



Constraints in Practicing Organic Farming in Tirunelveli District

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Introduction

Agriculture is highly vulnerable venture, the success of which depends on so many controllable and uncontrollable causes. “Indian agriculturists born in debt, live in debt and die in debt” is the popular saying. Though so many new inventions in the field are taking place around the world, more and more State and Central Government supports are being rendered through various Plans, still the unfortunate agriculturists are to go a long way to ensure their family a decent standard of living. Recent occurrences of large number of suicides and mass suicidal attempts among them across the country speak volume about the sufferings and hardships they undergo.

Organic farming may be the most suitable remedy, at least to safe guard their soil for the future generation. It is considered a viable alternative to safeguard the human lives from the contagious and non contagious diseases caused due to toxic elements contained in the food stuff.

However, organizing, implementing and containing organic practices in the cultivation of various crops are not ‘cake walks’ in the life of ordinary agriculturists. There are so many problems to be faced by them. Those problems may vary from place to place, region to region and state to state. Against this background, an attempt is made in this paper, to highlight the constraints faced by the farmers practicing organic farming in Tirunelveli district. Further, the analysis is focused on the association between personal profile and their perception on the constraints of the farmers.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

- ❖ To analyze the constraints of the farmers practicing organic farming in Tirunelveli district.
- ❖ To find out the association between profile of farmers and their perception on the problems encountered.

Methodology

The present study is based on primary data. A sample of 300 organic farmers practicing organic farming in Tirunelveli district were selected on the basis of snow ball sampling technique. An interview schedule is structured and adopted among the sample farmers. The responses of the farmers were used for analysis.

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The present study focuses on the constraints faced by them. The farmers were classified into two types based on the size of the land holding, namely small and medium size farmers. Likert's five point scale and analysis of variance were the statistical tools adopted for the purpose of the study.

Problems of organic farmers in cultivation of paddy

Problems faced by the sample respondents in organic farming are many. However for the purpose of present study, these problems are confined to 16 numbers based on their importance.

The respondents were asked to rate these problems at five point scale from "highly important" to "not at all important". The assigned scores on these scales are from 5 to 1 respectively. The mean score of the problems faced by both small and medium farmers was computed to exhibit the importance on the problems in two groups of farmers. The 't' test was conducted to analyze the significant difference among the two groups regarding their perception on various problems. The results are presented in Table: 1

Table:1 - Problems of Organic Farmers in Tirunelveli District

Sl. No	Problem	Mean score in		't' statistics
		Small	Medium	
1.	Lack of awareness about organic products	2.9197	3.8583*	2.2455*
2.	Lack of integration among fellow farmers	3.8899	3.3089	2.0215*
3.	Low demand due to high price	3.8554	3.9944	1.8183
4.	Lack of incentives from Government	3.8182	2.9039	2.1086*
5.	Lack of standards in cultivation practices	3.7375	3.2646	1.0868
6.	Short supply of quality seeds	3.6617	3.0517	1.2144
7.	Inadequate supply of manures	3.8582*	3.1776	1.3081
8.	Difficulty in preparing organic pesticides	3.6617	3.0517	1.2982
9.	Non availability of skilled labourers	3.1884	3.9664*	2.1446*
10.	Lack of special financial assistance	3.6886	2.9193	1.9001
11.	Long duration of crop	3.5045	2.9697*	1.5432
12.	Lack of encouragement and cooperation from agriculture department	3.9943	3.1408	2.0292*
13.	Tedious certification process	3.8568	3.8108	0.3889*
14.	Lack of Technical knowledge	3.7334	3.3341	1.7141
15.	Fear of crop failure due to unknown pests	3.6673	3.4146	0.4562
16.	Lack of moral support from public	3.9334*	3.1863	2.0842*

Source: Computed data *Significant @5% level

In the case of small farmers, the highly perceived organic paddy production problems are 'lack of encouragement and cooperation from the state agriculture department', 'lack of moral support from public', and 'lack of integration among fellow farmers' since their mean scores are 3.9943, 3.9334, and 3.8899 respectively.

In the case of medium farmers the major disturbing problems are ‘non availability of skilled labourers’, ‘lack of awareness about organic products’ and ‘tedious certification process’ since their mean scores are 3.9664, 3.8583 and 3.8108 respectively.

Regarding the perception on the production problems, a significant difference between the two groups has been noticed in the perception on ‘lack of awareness’, ‘lack of integration among fellow farmers’, ‘lack of incentive from government’, ‘non availability of skilled labourers’, ‘lack of encouragement from Government department’, ‘tedious certification process’ and ‘lack of moral support from public’, as their respective ‘t’ statistics are significant at five per cent.

Relationship between Characteristics of Respondents and their Perception on Problems in Organic Farming.

The profile of the farmers may be associated with their perception on the problems in organic farming.. In order to analyze this aspect, the included profile variables are age, literacy level, residential status, marital status, gender, annual income, number of family members, farming experience, and organic farming experience. For this purpose a null hypothesis was framed as “the personal profile of the respondents does not significantly influence on their perception on various problems in organic farming”. The one way analysis of variance has been executed to analyse such association. The results are presented in Table:2

Table:2 - Association Between Personal Profile of Respondents and their Perceptions on Problems in Organic Farming

Sl. No	Profile variable	‘F’ statistics			
		Yield risk	Input problems	Market risk	Problems relating to certification
1.	Age	3.0145*	2.7605	1.8999	3.0641*
2.	Literacy level	2.4432	2.9106	2.8275*	2.0831
3.	Residential status	2.5114	2.3885*	2.0442	2.9867*
4.	Marital status	2.0115	1.8010	2.1142	2.8186*
5.	Gender	2.8167*	3.1408*	2.943*	2.7186*
6.	Annual income	2.6862*	1.3345	1.5654	2.8184*
7.	Number of family members	2.0621	1.8942	2.1447	2.8175*
8.	Farming experience	2.8244*	2.5646*	2.7308*	2.6861*
9.	Experience in organic farming	2.8754	2.6515*	2.8144*	1.8669*

Source: Computed data

Significance @5% level

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Regarding the perception on 'Yield risk' the significantly associating profile are age, gender, annual income and farming experience, since their respective F' statistics are significant at five per cent level.

In the case of perception on 'Input problems' the profile variables are 'residential status', gender, 'farming experience' and 'experience in organic farming'. The significantly associating profile variables with perception on 'Market risk' are 'literacy level', 'gender', 'farming experience' and 'organic farming experience'. In the case of perception on 'Problems relating to certification' the profile variables associated are age, residential status, marital status, gender, annual income, number of family members, farming experiences and organic farming experience since the respective 'f' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level. From this the null hypothesis is accepted and the selected personal profile variables are not influencing the perception of sample respondents on problems in organic farming uniformly.

Findings of the study

Regarding the perception on the production problems, a significant difference between the two groups has been noticed in the perception on 'lack of awareness', 'lack of integration among fellow farmers', 'lack of incentive from government', 'non availability of skilled labourers', 'lack of encouragement from Government department', 'tedious certification process' and 'lack of moral support from public', as their respective 't' statistics are significant at five per cent.

The one way analysis of variance executed to study the relationship between the characteristics of respondents and their perception on problems in organic farming clearly indicates that

The perception on 'Yield risk' is significantly associated with age, gender, annual income and farming experience.

The perception on 'Input problems' is closely related to residential status, gender, farming experience and experience in organic farming of the respondents.

The perception on 'Market risk' significantly associated with the literacy level, gender, farming experience and organic farming experience of the respondents.

Age, residential status, marital status, gender, annual income, number of family members, farming experience and experience

Conclusion

Sustainable food production is increasingly important in developing countries as these will be the home for most of the world's population. Organic farming can contribute to sustainable food security by improving nutrition intake, supporting healthier livelihoods in rural areas and most important of enhancing the bio-diversity while simultaneously reducing the vulnerability of people to drastic climate change that the world is now confronting. Natural way of living is the time tested, well proven alternative to the chemical dominated lifestyle that resulted in currently prevailing harsh weather patterns and uncontrollable fatal diseases. The shortcomings mentioned can be overcome with appropriate measures. And with the overcome of shortcomings, Organic farming is said to be the future of India.

References

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