that if the mushrooms are processed and sold in dried form, they can fetch a much higher market price of around ₹2,000 per kg. This clearly demonstrates the high profit potential of mushroom cultivation with comparatively low initial investment and minimal land requirement.

### Solar Dryer Trial

The ASPEE Foundation procured a solar dryer from Aura Green Pvt. Ltd. with the objective of promoting value addition and reducing post-harvest losses at the farm level. Utilizing this solar dryer, chiku (sapota) chips were successfully prepared as a value-added product. The prepared samples were distributed to farmers during the Farmers' Day program to demonstrate the practical benefits of processing and to encourage adoption of such technologies. This initiative was undertaken to address the significant losses observed during the peak ripening period of chiku fruits. Due to intense sunlight and higher temperatures during the months of February and March, fruits tend to mature rapidly, leading to excessive fruit drop and subsequent wastage. By converting surplus and overripe fruits into dehydrated products like chiku chips, the shelf life of the produce can be extended, thereby minimizing losses. The use of a solar dryer not only provides an eco-friendly and cost-effective method of processing but also enhances the economic value of the produce. This approach offers farmers an opportunity to generate additional income through value addition while ensuring better utilization of farm produce that would otherwise go to waste.



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## ASPEE Foundation Board of Directors meeting

For the financial year 2025–26 the third Board of Directors meeting of the ASPEE Agricultural Research & Development Foundation was held on Tuesday, 24th February 2026 at 3:30 PM at the Foundation's Head Office in Malad, Mumbai. The meeting was attended by the Directors, namely Mr. Kiran Lallubhai Patel, Mr. Jatin Sharadchandra Patel, Mr. Rajeev Kiran Patel, and Mr. S. R. Srinivasa.

During the meeting, several important agenda items were discussed in detail. These included a review of the report of the Dr. Sharad Patel Skill Development Center at Uchat, as well as an overview of the ongoing activities of the ASPEE Foundation. The Board also reviewed the progress of the ASPEE L.M. Patel Farmers of the Year Award for the years 2023–24 and 2024–25 along with the financial accounts of the ARD Foundation.



In addition, the Board examined several important project proposals and requests received from different organizations aimed at strengthening rural livelihoods and farmer welfare. One notable proposal was received from the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ranchi, titled "Empowering Tribal Farmers of Ranchi District with Round-the-Year Vegetable Nursery Raising Facilities." The proposal focused on establishing five shade-net structures measuring 20 x 10 x 9 feet to support continuous vegetable nursery production. Out of these, four shade-nets are proposed to be installed at selected farmers' fields, while one will be set up at the Divyayan Krishi Vigyan Kendra campus, Ranchi, to serve as a demonstration and training unit for farmers. The Board appreciated the project's potential to improve access to quality seedlings, promote year-round vegetable cultivation, and enhance income opportunities for tribal farmers.

Another significant proposal was received from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kosbad Hill, focusing on the upliftment of tribal communities through skill development interventions in income-generating activities such as mushroom cultivation and beekeeping. The Board noted that such initiatives could play an important role in creating sustainable livelihood opportunities and strengthening self-reliance among rural households.

The Board also reviewed a donation request from Saguna Rural Foundation to support and facilitate 30 farmers from Maharashtra and neighboring states. The proposed support is expected to help farmers gain practical exposure to improved agricultural practices and innovative farming methods, thereby contributing to better productivity and farm sustainability. Overall, the Board carefully considered the relevance, impact, and long-term benefits of these proposals in line with the Foundation's objectives of promoting farmer welfare and rural development.

All matters were discussed comprehensively, and necessary guidance and directions were provided for further action.



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## Scrutiny of Nomination Forms for ASPEE L.M. Patel Farmers of the Year Award – 2025-26.

A meeting was convened on 25th & 26th February 2026 under the chairmanship of Dr. Parag Haldankar, former Director of Research at Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli. The primary objective of the meeting was to scrutinize and evaluate the nomination forms received for the ASPEE L.M. Patel Farmers of the Year Award 2025-2026.



After thorough and in-depth deliberations on 23 high-quality Nomination Forms the committee shortlisted 5 nominations for video documentation of farm activities under the Women Farmer category. This category focused

on enterprising women engaged in vegetable cultivation across the Central and Western zones including Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra.

In the Horticulture category (Banana crop) out of 27 Nomination Forms received, 5 nominations were selected based on their performance and innovation. Similarly, under the Rainfed Farming category (Paddy/Rice crop) 4 Nomination Forms were shortlisted from a total of 24 applications.

The selection process was carried out with careful consideration to ensure that the most deserving and progressive farmers are recognized and further evaluated for the prestigious award.

## Rabi Farmers' Day Celebration at Tansa Farm

Farmers' Day was successfully organized at Tansa Farm on 10th March 2026 on the topic of "Main Fruits and Sunflower Crop Management & Pest Management" with the objective of creating awareness among farmers about improved agricultural practices and strengthening the link between scientists and farmers. Around 60 farmers from nearby villages enthusiastically participated in the event.

The program began with a field visit where farmers were taken around the farm to observe different demonstration plots. During this visit, farmers closely examined crops such as Sunflower, Sunhemp and Safflower grown at the farm. The participants also visited the mushroom laboratory and the solar dryer unit, where they were informed about mushroom cultivation techniques and the benefits of solar drying technology for preserving agricultural produce.

Shri. Kiran Patel, President of the function, delivered the introductory remarks and briefed the farmers about the various activities and initiatives undertaken by the ASPEE Foundation for the benefit of the farming community emphasizing of adopting modern agricultural technologies. The program was anchored by Senior Scientist Dr. Swapnil Dekhane, who smoothly conducted the entire event. The Chief Guests for the program were Dr. Uttam Sahane and Shri. Bharat Kushare from Krushi Vigyan Kendra, Kosbad.

Shri. Bharat Kushare delivered an informative lecture on sunflower crop management. He explained important aspects for obtaining higher yield from sunflower cultivation. Dr. Uttam Sahane delivered



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a detailed talk detailed talk on insect and pest management in major crops. He highlighted common pests affecting fruit crops and field crops and suggested effective and eco-friendly management practices. After the expert lectures, an interactive question-and-answer session was organized where farmers actively raised their queries related to crop management and pest control. The experts patiently addressed all the doubts and provided practical solutions to the farmers.

The program concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by ASPEE Foundation staff member Mr. Kalpesh Jadhav, who expressed gratitude to the chief guests, participating farmers, and all staff members for their support in making the event successful.

After clearing all the doubts of the farmers, the Farmers' Day program ended with lunch, leaving the participants satisfied and motivated to adopt improved farming practices.



**The chief guest Shri. Bharat Kushare  
Welcomed by ASPEE Foundation Director,  
Shri. Kiran L. Patel.**



**The chief guest Dr. Uttam Sahane  
Welcomed by ASPEE Foundation Director,  
Shri. Kiran L. Patel.**



**Sunflower plot visit of the farmers.**



**Farmers visit to Solar Dryer.**





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**Chief Guest Shri. Bharat Kushare addressing to the farmers.**



**Chief Guest Dr. Uttam Sahane addressing to the farmers.**



**Farmers doubt clearing session**



**A token of love gave to chief guest Shri. Bharat Kushare by the hands of Shri. Kiran L. Patel Sir.**



**A token of love gave to chief guest Dr. Uttam Sahane by the hands of Shri. Kiran L. Patel Sir.**



**Vote of Thanks given by Mr. Kalpesh Jadhav.**



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# ANNOUNCING

## ASPEE L.M. PATEL FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD - 2026

In memory of late Shri L. M. Patel, the founder of Aspee Group of Companies, ASPEE gives 3 awards every year known as **ASPEE L. M. PATEL FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD** each carrying a **cash prize of Rs.1 lakh, a trophy and a citation** in the following 3 categories:



HORTICULTURE CATEGORY  
GINGER CULTIVATION

### : ELIGIBILITY :

- The Crop must be newly planted
- Must have at least 1 acre of area under Ginger cultivation at one place.
- Must be planting this crop for at least last 3 years.
- Use of modern Package of Practices such as Micro irrigation & fertigation, Micro propagation, Value addition, etc



RAINFED/WINTER FARMING CATEGORY  
GROUNDNUT

### : ELIGIBILITY :

- Must have at least 1 acre solely under Groundnut crop at one place.
- Must be growing this crop for at least last 3 years
- Use of modern Package of Practices such as Micro irrigation & fertigation, use of improved varieties, Value addition, By-product utilization, etc



WOMAN FARMER  
CATEGORY

An Enterprising Woman Farmer In Vegetable Cultivation From  
**South Zone : Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry.**

### : ELIGIBILITY :

- An Enterprising Woman growing any type of vegetable in an area of half an acre at one place.
- Must be growing vegetables for at least last 3 years.

### ADDITIONAL DECIDING FACTORS :

In addition to the above, special emphasis will be given to the following:

- Efficient and effective use of inputs, resources, water, land, etc. by adoption of modern agricultural technologies.
- A role model for farming community helping fellow farmers in adopting new technologies.

### SIMPLE WAYS TO APPLY:

- Step 1:** Request for Preliminary Proforma from ASPEE office at address given below and send it to us in time. The Preliminary Proforma form should be sent in triplicate (1 original + 2 duplicate) or else the forms shall not be considered. Photocopy of the form must be retained by the farmer.
- Step 2:** Nomination Forms will be sent to the shortlisted farmers only. The duly filled in nomination forms having recommendation of nominating authority given below may be sent to ASPEE Foundation office at Mumbai. The Nomination form should be sent in triplicate (1 original + 2 duplicate) or else the forms shall not be considered. ASPEE Foundation will get in touch with only the shortlisted candidates.
- Step 3:** Nomination Forms will be scrutinized by a Committee and video shooting of the farms will be conducted by the shortlisted farmers themselves.

NOTE: Only if the nomination form is shortlisted for the Award 2026-27, the farmer himself will be required to carry out video shooting, documenting the crop journey right from land preparation sowing the crop harvesting and processing at regular intervals

### :: REMEMBER THE SCHEDULE ::

- Last date for receiving a duly filled Preliminary Proforma : 30-06-2026 ► Last date for receiving a duly filled in Nomination : 30-10-2026

### WHO ARE THE NOMINATING AUTHORITIES?

Nominations can be made by Technical Officer concerned with  
**Agriculture/ Horticulture/ Animal Husbandry/ Fisheries / Dairying etc from any one of the following organizations.**

- Krishi Vigyan Kendra.
- Past Aspee L. M. Patel Awardees
- Aspee Dealers/ Distributors.
- Registered Farmers' / Mahila Associations (e.g. Womens' Self-Help-Groups).
- Union / State Departments.
- Agricultural Universities.
- Zilla Parishads.
- Rural Banks / Commercial Banks.

Nomination forms sent without the recommendation of Nominating Authority will not be considered.

**ASPEE Foundation reserves all rights to consider/reject application of farmers due to any unavoidable reasons.**



The nominating authorities of the Awardee may be duly honoured for their active involvement

**ASPEE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**

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