

A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING ORGANIC FARMING PRACTICES AMONG FARMERS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT¹Mrs.S.Radhika²V.Iswarya³T.M.Oviya⁴R.Ritusri

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ABSTRACT

Organic farming is gaining popularity in all over the world, as it can diversify agricultural production system towards attains improved productivity, farm income and food, as well as environmental safety. The aim of the study was therefore to investigate the factors which influencing organic farming practices. The present study was conducted in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. The District contains four main regional areas and convenience random sampling technique has been adopted to select sample respondents for the study. A total of 109 organic farmers have been used as sample respondents for the study. This study suggests that without government support, the adoption of organic agriculture seems to be a highly demanding task in a situation, where majority of the farmers fall under the small and marginal group. Hence, to promote organic farming in a developing country like India, the government has to introduce more schemes where farmers should get exclusive training and support to strengthen their plan behind the adoption of the organic farming.

KEYWORDS:

Organic farming, perception, Agriculture, Productivity, Organic Farmers

INTRODUCTION

Organic Farming is not anything new as it has been in practice from ancient times. With the shifting towards minerals-based farming and the chemical and technological advancements made in agriculture in the 1960s, India ushered in an era of Green Revolution. No doubt, the chemical-based agriculture process paid rich dividends in terms of higher productivity which helped in pulling the country out of food insecurity for the burgeoning Indian population. However, it brought a very negative cascading impact on our ecological plateau, creating new problems like degradation of soil health, emergence of new pests/diseases, wiping out of eco friendly microorganisms and percolation of toxic chemicals into our food chain threatening the very existence of the biosphere of our nation. In this context, organic farming, focusing on optimal, balanced, efficient and scientific management of land, water, biodiversity and external inputs has emerged as a solution. Organic farming system in India is not new; it has been practiced for thousands of years. In the traditional organic - based food production system, the entire agriculture was practiced using organic techniques, where the pesticides, fertilizers, etc., were obtained from plant and animal products.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Agriculture is the backbone of our country. Many farmers have adopted variety of farming practices, one such practice is organic farming. It is fast emerging practice in India. Today, the increasing population pressure has forced many countries to use chemical fertilizers to increase the farm productivity for meeting their

ever-increasing food requirements. The extended and over consumption of chemicals has, however, resulted in human and soil health hazards along with environmental pollution. Farmers in the developed countries are, therefore, being encouraged to convert their existing farms into organic farm. In large ratio farmers are choosing natural farming. Since organic farming is growing in number of practices it is necessary to study the factors which influencing organic farming practices.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-demographic profile of organic farmers.
- To study the factors influencing organic farming practices.
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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, factors which influence towards organic farming practices has been obtained from the respondents of organic farmers in Coimbatore district. Primary data has been collected from well structured questionnaire and secondary data has been calculated from various sources such as journals, websites etc. Convenience random sampling technique has been adopted to select sample respondents for the study. A total of 109 organic farmers in and around Coimbatore district have been used as sample respondents for the study. The following statistical tools namely Percentage analysis, Descriptive analysis, and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) are used to analyze the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Percentage analysis is the method to represent raw streams of data as a percentage for better understanding of collected data.

TABLE 1: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	66	60.6
Female	43	39.4
Total	109	100.0
Age (in years)		
20-30	31	28.4
30-40	43	39.4
40-50	24	22.0
Above 50	11	10.1
Total	109	100.0
Educational qualification		
Illiterate	22	20.2
Primary level	32	29.4
Secondary level	29	26.6
Graduate	26	23.9
Total	109	100.0
Organic farming experience		
Below 5 years	50	45.9
5-10 years	36	33.0
10-15 years	15	13.8
Above 15 years	8	7.3
Total	109	100.0
Source of irrigation		
Tube well	25	22.9

Canal	23	21.1
Well	21	19.3
Bore well	40	36.7
Total	109	100.0
Annual Income		
Less than 50000	15	13.8
50000-100000	45	41.3
100000-200000	39	35.8
Above 2 lakhs	10	9.2
Total	109	100.0
Reason for adopting organic farming		
To increase natural farming	52	47.7
To earn more profit	13	11.9
To increase hygiene in eatables	31	28.4
To increase fertility of the land	13	11.9
Total	109	100.0

Source: Primary Data

From the above table, it is seen that 60.6 percent of the organic farmers are male and 39.4 percent of the farmers are female. It is seen that 39.4 percent of farmers are in the age group of 30-40 years and 10.1 of the organic farmers are above 50 years of age. Middle aged farmers are experienced and young enough to carry forward organic farming maintaining a balanced state. 29.4 percent of the farmers have studied till primary level and 26.6 percent of organic farmers have completed secondary level of education. It can also be noted that 23.9 percent of the organic farmers are graduates and 20.2 percent of the farmers are illiterate. It is evident from the table that 45.9 percent of the farmers are doing organic farming below 5 years and 33.0 percent of the organic farmers are practicing organic farming for 5 -10 years. It can also be seen that 13.8 percent of the organic farmers are practicing for 10-15 years and only 7.3 percent of the farmers are having above 15 years of organic farming.

It is clearly understood that most of the organic farmers make use of bore well due to the less availability of well. It is found that 41.3 percent of the farmers are earning an annual income of Rs 50000-Rs100000 and 9.2 percent of the organic farmers are earning an annual income of above Rs 2 lakhs. It is seen that, 47.7 percent of the organic farmers have adopted organic farming for the reason to increase natural farming, whereas 28.4 percent of the organic farmers adopt organic farming to increase hygiene in eatables. On other hand 11.9 percent of the organic farmers have adopted organic farming for the reason to earn more profit and to increase fertility of the land. Most of the farmers have opted to increase the natural farming in the Coimbatore district.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The respondents were asked to rate the factors regarding factors influencing organic farming practices. The scale consists of 9 items. Five-point Likert type scale was constructed to measure the rate of factors of the respondents. The scale values ranged from disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Higher the rating more will be the agreed level. Mean ratings were found out for each item given below.

TABLE 2: FACTORS INFLUENCING ORGANIC FARMING PRACTICES

Factors influencing organic farming practices	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Market demand	109	1	5	4.27	.909
Traditional practices	109	1	5	3.91	.823
Maximize profit	109	1	5	3.43	.896

Less cost of farming	109	1	5	3.31	1.192
To increase the fertility organic eco system	109	1	6	3.94	.989
Diversification of taste and preference	109	1	5	3.52	1.085
Reliable and stable income	109	1	5	3.61	1.079
To produce high quality farm products	109	1	8	4.01	1.084
To improve the farm for next generation	109	1	5	4.25	1.064

Source: Computed Data

It is seen from the above table that the highest mean rating is 4.27 for the item 'market demand' that is on average the agreed level of the respondents is between agree and strongly agree. The next highest mean rating is 4.25 for the item 'to improve the farm for next generation'. The lowest mean rating is 3.31 'less cost of farming' that is the respondents on average have their agreed level between strongly disagree and disagree. It is also seen from the table that the ratings were most of the items vary between a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 4. Traditional practices, maximum profit, less cost of farming, to increase fertility organic eco system, diversification of taste and preference, reliable and stable income have neutral level above agree.

One-way ANOVA

H₀: There has been no significant difference in the factors influencing organic farming practices Vs Educational qualification of the organic farmers

Table 3: One-way ANOVA

Demographic factors		Factors influencing organic farming practices			F	Table Value	Sig.
		Mean	SD	No			
Educational qualification	Illiterate	3.8636	.30657	22	.750	2.6802	NS
	primary level	3.8576	.29765	32			
	Secondary level	3.7165	.56546	29			
	graduate	3.7949	.43398	26			
	Total	3.8063	.41695	109			

Source: computed S*: Significance level at 1% NS: Not Significant

The F ratio has been shown that there is no significance difference in the mean score of the factors influencing organic farming practices and educational qualification of the organic farmers. Hence the null hypothesis has been accepted.

H₀: There has been no significant difference in the factors influencing organic farming practices Vs Annual income of the organic farmers

Table 4: One-way ANOVA

Demographic factors		Factors influencing organic farming practices			F	Table Value	Sig.
		Mean	SD	No			
Annual income	less than 50000	3.7259	.46740	15	.892	2.6802	NS
	50000-100000	3.8148	.42044	45			
	100000-200000	3.8661	.35245	39			
	above 2 lakhs	3.6556	.55296	10			
	Total	3.8063	.41695	109			

Source: computed S*: Significance level at 1% NS: Not Significant

The F ratio has been shown that there is no significance difference in the mean score of the factors influencing organic farming practices and annual income of the organic farmers. Hence the null hypothesis has been accepted.

CONCLUSION

Organic farming is an emerging trend in the modern era of agriculture. Organic farming increased the agricultural productivity without damaging the resources and the environment. Organic farming is focused on optimal, balanced, efficient and scientific management of land, water, biodiversity and external inputs has emerged as solution. There is no conventional rule in organic farming with respect to their demographic characteristics like the farmers' age, gender, occupation, income, years of experience in farming, etc. Organic farmers face a lot of problems like obtainment of natural fertilizers, availability of market for their goods, transportation, etc. In spite of all the difficult situations faced by the organic farmers, they never give up on organic farming since it serves as a component for a better economic development of the country. The aforesaid findings and suggestion of this study has derived the requirement for further development in organic farming practices.

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