



ORGANIC FARMING – PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

The organic farming sector is suffering from a lot of problems such as insignificant growth. Organic Farmers find it difficult to continue their organic farming practices due to various reasons like inadequate support from Governments and universities, contaminated water, deteriorated soil due to application of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and weed killers which affected productivity and production and also resulted in unhealthy food products, shortage of labour, inadequate organic manure due to decreasing livestock population and ineffective supply chain of organic farming system. The cost of production in Organic Farming is more and customers are not ready to buy by paying more. About production and productivity facts and opinion differs among the experts, farmers and actual. Required quantity of organic pesticides and weed killers are not available. Loss of different type of our age old seeds in all food crops affects productivity and production. Organic farmers found no specific demand for their produce. Traders found difficulties to get the required quantity of products as per demand. Consumers are unhappy as they are not getting what they want and also due to heavy pricing for available products. Awareness amongst consumers about the ill-effect of conventional farming produce and the health advantage of organic food products is missing. There is a gap between organic farmers' expectations from the Government and actual. Due to innumerable unsolved problems, dissatisfied organic farmers are either switching over to conventional farming or non-farming activities. This paper analyze the problems and prospects of organic farming in India.

KEYWORDS : Organic Farming, Chemicals, Agriculture, Production, Government

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Organic Farming is a production system in which input consists of farm manure, natural pesticides and excludes synthetically compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators and livestock additives. The organic farming system relies upon crop rotation, crop residues, animal manures, legumes, green manures, off-farm organic wastes, mineral bearing rocks and aspects of biological pest control to maintain soil productivity and to supply plant nutrients and to control insects, weeds and other pests. The existing farming practice is called conventional farming. Conventional Farming uses chemical fertilizers, pesticides and weed killers, mechanical implements for various processes and modern agricultural science and holds more than 98 percent of shares in farming. Prior to 1965, our country followed 100 percent natural farming or organic farming practice without chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It appears that organic farmers face more problems than conventional farmers and their expectations from the government is high for their survival and sustainability. Government and agricultural scientists are not accepting Organic Farming as a solution to overcome the existing problem of feeding the ever increasing population of our country. Organic farmers and experts of organic farming claim that organic farming is the only remedy for the required quantity and quality of food. As such the present study reveals the problems and prospects of organic farming.

1.2 NEED FOR THE STUDY

Chemical or conventional farming totally spoiled the soil, and output turned to be ill health food products to a considerable extent. Hence lot of scientists from agricultural sector, experts and well wishers of people are claiming that our good old system of natural or organic farming system is to be brought back against the current conventional farming system. But in spite of severe attempts by many stakeholders of organic farming, the growth of organic farming is insignificant with less than one percent practising Organic Farming. Hence, it is needed to study the problems and prospects of organic farming on the whole and bring out those factors which will ease the problems pertaining to the organic agricultural sector.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study mainly confined to analyse the issues of Organic Farming like management of seed, manure, irrigation, diseases,

harvesting, productivity, marketing, profitability and growth of organic farming. The primary data were collected from the organic farmers engaged in Organic Farming in the study area. The study does not cover the issues and problems of farmers engaged in conventional farming.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall objectives of the study are to outline the present status of Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu and to identify the various issues and prospects for Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu. The specific objectives of the study are listed as below:

1. To know the profile of organic farmers engaged in Organic Farming.
2. To understand the factors affecting profitability in Organic Farming.
3. To highlight the opportunities available for Organic Farming.

1.5 HYPOTHESES TESTED

The following hypotheses have been drawn up and tested using appropriate statistical tools.

1. There is no significant relationship between the size of the farm and the option of selecting Organic Farming
2. There is no significant relationship between the source of irrigation and capital employed

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

'Descriptive research' is considered as the most appropriate for the present study. Hence, the study has been descriptive type. The research problem, hypotheses and interview schedule all have been formulated and framed accordingly.

1.6.1 Data Collection**i) Primary Data**

First hand data were collected from the field through interview schedule and observation. Data relating to the issues and challenges of Organic Farming were gathered through interviews from farmers engaged in Organic Farming.

(ii) Secondary Data

The secondary data were collected from leading agricultural

Journals, articles and press news from leading local regional language Journals, Magazines and News papers, about organic farming practice.

1.6.2 Sampling Design

It was possible to collect data from 118 farmers pertaining to various groups. There are hundreds of farmers practising organic farming but they are not interested for getting certified. A survey was done with 100 organic farmers of the above category mostly from Namakkal, Erode, Tiruppur and Coimbatore districts. On the whole 325 farmers who are practising Organic Farming were interviewed and primary data were collected for analysis.

1.7 Analysis

1.7.1 Gender of the Respondents

In farming activities both male and female are participating. But during interview mostly males are coming forward to give the details. The classification of respondents based on gender is given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Gender of the Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Male	289	88.9
Female	36	11.1
Total	325	100.0

1.7.2 Age of the Respondents

The following are the distribution of sample respondents according to their age.

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Below 30	32	10
Between 30 to 50	189	58
Above 50	104	32
Total	325	100.0

1.7.3 Capital Employed in Farming

Farming requires heavy input cost for buying seeds engaging mechanical implements for sowing, irrigation, weed management, manure management, diseases controls and harvesting. Hence farmers require other sources for capital.

Table 4.7 Capital Employed in Farming

Capital Employed	No. of Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Own Money	216	66.5
Borrowed Money	109	33.5
Total	325	100.0

1.7.4 Land Holdings

Farmers doing farming in leased land will not opt for organic certification. The following table reveals the fact.

Table 4.8 Land Holdings of the Respondents

Land Holdings	No. of Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Own land	308	94.8
Leased land	17	5.2
Total	325	100.0

1.7.5 Farm area in acres

Farmers own their land for farming. The land will be shared between the wards of the family. Population is increasing continuously but an area of cultivation land remains constant. Therefore farming community, owning of land differs to a larger extent. The following table shows the land owning of respondent farmers.

Table 4.11 Farm Area of the Respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Less than 5	148	45.5
10 to 25	63	19.4

25 to 100	43	13.2
Above 100	15	4.6
Total	325	100

1.7.6 Practices in Organic farming

There are several traditional and modern techniques in organic farming practices. After Green Revolution, farmers stopped techniques like integrated farming practices multi-cropping, Compost Techniques, Bio- Pesticides, Insect Fighters, Neem Products. Also awareness about modern techniques like Panchagavya, Amirth Solution, Bio-Fertilizers amongst organic farmers are shown in the following table.

Table 4.17 Practices in Organic farming

Vermi Compost Techniques	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	217	66.8
No	108	33.2
Total	325	100.0
Panchagavya	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	252	77.5
No	73	22.5
Total	325	100.0
Amirth Solution	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	221	68.0
No	104	32.0
Total	325	100.0
Bio-Fertilizers	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	230	70.8
No	95	29.2
Total	325	100.0
Bio-Pesticides	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	226	69.5
No	99	30.5
Total	325	100.0
Insect Fighters	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	159	48.9
No	166	51.1
Total	325	100.0
Neem Products	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	274	84.3
No	51	15.7
Total	325	100.0
Mulching Technique	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	220	67.7
No	105	32.3
Total	325	100.0
Integrated farming practice	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	215	66.2
No	110	33.8
Total	325	100.0

1.8 SUGGESTIONS

1. Due to the continuous application of petroleum products for four/five decades as fertilizers, pesticides and weed killers, soil changed into the impotent condition and the productivity is far below compared to other several countries. Soil testing is to be done whenever required to apply required organic manure. Farmers are required to take the initiative and take required steps to bring back the soil to the original condition as it was found prior to Green Revolution.
2. Application of chemical pesticides and weed killers are to be minimized or banned since they killed those pests/insects/birds which are friendly one to farmers. Natural pesticides are to be prepared for development and growth. Necessary guidelines for using organic pesticides and control of diseases are to be expanded.
3. Water plays key role in the farming especially in organic farming. Water should be contamination-free and testing facilities are to be added. Water being a scarce commodity

especially in Tamil Nadu for irrigation, modern techniques of drip, sprinkler water irrigation system should be implemented allocating with a massive investment in priority. Mulching technique is to be popularized to minimize water consumption. Harvesting rain water, efficient usage of underground water is to be streamlined to strengthen the cultivation in periods of monsoon failure.

4. Farmers are required to learn all organic farming practices especially in the preparation of organic manures, organic pesticides, insect fighters, mulching techniques and follow integrated farming practices.
5. It is requested to seek crop insurance definitely for certain risk factors in the cultivation without hesitation to avoid heavy loss.
6. It is suggested to seek crop insurance for certain known risk in cultivation.

1.9 CONCLUSION

At present the organic farming system which has a share of less than two percent belonging to mostly young, energetic and progressive organic farmers. They claim that all the issues, problems could be solved only by the Government. The Government also claims that it is doing the best for farming sector including organic farming. But in reality both scientific and organic farming systems face unsolvable issues like negligible growth, poor earning, limited satisfaction and disrespect of the society. The questions about the yield and financial viability of organic farming are crucial and there is no empirical studies available in the Indian context comparing the economic and ecological returns of organic farms vs. Conventional farms. Organic agriculture has been neglected in the agricultural policy, and therefore there is less government assistance for the promotion of organic agriculture, as it exists for the conventional agriculture in the form of subsidies, agricultural extension services and official research. Given proper encouragement, organic farming will progress tremendously in India, especially in the dry land regions of the country, taking advantage of the diverse soil and climatic conditions.

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