

ORGANIC FARMING IN TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

Green revolution has increased the use of chemical fertilizers which polluted the various resources. This brought awareness among the people about the organic farming. The study about the organic farming is the need of the hour to save people, environment and to maintain ecological balance. This paper highlights the different aspects with regard to organic farming and benefits, challenges and situation of organic farming in Tamil Nadu. The importance of organic farming, government policy and extending government support to organic farmers in various ways is suggested.

Key words: Organic farming, organic products, green revolution, environment protection, challenges of organic farming.

1. Introduction

In spite of various environmental issues like global warming, water pollution, increasing piles of plastic waste, today people are more concerned about the method of production of food. Organic food has gained its importance in the recent years due to the health consciousness of the people throughout the world, which paved way for organic farming. In the early 1960, Green Revolution made drastic change in the agriculture sector which leads to rise in productivity to meet the needs of the increasing population. This revolution introduced a modern method of farming using chemical fertilizers, synthetic pesticides, germicides and genetically engineered seeds. Excessive and uncontrolled use of chemicals polluted all the resources as the agriculture land has become barren land, water sources are highly polluted. This was reflected in the present generation where the new born were born with disabilities and people had various dreadful diseases. The awareness among the consumers supported the organic farming and increased the demand for the organic food products. Sustainability is to maintain a balanced environment where exploitation of resources, technological development has to be controlled and improve both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. Sustainability concentrates on three domains: environment, economic and social. Sustainable development means the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2. Objectives of the paper

1. To study the concepts of organic farming in Tamil Nadu.
2. To understand the factors that motivates organic farming.
3. To analyze the issues in implementing organic farming in Tamil Nadu.

3. Methodology

The paper is mainly based on secondary data. Information about organic farming was collected from the various published sources like books, periodicals, websites and newspapers.

4. Organic farming

Organic farming in India is being followed from ancient times. It is a method of cultivating with the objective of protecting the soil by use of organic wastes and other biological materials along with beneficial microbes to provide required nutrients to crops for sustainable production in a pollution free environment. India has a lot of potential in this field. Initially, organic farming was started in the farm size of less than 1 acre. In the present situation of Indian agriculture, organic farming has a lot of scope in uplifting the Indian farmers. Increased population has increased the demand for organic products. According to recent research of Techsci, organic food market of India is projected to grow by 25 per cent by 2020. FAO suggested that organic agriculture is a unique production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem, health, including bio diversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity, and this is accomplished by using on-farm agronomic, biological and mechanical methods in exclusion of all synthetic off-farm inputs. Organic farming uses vermi compost, green leaf manures, crop rotation, manures, bio-fertilizers, biological management and animal husbandry. This helps to maintain healthy soil and water resources which are the most important resources for the production of food. It puts an end to the absorption of harmful chemical by the soil and water bodies. Non-renewable oil based fertilizers and pesticides are totally avoided in the organic farming. As a result less greenhouse gas emissions are released and better biodiversity is build. It works on the four principles: principle of health, principle of ecology, principle of fairness and principle of care.

5. Need of organic farming

As the population is increasing, there is a necessity to increase the food production in a sustainable manner. Though 'Green Revolution' has paved way to increase the production, but at the cost of existence of life and resources. Therefore, there is need to change the method of farming to protect the environment and to bring ecological balance.

6. Characteristics of organic farming

- Maintains organic matter levels, encourages soil biological activity and careful mechanical intervention thereby protects the long-term fertility of soils.
- Provides the required crop nutrients by using insoluble nutrients which is available in nature.

- Weed, disease and pest are controlled primarily by crop rotation, organic manuring and also by biological and chemical intervention.
- This farming has an impact on the wider environment, extensive management of livestock and conservation of wildlife and natural habitats.

7. Benefits of organic farming

- Organic farming maintains the health of environment by reducing the level of pollution.
- Health hazard of human and animal are reduced as the level of chemical residues are reduced in the product.
- Ensures high agricultural production and makes it sustainable.
- It improves the health of the soil.
- In the short run, optimum utilization of natural resources are under taken and helps in conserving them for future generation.
- Risk of crop failure is reduced.
- Improves the physical properties of soil like granulation, good aeration, easy root penetration and water-holding capacity.
- Chemical properties of soil like supply and retention of soil nutrients are improved and promotes favourable chemical reactions.

8. Challenges of organic farming

Although organic farming has numerous benefits but there are many problems in pursuing the organic farming. Some of the challenges are here discussed. Undertaking organic farming is very expensive which has constant expenditure. Farmers find it difficult to invest for fertilizers and for storage of the produce. Seeds and input required for this method is regulated by the government but the seeds are not provided at subsidized rate which again an additional burden to the farmers. Among the organic products, there is trust deficit among consumers. Due to the growing health awareness among people organic produce has become more familiar. But all the organic products are not certified by the regulatory authorities. This has lead to the situation that anybody can sell the products under the label organic. Ultimately consumers find it difficult to identify which is a true organic product. Although certification has been made compulsory, farmers felt that high cost will be charged for certification and consumers are confused about its genuineness. Price of the organic products is higher than the conventional products which affects market of such products. Mostly

Indians prefer to purchase the cheaper products where the demand for the organic products is totally reduced.

9. Organic farming in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is known for long history in agriculture. When compared with other states, Tamil Nadu lags behind in the coverage of organic farming although it has more number of organic product consumers. Out of 51.29 lakhs hectares of overall cropped area and 43.47 lakh hectares net cropped area, Tamil Nadu has 2119 hectares under organic farming; 3182 hectares of area are under conversion to organic farming and 2240 hectares of area being covered under PKVY. Fruits and vegetables are being grown on 1085 hectares and millets on 640 hectares. There are two certification bodies which operate from Coimbatore namely, The Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department, and the Indian Society for Certification of Organic Products. According to State Focus Paper of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Chennai alone has 400 shops that exclusively sell organic products. Organic farming is considered to be the best method to face drought prevailing in Tamil Nadu. In the long run this traditional method helps to fight lack of irrigation as well as soil salinity. This is another vital reason for shifting to organic farming. In Tamil Nadu, during last three decades there was awareness about organic farming and also the importance of organic products consumption. This awareness was mostly done by the social activists than the government. In Tamil Nadu, the environmental experts are urging the government to evolve its own policy for a long period. Without a policy major programme, organic farming cannot be implemented effectively.

10. Suggestions

Proper measures and government policies can be used to overcome challenges. Only NGOs are giving financial aids and proper training to the farmers to overcome the loss and they are taking care of their produce. This activity should be concentrated by the government. Government should show greater involvement to provide security to organic farmers in the form of MSP for the organic shop, for storage and by selling to the willing buyers. With the regulation of government at state and centre, certification cost for organic products should be waived off for marginal and small farmers. Organic farming communities should conduct different workshops on cultivation method and pest management to get benefits in the long run. And also organic farmers should encourage other farmers to follow this method.

11. Conclusion

In India, farming is a traditional occupation; nowadays organic farming has gained its importance among the farmers as well as among the urban people. In order to have healthy and safe environment more focus should be made on organic farming to reap more benefits. The different problems faced during organic farming have to be defeated with a smart strategy, scientific planning, responsible public activity and government support.

12. Reference

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