

## **ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ORGANIC FARMING IN INDIA**

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### **Abstract**

India is a country that is bestowed with indigenous skills and potentiality for growth in organic agriculture. Organic farming is one of the widely used methods, which is thought of as the best alternative to avoid the ill effects of chemical farming. Organic farming is eco-friendly, promotes sustainable development, protects the fertility of the soil and ensures long term crop income to the farmer. Organic food production is defined as cultivation without the application of chemical fertilizers and synthetic pesticides or genetically modified organisms, growth hormones, and antibiotics. The popularity of organically grown foods is increasing day by day owing to their nutritional and health benefits. Organic farming also protects the environment and has a greater socio-economic impact on a nation.

Keywords: agriculture, Organic Farming

### **Introduction**

Organic farming is one of the widely used methods, which is thought of as the best alternative to avoid the ill effects of chemical farming. There are several definitions of organic farming and the one given by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is considered the most coherent and stringent. It is defined as 'a system that is designed and maintained to produce agricultural products by the use of methods and substances that maintain the integrity of organic agricultural products until they reach the consumer. This is accomplished by using substances, to fulfil any specific fluctuation within the system so as to maintain long term soil biological activity, ensure effective peak management, recycle wastes to return nutrients to the land, provide attentive care for farm animals and handle the agricultural products without the use of extraneous synthetic additives or processing in accordance with the act and the regulations in this part'.

Organic farming is one of the several approaches found to meet the objectives of sustainable agriculture. Many techniques used in organic farming like inter-cropping,

mulching and integration of crops and livestock are not alien to various agriculture systems including the traditional agriculture practiced in old countries like India.

### **Need for Organic Farming in India**

The need for organic farming in India arises from the unsustainability of agriculture production and the damage caused to ecology through the conventional farming practices. The present system of agriculture which we call 'conventional' and practiced the world over evolved in the western nations as a product of their socio-economic environment which promoted an overriding quest for accumulation of wealth. This method of farming adopted by other countries is inherently self destructive and unsustainable. The modern farming is highly perfected by the Americans who dispossessed the natives of their farms right from the early period of the new settlers in US. The large farms appropriated by the immigrants required machines to do the large scale cultural operations. These machines needed large amount of fossil fuels besides forcing the farmers to raise the same crops again and again, in order to utilize these machines to their optimum capacities. The result was the reduction of bio-diversity and labour. The high cost of the machines necessitated high profits, which in turn put pressure to raise productivity. Then, only those crops with high productivity were cultivated which needed increased quantities of fertilizers and pesticides. Increasing use of pesticides resulted in the damage to environment and increased resistance of insects to them. Pesticides harmed useful organisms in the soil.

### **Review of Literature**

According to Mendon et al, (2020) the farming of organic products is a unique practice which balances the environmental sustainability and also controls the detrimental effect both on customer's safety by creating a positive notion in the minds of the customers. Varkey, (2020) contends that countries, developing as well as developed are emphasising environment sustainability of agricultural production, methods and practices. The traditional wisdom of farmers on indigenous agrarian practices increasingly being called into question owing to a host of factors.

The work of Magnaye, (2018) examines the relationship between smallholder organic farming and entrepreneurship taking into account the environmental conservation approach of organic farming and the economic enhancement features of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it

intends to determine, through qualitative analysis using case studies, how smallholder organic farming can be planned, and the competencies needed by an organic farmer when venturing into an organic farm enterprise. On the other hand Giovannucci, (2007) assert that generally speaking, find that there is significant evidence that organic methods could be favorable for small farmers. In fact, most of the cases clearly noted a number of direct benefits and related externalities from which it is reasonable to conclude that the promotion of organic agriculture methods among small and resource-poor farmers can be well warranted. Yadav, et al, (2013) add that in the post independence period, the most important challenge in India has been to produce enough food for the growing population. Hence, high-yielding varieties are being used with infusion of irrigation water, fertilizers.

### **Organic Farming in India**

Ever increasing population as opposed to an ever decreasing supply of living resources like food and water has made it necessary to increase agricultural production and stabilize it in a viable and feasible manner. The benefits of 'Green Revolution' credited to Dr. MS Swaminathan have now reached a plateau and with diminishing returns it has become necessary to devise alternate techniques. In addition, the excess use of fertilizers and artificial growth regulators has led to an issue called 'pollution'. The need of the hour is a natural balance between life and property for existence. Keeping in view the fact that fossil fuels are on their way of extinction and are non-renewable, organic, nature friendly ways of farming and agriculture has gained importance. (<https://www.farmingindia.in/organic-farming/>)

India produced around 2.75 million MT of certified organic products which includes all varieties of food products namely Oil Seeds, Sugar cane, Cereals & Millets, Cotton, Pulses, Aromatic & Medicinal Plants, Tea, Coffee, Fruits, Spices, Dry Fruits, Vegetables, Processed foods etc. The production is not limited to the edible sector but also produces organic cotton fiber, functional food products etc. Among different states Madhya Pradesh is the largest producer followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. In terms of commodities Oil seeds are the single largest category followed by Sugar crops, Cereals and Millets, Tea & Coffee, Fiber crops, fodder, Pulses, Medicinal/ Herbal and Aromatic plants and Spices & Condiments. The total volume of export was 6.389 lakh MT. The organic food export realization was around INR 4,686 crore (689 million USD). Organic products are exported to USA, European Union, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Japan,

Israel, UAE, New Zealand, Vietnam etc. In terms of export value realization Processed foods including soya meal(45.87%) lead among the products followed by Oilseeds (13.25%), Plantation crop products such as Tea and Coffee(9.61%), Cereals and millets (8.19%), Spices and condiments (5.20%), Dry fruits (4.98%), Sugar(3.91), Medicinal plants(3.84%) and others. ([http://apeda.gov.in/apedawebsite/organic/Organic\\_Products.htm](http://apeda.gov.in/apedawebsite/organic/Organic_Products.htm))

### **Modern Farming Technology**

Modern agriculture is based on the use of high yielding varieties of seeds, chemical fertilizers, irrigation water, pesticides, etc., and also on the adoption of multiple cropping systems with the extension of area under cultivation. But it also put severe pressure on natural resources like, land and water. However, given the continuous growth of modern technology along with the intensive use of natural resources, many of them of non renewable, it is felt that agriculture cannot be sustainable in future because of the adverse changes being caused to the environment and the ecosystem. The environmental non-degradable nature of the agricultural development and its ecological balance have been studied in relation to the modern Indian farming system by experts which shows exploitation of land and water for agriculture, and the excessive use of chemicals.

### **Indirect Economic Benefits**

- In developing countries, certified farmer organizations (or buyers) usually offer services, such as price information, training, credit, or value addition, to help farmers meet certification requirements and produce the quality demanded in international organic markets.
- As smallholder access to rural services is generally low, such initiatives by certified organizations can improve the situation more broadly and result in income gains. However, the range and quality of services to be provided is not specified in organic standards, so the relevance of such indirect benefits varies.
- Collective marketing or contractual arrangements are also commonplace in smallholder organic value chains.

### **Overall Profitability and Income**

- The price premium is insufficient to compensate for lower yields and/or higher production costs. Other studies suggest that organic certification contributes to higher profitability in the small farm sector.
- However, a narrow focus on the profits from one certified crop alone may yield an incomplete picture of the overall economic impacts of organic farming.
- This is especially true in the small farm sector, where households usually engage in multiple farm and off-farm activities. For instance, when households decide to allocate land, labour, and capital to organic production, the income from other economic activities may also be affected through resource reallocation and other types of spillovers.

Recently, the Government of India has implemented a number of programs and schemes for boosting organic farming in the country. Among these the most important include

- (1) The Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana,
- (2) Organic Value Chain Development in North Eastern Region Scheme,
- (3) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana,
- (4) The mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (a. National Horticulture Mission, b. Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan states, c. National Bamboo Mission, d. National Horticulture Board, e. Coconut Development Board, d. Central Institute for Horticulture, Nagaland),
- (5) National Programme for Organic Production,
- (6) National Project on Organic Farming, and
- (7) National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

### **Conclusion**

Organic farming as a cultivation process is gaining increasing popularity. Organically grown foods have become one of the best choices for both consumers and farmers. Organically grown foods are part of go green lifestyle. Organic farming is less harmful to the environment as it does not allow synthetic pesticides, most of which are potentially harmful to water, soil, and local terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. The consumption and popularity of organic foods are increasing day by day throughout the world. Consumer prefers organic

foods in the concept that organic foods have more nutritional values, have lesser or no additive contaminants, and sustainably grown. The families with younger consumers, in general, prefer organic fruits and vegetables than consumers of any other age group.

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