

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION & MANAGEMENT

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GOVERNMENT'S INCLINATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

From ancient times itself organic farming is prevalent in India. Organic farming system in India is not new and is being followed from ancient time. A food that is described as 'organic' simply means a food in its purest form, grown or produced without chemical aid. Organic farming keeps harmful chemicals and pesticides out of the food we eat and beverages we drink. The main objectives of organic farming are to maintain organic matter level, promote soil biological activities and careful mechanical intervention to protect the long term fertility of soil, providing nutrients to the crops indirectly with the help of soil micro-organisms which are relatively insoluble nutrient sources and giving due attention to the impact of the farming system on the wider environment and the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats. The different kinds of organic farming are discussed in this article. The main concentration in this article is given to the role of Government of India in development of organic farming. Schemes developed and constraints faced by the Government in path of developing the organic agriculture in India. Some recommendations are offered like Farmers' Organization should be formed as a sound organic strategy for reasonable price premium, awareness and training programmes for organic farming at a regular interval are required and regular demonstrations to the farmers regarding the economic benefits due to application of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy in organic farm should be given. Flow of credit to agriculture by Kisan Credit Card (KCC), Self Help Group (SHG)-banking linkage programme, Farm Income Insurance Scheme (FIIS) should be developed, especially for organic farming.

KEYWORDS

constraints, government's role, kinds of organic farming, promote organic farming, schemes developed.

INTRODUCTION

From ancient times itself organic farming is prevalent in India. Organic farming system in India is not new and is being followed from ancient time. The main aim of organic farming is to keep the soil alive and in good health by the use of organic wastes like crop, animal and farm wastes and aquatic wastes. It is a method of farming system which primarily aimed at cultivating the land and raising crops in such a way, as to keep the soil alive and in good health by use of organic wastes and other biological materials along with beneficial microbes to release nutrients to crops for increased sustainable production in an ecofriendly pollution free environment.

As per the definition of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) study team on organic farming "organic farming is a system which avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetic inputs (such as fertilizers, pesticides, hormones, feed additives etc) and to the maximum extent feasible rely upon crop rotations, crop residues, animal manures, off-farm organic waste, mineral grade rock additives and biological system of nutrient mobilization and plant protection".

Organic agriculture is a unique production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, 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.

NEED FOR ORGANIC FARMING

The Green Revolution has taken India from food deficiency stage to self-sufficient stage to export level production. It has all been possible by the use of high yielding varieties and higher level of inputs of fertilizers and plant protection chemicals. During the post Green Revolution period, the production of food grains has increased four-folds. Anything in excess is not good for human, plants and for soil too, excessive use of chemicals in agriculture is raising the questions on sustainability of agriculture in the long run calling attention for sustainable production, which shall address social, ecological and economical issues together. Recognizing the adverse impact of excessive use of chemicals on soil health and human health, there has been a realization for integrated management system. Since organic farming addresses soil health, human health and environmental health and is eco-friendly, appears to be one of the options for sustainability. Therefore, organic farming is receiving a focused attention of Government of India.

Producing crops using fertilizers and chemicals has come to be known as conventional agriculture. Environmental concerns, possible pesticide residues in foods and declining energy resources have breathed new life into alternative forms of production such as organic farming. Foods that are organically farmed are seen as more natural, healthier and perhaps of higher quality. Organically grown foods are cultivated without synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. A food that is described as 'organic' simply means a food in its purest form, grown or produced without chemical aid. Organic farming keeps harmful chemicals and pesticides out of the food we eat and beverages we drink.

The main objectives of organic farming are:

- To maintain organic matter level, promote soil biological activities and careful mechanical intervention to protect the long term fertility of soil.
- Making the soil nitrogen self-sufficient biological nitrogen fixation and use of crop residues and livestock wastes as manures.
- Providing nutrients to the crops indirectly with the help of soil micro-organisms which are relatively insoluble nutrient sources.
- Controlling weeds, diseases and pest through crop rotation, natural predators, diversity, organic manuring, and minimal thermal, biological and chemical intervention.
- Taking extensive care of livestock, paying full attention to their adaptations, behavioural needs and welfare issues regarding their nutrition, housing, health, breeding and rearing.
- Giving due attention to the impact of the farming system on the wider environment and the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats

DIFFERENT KINDS OF FARMING PRACTICES**Homoeofarming**

Samuel Hahnemann, the developer of the modern homoeopathic method of medicine, discovered in 1827 that when a remedial substance was diluted and then shook or knocked and repeated the process several times, the end result was remedy which had lost its toxicity and simultaneously had acquired a stronger medicinal property with a greater curing effect. That is why he called this processing 'potentizing'.

Advantages of homoeofarming

- It is a total and complete organic farming with assured yields.

- Produces healthy soils, healthy plant life and healthy yields.
- Restores natural taste, color and flavor of the yields. The cooking quality of rice and other cereals improved very much.
- No environmental pollution and ecological disturbance
- The plants are not subjected to shocks due to chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticides
- Easy to carry and handling charges are nil. For example 200-450 ml (1 kg max) of Tincture per acre is sufficient as against 50 - 100 kg of chemical fertilizers.
- These are cost-effective (200-300% less than chemicals.) So it is very much helpful to small and marginal farmers.
- Leads to sustainable Agriculture.

Maharishi Vedic Organic Agriculture

Maharishi Vedic Organic Agriculture is natural agriculture free from all poisonous fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, grown by farmers enjoying Vedic consciousness. It is higher consciousness spontaneously in harmony with the rhythms and cycles of nature on the local and cosmic levels and utilizing the Vedic sounds - the sounds of natural law to awaken the inner intelligence of the plants, so that their growth and health-giving, nourishing properties are maximized to uplift the consciousness and promote a peaceful, healthy life for all who eat them. The goal of Maharishi Vedic Organic Agriculture is to re-enliven Natural Law in agriculture, bringing the farmer, the process of farming and the environment in complete harmony with each other.

Agnihotra

Agnihotra is a healing fire from the ancient science of ayurveda. It is a process of purifying the atmosphere through a specially prepared fire performed at sunrise and sunset daily. Agnihotra utilizes the combined effect of various factors involved in its science viz., burning of specific organic substances like cow's ghee, rice grains, twigs of plants like vata, audumbar, palaash, peemal and bael etc and thereby injecting the atmosphere with nutrients. The mantra vibrations chanted too have a healing and relaxing effect on the atmosphere and all the living beings. Agnihotra also nourishes plant life and neutralizes harmful radiation and it harmonizes the functioning of life energy and can be used to purify water resource.

Amrutpani

Amrutpani invigorates the living soil and converts a dead soil into a living one. Amrutpani is liquid manure prepared by Ahimsak Rishi-Krishi Deshpande technique. Amrutpani is also used to improve the soil fertility.

How to use Amrutpani?

Sugarcane, turmeric, ginger etc. should be planted after dipping into Amrutpani. In the case of crops where the seedlings are transplanted, the roots can be dipped into Amrutpani before planting. While watering sugarcane and other crops with canal or well water, Amrutpani can be mixed in the main watering channel stirring all the time. For rain fed or monsoon crops the seeds need dressing. When the soil is damp, it should be drenched with Amrutpani. Between the rows and not directly on the plants. While planting seedlings of crops such as chilli, tobacco or fruit trees, the small amount of water, which is needed to wet the area around the plants, should be Amrutpani. Excess of Amrutpani is always beneficial and will not harm the young plants.

Companion planting

Companion planting refers to the practice of planting more than one crop in the row or planting a different crop between two rows of a like crop. It is theorized that the aroma of certain plants are inhibitory to some diseases or insects. Companion cropping can effectively use garden space and is particularly useful with small gardens. If companion cropping is used, select companions with care to avoid shading or excessive, competition for water and nutrients. Like for beans - Potato, carrot, cucumber, cauliflower, cabbage are companion crops but Onion, garlic are antagonist crops.

Biopreservatives

In today's food industry, chemical preservatives are commonly used to maintain raw material quality, to ensure safety and stability of the products during their extended shelf life. But consumers world over prefer food products that are natural, additive free, have less salt and acceptable shelf life with assured quality. However, the use of chemical preservatives to inhibit growth of spoilage bacteria in modern food systems has been recognized as deterrent to health. Thus this has necessitated the need to exploit the natural biological substance from plants, animals and microorganisms, which are safe for human health and are capable of producing substances that act as preservatives, called 'Biopreservatives'.

GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC FARMING IN INDIA

Government of India also wants to develop the organic products market in India and around the world. Government is taking actions to promote organic production in India. As part of 10th Five year Plan, Government of India has earmarked about Rs. 100 crores for the promotion of organic agriculture in the country. The main components of this initiative include farming of standards, negotiating with different countries and putting in place a system of certification for organic products. Central Government is also promoting the production and use of bio-fertilizer to make it popular. Government has initiated a project "National Project on Development and Use of Bio fertilizers" for this purpose.

Government in 2001 has created a nodal agency named APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) to promote the Indian organic agriculture and its exports opportunities. Another program called National Program for Organic Production (NPOP) is outlined and under this program, National Organic Standards have been evolved. This apart, it has also developed Criteria for Accreditation of certification agencies, Accreditation Procedure and Inspection and Certification Procedures. In developing these standards and procedures due attention is paid to the guidelines as enumerated by international organizations such as International Federation for Organic Agricultural Movement (IFOAM), EU Regulations and FAO Codex Standards. As part of this program, a National Logo for organic products on behalf of Govt. of India has also been developed.

Some of the other efforts towards promotion of organic exports include attempts to collaborate with all the major organic importing countries. Towards this APEDA is deliberating with European Union for inclusion of India in the list of third countries under Article 11 of the EU regulations No 2092/91 so that India's National Programme for Organic Production gets the required recognition under the EU regulations.

A national level steering committee is functioning as the apex advisory body for assisting the government to promote organic farming in the country. This body consists of representative's from the Ministries of Agriculture, Food Processing Industries, Forests and Environment, Science and Technology, Rural Development and Commerce.

CONSTRAINTS THAT ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IS FACING IN INDIA

- **Market Information** – Very less information regarding organic farming is available in the market. The information is not easily accessible to the local farmers. There are no central, state and local designated agencies which brings the information to the farmers.
- **Bio – input** – The conventional inputs are considered more effective than bio inputs because –
 - a. There is no quality monitoring system for bio inputs due to which many spurious and low quality brands are available in the market.
 - b. There is low penetration of bio inputs in market due to the disincentive for traders.
 - c. Traders are not willing to keep the stock of bio input in the shop due to the limited shelf life of the bio inputs.
 - d. It takes long period for bio inputs to be effective. There are very limited R&D and investments on bio inputs.
- **Time and cost of conversion** – High cost is involved in the certification process and there are very limited numbers of certifying agencies. Small and marginal farmers hesitate to convert from conventional to organic farming due to high cost and time lag.
- **Limited Government Support** – Farmers prefer conventional inputs since they are subsidized but no incentives are provided to bio inputs. Government has outlaid limited financial support to bio inputs. There are no coordinated efforts between centre and state level for strategic attention towards greening the agriculture.

- **Inadequate Infrastructure** – There is lack of adequate transportation facilities and no or limited storage facilities. Quality assurance mechanisms are not easy for the farmers. Marketing channels for green outputs are under developed. Price premiums reach more for intermediaries than producers. There is low level of networking among farmers and other stakeholders.

HINDRANCES THAT GOVERNMENT IS FACING WHILE PROMOTING ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

The subsidies on chemical and fertilizers have slowed down the growth of organic agriculture.

The change process from conventional to organic is difficult because in India majority of numbers of farmers are small or marginal and there is high level of illiteracy rate among them, so making them understand that the income loss while changing the cropping and cultivation patterns is an investment even if it is slow and time consuming process.

Government aided agricultural departments, research institutions and extension services have for long been oriented towards chemical input agriculture as a result there is a requirement for reorienting these officials towards organic agriculture which takes time and money.

SCHEMES DEVELOPED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Many corporate houses require a regular supply of organic foods and all the polyclinics in the major cities demand toxin free fruits and vegetables for inmates. The retailers of metropolitan cities and exporters of vegetable to the Middle East / Far East require small quantities of organic produce on a continuous basis throughout the year. Correspondingly substantial area in Erode, Thirunelveli, Sivagangai, Coimbatore and Madurai districts have been converted into organic horticultural production systems. APEDA has accredited Spices Board and OASIS, an NGO to certify the organic farms.

Importing regions such as the EU are insisting on adherence to Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary standards (SPS) and Traceability norms on the import of food products. The WTO also has developed norms for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in line with Europe Gap to ensure food safety. In this context, it is imperative to promote organic farming in places like Nilgiris, Sathyamangalam, Sivagangai, Tirunelveli, Theni etc., so as to enable the farmers to get certified by agencies like INDOCERT, SKAL, and IFOAM.

The organic producers are to be trained on GAP, SPS and traceability issues. Currently, there is no institutional mechanism to link the production base with the retail sector. District level collection centers and retail sales centers at Urban areas are proposed to be established under Tamil Nadu Horticultural Produces Co-operative Enterprises, primarily a farmers co-operative, so that a steady flow of organic produce is ensured between the producers and consumers. This model is proposed to be implemented in two production centers during 2005–06 and scaled up to all major horticultural clusters in the next couple of years. The total financial assistance sought in 2005–06 for all initiatives under Organic farming (all components) is Rs 157.6 Lakhs.

ADOPTION OF ORGANIC FARMING

Estimated Value	:	Rs.20,000/-ha
Subsidy	:	50% (i.e) Rs.10, 000/-ha
Maximum subsidy per individual will be for 4 ha		

Organic farming can be followed in fruit crops, vegetables, spices & condiments and Cole crops.

TABLE 1 – INVESTMENT TO ADOPT ORGANIC FARMING

Details	50% Subsidy Rs.	Farmers contribution (Rs.)	Total (Rs.)
Land preparation	0	2,500	2,500
Green manure and seed material	0	500	500
<i>Trichoderma viridi</i> , <i>Pseudomonas</i> , <i>Azospirillum</i> , <i>Phosphobacteria</i> , VAM	1,000	0	1,000
Vermicompost & organic manure	4,000	0	4,000
Neem seed oil cake & pungam cake	4,000	0	4,000
Neem oil	500	0	500
Poultry manure, farmyardmanure	500	7,000	7,500
Total	10,000	10,000	20,000

Source: agritech.tnau.ac.in

Following are the schemes of Government to aid all the farmers irrespective of the size:

1. Production and distribution of Green manure seeds – 25 % subsidy
2. Production and Distribution of *Rhizobium*, *Azospirillum* and *Phosphobacteria*- Rs.6/200 gm packet
3. Production and distribution of Blue green algae Rs.2.75/kg
4. Production and distribution of parasites to control Black headed caterpillar. Subsidy charge Rs.35/ha
5. Release of parasite in sugarcane to control internode borer. RS.35.75/ha
6. Production of NPV for the control of prodenia in cotton. Rs.53/ha
7. Composting of farm waste through pleurotus. Distribution of kits at free cost (1 kg of pluerotus, 5 kgs of urea and a leaflet containing technical information at a cost of rs.140 per kit)
8. Vermicompost production scheme implemented to conduct demonstration. Supply input at the cost of Rs.1200
9. Vermicompost production scheme implemented to conduct training. Rs. 50 for each person participates in training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Farmers' Organization should be formed as a sound organic strategy for reasonable price premium.
2. Awareness and training programmes for organic farming at a regular interval are required.
3. Regular demonstrations to the farmers regarding the economic benefits due to application of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy in organic farm
4. Flow of credit to agriculture by Kishan Credit Card (KCC), Self Help Group (SHG)-banking linkage programme, Farm Income Insurance Scheme (FIIS) should be developed, especially for organic farming.
5. Interlinked credit with output for organic farm production should be initiated to facilitate export in this section and to encourage organic farmers.
6. Sound public policy should involve revolving fund for farmers to access initial financing required for investments to vermicomposting, bio-pesticide production, livestock, etc. These are useful in integrated systems of manures, pesticides, etc.
7. Government incentives or tax exemptions on organic inputs should be applied like conventional inputs and benefits could be channeled like extension services and support for biological pest controls.
8. The Government should provide start-up funding as subsidy for a broad scale farmer conversion programme i.e. inputs of organic in nature.
9. The organic farm produce should be included under the public distribution system (PDS).
10. Proper attention should be paid while supplying the inputs at the door step of farmers in the initial stage.
11. Farmers and consumers should rely on a system of private self-organized producer organizations and independent certifiers which will provide an economically-efficient mechanism of certification (e.g. PGS, i.e. Participatory Guarantee System).
12. Marketing co-operatives by pooling the small and scattered produce of the producers can improve the bargaining strength of organic growers and can thus effectively eliminate the margin appropriated by the market intermediaries.

13. Organic food products should be integrated into public procurement, such as in schools, hospitals, etc., through the requirement of at least a certain percentage of organic foods, if these are available, to stimulate both a base market demand and improve the public information and consumer exposure to organics.
14. Public domain research with adequate funding for sustainable agriculture is urgently necessary in developing countries. The Government of India should set up an Organic Agricultural Research Institute (OARI) with its all India network through different centers in different states of different agro-ecological condition.

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