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CONSTRAINTS FACED BY THE FARMERS IN ORGANIC FARMING CULTIVATION - A STUDY IN ERODE DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU

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Abstract

Organic farming is an agricultural process that uses biological fertilizers and pest control acquired from animal or plant waste. Organic farming was actually initiated as an answer to the environmental sufferings caused by the use of chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilisers. The practice of organic farming is said to the best known alternative to the conventional method which suffered from the ill effects of chemical agriculture. However, organic farming is based on the similar principles underlying our traditional agriculture. Organic agriculture aims at the human welfare without any harm to the environment which is the foundation of human life itself. During last few years an increasing number of farmers have shown lack of interest in farming and the people who used to cultivate are migrating to other areas. Organic farming is one way to promote either self-sufficiency or food security. Use of massive inputs of chemical fertilizers and toxic pesticides poisons the land and water heavily. The after-effects of this are severe environmental consequences, including loss of topsoil, decrease in soil fertility, surface and ground water contamination and loss of genetic diversity. Hence the present study has been undertaken to investigate the constraints faced by the farmers in organic farming cultivation in Erode District of Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Organic farming, Organic Agricultural produces, Cultivation constraints.

INTRODUCTION

Organic foods are proved to have superiority in terms of health and safety, but there is no evidence to prove this superiority in terms of taste and nutrition. Combining lower input costs and favorable price can offset reduce yields and make organic farms more profitable than conventional farms. Organic farming systems have pest and disease management approach which are largely preventive than reactive. Pest and disease incidence is less in organic farms when compared to conventional farms.

Agriculture sector contributes a major portion in gross production of India. In spite of this, agriculture today is finding itself in increasing difficulties. The adverse impact of agriculture based on synthetic fertilizers and herbicides is visible in the degradation of soil fertility, quality of food, taste of food and so on. Organic agriculture may prove to be a boon to curb these adverse effects. There is dearth of information on organic farming in India in general and in Tamil Nadu in particular. Hence, the present study has been undertaken to investigate the constraints faced by the farmers in organic farming cultivation in Erode District of TamilNadu.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the constraints faced by the farmers in organic farming cultivation.

METHODOLOGY

This study is an empirical research based on survey method. The present study is confined to Erode District of Tamil Nadu. Erode District has been purposively chosen as the study area by considering its substantial contribution to state's agricultural production and flourishing organic agriculture adoption and production. In Erode district, there are 14 blocks. Out of 14 blocks in the district, five blocks namely Gobichettipalayam, T.N.Palayam, Modakurichi, Bhavani and Erode have been selected for the present study by using simple random sampling method. The list of farmers cultivating organic crops could not be obtained from the reliable official agricultural sources in the study region despite serious efforts. Hence it has been decided to opt for non-random sampling method. The method of sampling used for selecting sample organic farmers for the study is non-random convenience sampling method. From each selected block, it has been decided to select 30 farmers cultivating organic crops for a minimum of one year. Hence, the total sample size selected for the study is 150 farmers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Patoju et al. (2020) found that the farmers are facing problems with the variety of suitable seeds, lack of agricultural extension services, increasing labour cost, the low intervention of mechanization, climatic condition, the absence of certification and lack of branding due to the expensive certification process and no support for organic produce.

Yasmin et al. (2019) concluded that in spite of problems and constraints as reported by the farmers' in adopting organic cultivation, organic agriculture is so far the most promising and holistic approach for mitigating the harmful effects of the chemical farming. They also concluded that the inclination of the consumers towards organic produce is increasing rapidly and in future the demand for organic products is likely to increase and sooner or later the farmers will have to adopt organic farming. They suggested that the need of the hour is to understand thoroughly the problems faced by farmers in adopting organic farming and formulate the action plans accordingly.

Chandrashekar (2014) found that main problems of organic consumers are irregular availability of organic products. Sometimes, the organic consumer would purchase non organic products along with organic products. He also found that organic products are too expensive than non-organic products. So the organic consumers are not purchasing more quantity of organic products. He also found that Education background of the consumers is one of the important variables which influence the purchase of the organic products.

CONSTRAINTS FACED BY THE FARMERS IN ORGANIC FARMING CULTIVATION - KENDALL'S 'W' TEST OF MEAN RANKS

Table 1 shows the constraints faced by the farmers in organic farming cultivation using Kendall's 'w' test of mean ranks.

Table 1

Constraints Faced by the Farmers in Organic Farming Cultivation – Kendall's 'W' Test of Mean Ranks

Constraints Faced by the Farmers in Organic Farming	Mean Rank	Rank Within Group	Overall Rank
Production Constraints			
Production is complex	27.87	1	1
Requires more time and energy	17.84	4	12
Very hard to get information on how and when to produce from the agencies	18.46	3	9
Unsuitability of soil	15.75	9	27
More diseases	16.62	7	18
Lower yields	15.91	8	23
Internal farm problems	26.56	2	2
High weed infestation	17.02	6	17
Too much work	17.08	5	16
Natural calamities	14.88	12	31
Lack of technical guidance on organic farming	15.40	11	30
Scarcity of irrigation water	15.57	10	29
Input Constraints			
Obtaining organic fertilizer on time is difficult	22.20	1	4
Lack of adequate materials for organic decomposition	15.88	6	24
Process of producing organic fertilizer is complex and tedious	17.63	3	13

Non-availability of organic inputs	18.07	2	10
Growing fertiliser and pesticide industry	16.39	4	19
Bulky nature of organic inputs	16.26	5	20
Complicated methods for production of organic inputs	8.85	8	34
No labeling / Standards for organic inputs	9.24	7	33
Cost & Return Constraints			
Very expensive to produce organic crop	19.77	1	7
High cost and non-availability of labour	17.90	2	11
Higher price of organic inputs	15.88	5	25
Lower farm income	16.26	4	21
High risk and uncertainty of return	17.53	3	14
Facilities & External Factors			
Lack of financial support	17.50	5	15
Refusal of loans	21.03	2	5
Refusal of insurance	18.84	4	8
Lack of government support and advice	24.41	1	3
Lack of information	19.98	3	6
No appropriate agricultural policy	15.84	7	26
Inadequate transport facilities	16.19	6	22
Lack of quality training on organic farming practices	15.58	8	28
Lack of awareness programmes on organic farming in the media	14.81	9	32

Table1 shows that, regarding Production Constraints, ‘Production is complex’ is the major cultivation constraint faced by the organic farmers with the highest mean score of 27.87. Regarding Input Constraints, ‘Obtaining organic fertilizer on time is difficult’ is the major cultivation constraint faced by the organic farmers with the highest mean score of 22.20. Regarding Cost & Return Constraints, ‘Very expensive to produce organic crop' is the major cultivation constraint faced by the organic farmers with the highest mean score of 19.77. Regarding Facilities & External Factors Constraints, 'Lack of government support and advice' is the major cultivation constraint faced by the organic farmers with the highest mean score of 24.41.

Table 1 also shows that 'Production is complex', 'Internal farm problems' and 'Lack of government support and advice' are the major cultivation constraints faced by the organic farmers with the third highest mean scores of 27.87, 26.56 and 24.41 respectively. 'Complicated methods for production of organic inputs' (8.85), 'No labeling / Standards for organic inputs' (9.24) and Lack of awareness programmes on organic farming in the media (14.81) are identified as the least cultivation constraints faced by the organic farmers with the lowest Kendall's 'w' test of concordance mean ranks.

SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

The present study has made an attempt to bring out the result of constraints faced by the farmers in organic farming cultivation in Erode District by using statistical tool using Kendall's 'w' test of mean ranks.

It is found that regarding Production Related Constraints, 'Production is complex' is the major cultivation constraint faced by the organic farmers. Regarding Input Related Constraints, 'Obtaining organic fertilizer on time is difficult' is the major cultivation constraint faced by the organic farmers. Regarding Cost & Return Constraints, 'Very expensive to produce organic crop' is the major cultivation constraint faced by the organic farmers. Regarding Facilities & External Factors Constraints, 'Lack of government support and advice' is the major cultivation constraint faced by the organic farmers. It is found that 'Production is complex', 'Internal farm problems' and 'Lack of government support and advice' are the major cultivation constraints faced by the organic farmers. It is found that there exists a similarity among the organic farmers in ranking the constraints faced in organic farming cultivation.

Organic farming promotes increased production of eco-friendly items in the market. This will help to decrease the production of toxic, harmful chemicals that are the primary source of pollutants affecting our environment at a large scale. Fewer requirements of inorganic items will lead to lesser use of these harmful elements amongst the general public which in turn will save our environment from further pollution. Since use of biodegradable elements help to increase the quality of produced crops substantially, they possess more nutritional value compared to those produced through traditional farming methods. Hence, these crops yield a substantial export value for their improved health benefits thereby indicating the organic farming importance in an increased inflow of foreign currency reserves of India.

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