



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

ORGANIC FARMING IN KERALA

Bibin Prabhu
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
S.N. College,
Nattika, Thrissur
India

*Abstract*In this paper the case study is about describing the present scenario of Organic farming in Kerala and the problems in adopting it and various suggestions for removing the obstacles in this field.

Agriculture in Kerala has been revolutionized by Green Revolution, but it has created severe bad consequences on our economic system and its sustainability. As a result farmers convinced the importance of return to the traditional sustainable ways of cultivation without harming the economic system. Thus Organic farming a system with the broad principle of “living soil” came up which was recognized nationally and internationally.

Kerala is heading towards an Organic farming state. But at the same time Organic farming had to face many immediate problems like a steep fall in yield, high cost of certification etc. So it is difficult to maintain Kerala as a fully Organic state. But at the same time the government and various organizations taken many initiatives in the promotion of Organic farming in Kerala.

The main objective of this paper is to analyse the status of Organic farming in Kerala and also evaluate its problems and suggestions associated with it.

AGRICULTURE

The word Agriculture is derived from the latin word “Ager” means land or field and “Culture” means cultivation. Agriculture is an art of raising the lives of plant from the soil for the use of mankind. It is the backbone of Indian economy. In India around 65 percent of total population dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. It provides approximately 52 percent of jobs and contributes 18.1 percent to GDP. The food grain production has increased from 51 million tonnes in 1950-51 to 25 million tonnes during 2011-12 and it was the highest growth ever since independence.

However, in the course of development, agriculture the means of livelihood of two-thirds of work force has been revolutionized by Green Revolution. Though Green Revolution became a boom for hungry India, it has also created severe consequences on our economic system and its sustainability. The farmers convinced the importance of return to the traditional sustainable ways of cultivation without harming the economic system. Organic Farming seems to be as an alternative to wipe out the negative effects of Green revolution technology. Thus Organic Farming , a system with the broad principle of “living soil” came up which was recognized nationally and internationally.

ORGANIC FARMING

The word “Organic Farming” is derived from two words – “Organic” means “origin from a living thing” and “Farming” means “production system alive with long life”. The term Organic was first coined by Northbourne, in 1940, in his book entitled “Look to the land”. The British botanist, Sir Albert Howard studied traditional farming and considered such practices as superior to modern agricultural practices which is described in his work “An Agricultural Testament” published in 1940 emerged as the origin of modern Organic farming. Later he is known as the “Father of Organic farming”.

Organic Farming system is not new and is being followed from ancient time. It is a system of agriculture originated early in the 20th century in reaction to rapidly changing farming practices. Organic Farming is a method of farming system aimed at cultivating the land and raising crops in a way as to keep the soil alive and in good health by use of organic wastes and other biological materials along with bio fertilizers to release nutrients to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco friendly pollution free environment.

HISTORY OF ORGANIC FARMING

The popularity and scientific acceptance of Organic farming is first taken place in western world, especially in USA and Germany. The first initiative in this way was by Rudolf Steiner and his work “Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture” published in 1924, and the concept is called Biodynamic agriculture. Sir Albert Howard, Father of Organic farming, studied traditional farming practices in various states and argued such practices as superior to modern agricultural practices which is described in the book “An Agricultural Testament” published in 1940 emerged as the origin of modern organic farming.

In 1972 IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements) was founded in Versailles, France. IFOAM was dedicated to world wide transmission of information on the principles and practices of Organic farming. During 1980’s regulation of Organic production certification standards began. The FIBL, Organic agriculture research institute in Switzerland, International Federations like the IFOAM with headquarters in Germany are doing exclusive research in Organic farming and support Organic farmers.

PRESENT STATUS OF ORGANIC FARMING IN INDIA AND WORLD

- Worldwide 31 hectares of land is under Organic farming and it was managed by 700000 farmers.
- 138 Countries growing Organic food.
- India ranks 33 in the Organic farming and Madhya Pradesh has highest land under Organic farming (52%)
- Maharashtra is at Second (33.6%)
- Orissa is at Third (9.7%)
- Uttrakhand and Sikkim are Organic states.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the status of Organic farming in Kerala.
- To analyse the movement of Kerala towards Organic farming and evaluate the problems and suggestions associated with it.

METHODOLOGY

The Paper is based on Secondary data. The Secondary data were collected from articles published in various journals, books, periodicals and websites. Information from literature on historical evolution of Organic farming and the progress it has attained were also collected from various published sources and internet.

KERALA BECOMES ORGANIC

In Kerala, farmland become identified with Mother God. Just like female has to take rest after delivery, the farmland also to be given rest for 3 months after harvest, and tilling is strictly prohibited during this period. Although it may look superstitious, the ecological reason behind this is that tilling during monsoon leads to severe soil erosion, and thus unsustainable practice. Therefore sustainability has been the hallmark of our farming system.

Meanwhile the Green revolution is essentially replaced the traditional varieties with high-yielding ones. As a result of it, production increased to a large extent, but at the same time, the soil lost its fertility and vitality, water demand increased and the eternal relationship between the farmer and farmland was lost. The sustainability of agricultural systems collapsed, cost of cultivation soared, income of farmers stagnated and food security and food safety became a daunting challenge.

The farmers in Kerala realised that the only way is to return to the traditional sustainable ways of cultivation without harming the ecosystem. Thus “Organic farming”, a system with the broad principle of “live and let live” came up which was recognised nationally and internationally.

Organic farming is not limited to crop production alone, it encompasses animal husbandry, dairy, poultry, fisheries, forestry etc. and also uncultivated biodiversity around. There is an increasing awareness among the consumers on the deleterious effects of pesticides and hence there has been a high demand for organically cultivated food produces. Besides it has become a solemn responsibility of the Government to encourage organic farming to ensure poison-free food at affordable price to every citizen. The State Department of Agriculture commenced Organic farming promotional activities since 2002-03. Kerala also has accredited organic certifying agencies catering to the needs of the farmers. Self help groups of women like “Kudumbasree” and “Janasree” are encouraged to undertake Organic farming of vegetables and they run “Organic Markets” successfully. Understanding the growing demands, private entrepreneurs have also entered into the Organic food business.

Kerala is heading towards an Organic farming state. The Government of Kerala issued an Organic farming policy. The Kerala Agricultural University has published the adhoc Package of Practices Recommendations for Organic farming. Kasaragod, that witnessed harshness of chemical pesticides application has been declared the first Organic farming district in the state. This gives a new momentum to Kerala’s race to an Organic farming state.

STATUS OF ORGANIC FARMING IN KERALA

The concept of Organic farming is gaining gradual impetus in Kerala. During the past 12-15 years, many farmers in Kerala other than those continued traditional methods, have converted to Organic farming. Those who converted from intensive agriculture to Organic farming had to face many immediate problems like a steep fall in yield. It is also difficult to maintain the organic purity in the soil and atmosphere due to the prevalence of modern agriculture in majority of cultivable areas.

Kerala’s rich endowments of wide variety of agricultural crops especially spices, plantation crops, medicinal plants etc. is an ideal destination for promotion of organic farming due to the changing preferences worldwide towards organic and eco-friendly products. Currently there are a number of ongoing initiatives in Kerala, one such is to make Kerala fully organic has begun with the formulation of a draft policy in 2003. Now there are a number of certified organic farmers in the state, those cultivating cash crops such as spices, tea and coffee mainly targeting export market and also non-certified organic farmers who focus on food crops and biodiversity.

There are so many initiatives from the part of government and various organisations in promotion of Organic farming in Kerala. A State wide intensive action programme on “Jaiva Keralam” was started by government.

Besides government itself came forward with a new policy on Organic farming in 2007 which had been formulated by the State Biodiversity Board. The policy documents entitled Kerala State Organic Farming Policy, Strategy and Action plan has a vision statement to make Organic farming sustainable and eco-friendly.

PROBLEMS OF ORGANIC FARMING IN KERALA

Despite the benefits of Organic farming, farmers are facing many obstacles in its expansion. The following are the main obstacles in adopting and promoting Organic farming in Kerala.

- Most of the people get only a few amount of earnings from Organic production because they only use small amount of land for their production.
- Changing climatic conditions, a universal problem faced by all farmers, were also happening in Organic farming because of improper development strategies, deforestation and the ruing of natural resources.
- Organic certification is costly for small and marginal farmers. Thus absence of Organic certification and branding is a common problem in Organic farming.
- There are no appropriate government interventions in policy-making for small and marginal Organic farmers.
- In Organic farming cost of labour and other expenses are very high especially for small and marginal farmers.
- Seed expenses and cost of fertilisers are very high. Free seeds and subsidised fertilisers are the motivating factor of Organic farmers.
- The costs of Organic inputs like Vermicompost, Cow dung and other manures are very costly, making them unaffordable to small cultivation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING ORGANIC FARMING IN KERALA

- Quality seeds must be distributed to farmers from Krishi bhavan.
- Green manure seeds, bio fertilisers and bio pesticides should be made available to the farmers at an affordable price.
- Government should minimise the excessive expense of Certification procedure.
- Adequate research should be taken to improve the yields of Organic farming
- Separate market should be established for Organic farm products.
- Consumers should be educated the advantages of Organic farm products.
- A strong organizational support structure is needed to increase the area of Organic farming and to motivate the farmers.
- Government needs to spread awareness about Organic farming through Seminar, workshops, etc. and get to help proper skill development related to Organic farming.
- The government policies and regulations should be in support of Organic farmers to overcome the constraints they faced along the path of conversion to Organic farming.

CONCLUSION

Today Organic farming is growing and spreading all over in Kerala. It is superior on account of increased use of natural resources, lower cost of cultivation, higher soil fertility, better input use efficiency , increases self reliance etc. Thus Organic farming has better economical and environmental benefits. The major challenge of it is that its lowest yield compared to conventional farming. In Kerala, it is crucial to familiarise policies and strategies to promote Organic farming methods in order to realise its full potential .

REFERENCES

- Balachandran V (2004) Future in the past : A study on the status of Organic farming in Kerala
Dr. Biju S K (2016) Organic farming Problems and Prospects in Kerala : An Analysis
Soumya K M (2016) Organic agriculture in Kerala : An evaluation of certified organic spices producers
Maria Eugenia Ortiz Escobar and Nguyen Hue (2007) Current developments in Organic farming
Satish Bhagwatrao Aher (2012) Organic agriculture : way towards sustainable development
Dr.Eknath Shankarrao Mundhe (2018) Organic farming : Need of time and health
Mr. Sunil Kumar (2019) Trends of Organic farming in Indian Economy
John P Reganold (2016) Organic agriculture in the twenty-first century

Websites

- farmer.gov.in/kerala.organic.pdf
agritech.tnau.ac.in
en.wikipedia.org
keralabiodiversity.org
researchgate.net

