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## Chances and Challenges of Organic Farming in India: A Critical Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

India, being predominantly an agrarian society and a huge 65.5 percent of the total population engaging in agriculture in one form or the other producing food crops and live stocks for an alarming one hundred thirty crore people of the country needs to be envisaged with techno-driven action policy for more and more productions. This impulse, however leads people towards a devastating future of their existence itself. As far as the scientific knowledge of the farmers regarding how to cultivate food grains in a healthy and hazard free way is concerned, they are pitifully poorer and hence are easily get victimized by the growing use of chemicals, leaving tremendously adverse effects on soil health, men, animals and the eco system. As a protest to this devastating “chemical culture” the national government of India has recently launched several schemes, programs to boost the organic farming method as the best alternative. This study aims to focus on different parameters of this method and the problems and prospects in Indian context.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organic farming is a method of crops and livestock production naturally. It uses the organic or natural fertilizers like composed manure, bone meal, green manure etc and it also emphasizes on techniques like crop rotation, companion planting and mixed cropping. Organic farming strictly avoids uses of synthetic or chemical fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified techniques, hormones, plant growth regulators etc.



Organic farming is mostly envisaged as the stoppage of synthetic inputs and their replacement by organic alternatives i.e. the use of organic manures and natural methods of plant protection, but it is for deeper concept than mere non-chemicalization. It refers to a comprehensive approach towards soil and plant leading to the enrichment of the surrounding ecology, which is a pre requisite for sustainable agriculture. According to IFOAM, organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soil, ecosystem and people. It relies on ecological processes, bio diversity and cycles adapted to local conditions rather than use of inputs with adverse effect. The major objective of organic farming is the development of a self-sustainable farming system in harmony with nature.

## **2. OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

### **2.1 Origin of organic farming method**

The concept of organic farming was developed in early 1900s by sir Albert Howard, a British Botanist with others who believed that the use of animal manures, cover crops, crop rotation and biologically based pest controls resulted in a better farming system.

These practices were further promoted by various advocates such as J.I. Rodale and his son Robert in 1940s and onward, who published “organic gardening and farming magazine and number of texts on organic farming. The demand for organic food was stimulated in 1960s and sales increased steadily from late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **2.2 Types of Organic Farming**

There are number of different types of organic farming. Amongst these all the mostly visible and more in lucrative farming are –

1. Pure Organic farmers which uses completely the organic measures and bio- pesticides and avoids completely the chemicals.
2. Integrated organic farming: This involves nutrient management and pest management. It develops crops from natural resources preventing from the pests. Meghalaya is a shining example of integrated farming.

### **2.3 Organic farming in India**

Organic farming has been practiced in India for thousands of years. In traditional India the entire industries of agriculture was practiced using organic technique.



At present, amongst the big number of 172 countries who practice organic farming, India holds unique position with 6,50,000 organic producers, 699 processors 699 exporters 7,20,000 hectares with 0.4 percent of total agricultural land use for organic farming producing around 1.35 million MT (2015-16) organic products of different types like Sugarcane, Oil Seeds, Cereals, pulses, tea, fruits, spices, vegetables, coffee etc.

India is supposed to have a wide access in this sector as the world organization agriculture 2018 report shows that about 30% of total organic producers of world reside in India. In January 2016 Sikkim was recognized as India's first 100% organic state.

Recently Indian government has launched several schemes and policy initiatives for agriculture including Organic Farming Policy in 2005. The Ministry of agriculture and farmer welfare has launched paramparagot krishi Vikash Yojna (PKVY) to promote organic farming through cluster approach along with participatory guarantee system (PGS) which is a centrally sponsored scheme and the state government of almost all the states of the country have been implementing the scheme.

Apart from this, government of India has started number of schemes and programmes and for that the area under certified organic farming has grown many fold in the past few decades. For boosting organic farming numbers of programs like Rastriya Krishi Vikash Yojna (RKVY) , The National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, National Project on Organic Farming etc. As on March, 2014 India has brought 4.72 million hector area under organic cultivation process .During 2012-13 India exported 1,65,262 mt.of organic products belonging to 135 commodities. In view of the tremendous scope for cultivation of organic crops and their exportability, the Ministry of commerce, government of India launched National Programme for organic production (NPOP) in 2000 which was implemented in 2001 and 11 states of the country have been availing the programme for promoting their organic farming sector.

India government is giving more priority for welfare of the farmers ,and numbers of farmer welfare schemes to revitalize agriculture sector and improve their economic conditions, government has rolled out initiatives, schemes, programs and plans to benefit the farmers , like-

- 1) **Soil Health Card Scheme:** This scheme was launched in 2015 to assist the farmers to ensure the soil health and also provide information on nutrient status of their soil.
- 2) **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (MNSA):** It is an action plan on climate change which aims at promoting sustainable agriculture through climate change adaption measures. There



are numbers of schemes have been launched under NMSA like Refined Area Development (RAD), Soil Health Management (SHM), National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF), Central Fertilizer Quality Control and Training Institute (CFQC&TI).

- 3) **Prodhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna (PMKSY):** This program is meant for ensuring water supply to every plot of cultivating land. The motto behind this scheme is “ Har Khet me Pani. Accordingly it focuses on creating courses for assured irrigation.
- 4) **E-marketing Programme:** It is a national agriculture market platform supporting creation of infrastructure to enable e marketing for farmers to get better price of their products
- 5) **Micro Irrigation Fund (MIF):** This programme was launched for encouraging private and public investment in micro irrigation to facilitate state government mobilizes resources for extended irrigation.

There are other various programs the national government has launched for upliftment of agriculture. These are Agriculture Contingency Plan, Refined Area Development, and National Watershed Development Project for rain fed areas etc.

The organic live stock farming is another significant alternative to conventional animal farming where excessive doses of veterinary drugs and synthetic products are used for higher production at the cost of human health.

India government has taken initiatives to launch different schemes for boosting live stock farming like-

- a) Live stock Insurance schemes as protection mechanism against any eventual loss of animals due to death.
- b) National scheme on welfare of fishermen’s financial assistance.
- c) Schemes on Fishery’s Training and Extension for providing training for the fisher sector to undertake fishery extension programs effectively.
- d) Subsidized bank loan schemes: Central government launches several schemes for diary farming with subsidized bank loans from 5 lakhs to 50 lakhs.

## 2.4 Significance of organic method of farming

Experienced that the products of organic farming are demanded much more in the market than that of hybrid production. People of almost all living standards are aware of the benefits of the organic products and are ready to pay high price for the local products. This is because of the health



consciousness of the people, the demand for local productions especially the farming products to consume are increasing day by day in present time.

Organic farming is growing significantly because the reason not only of health consciousness of the consumers, it is equally felt a necessary for preserving the natural quality of soil over years of continuous use. It rather promoter the use of crop rotations and over crops and the use of crop rotations and over crops and the use of crop rotations and over crops and also encourages balanced host and predator relationships.

- 1. Ensure Ecological balance :** Organic farming is a method of cultivating and growing crops and rearing animals in natural ways making use of biological material and avoiding synthetic substances to maintain to maintain soil fertility and ecological balance thereby minimizing pollution at all levels.
- 2. To avoid wastage:** Organic farming ensures use of substances which would otherwise have been thrown as wastage creating lot of pollutions and causing to health hazards.
- 3. Minimize chances of diseases:** Organic farm products are beneficial as these are free from any kind of toxic chemical residue, which are supposed to increase the chances of various diseases and health hazards.
- 4. Less input Cost:** Organic forming is preferred as it involves less input cost for Cultivation and also preserves ecological balance ensuring and promoting biological diversity and protection of environment.
- 5. Sustaining and Development rural economy:** Organic farming is very lucrative in sense it uses less cost input to produce highly costly out contributing to rural economy.
- 6. Making diet healthier & tastier:** The items grown by organic farming are testier and healthier. The essential nutrients of these food products for health remain preserved which makes them tasty to consume.
- 7. Eco-friendly:** Scientific researchers have shown that organic farming unlike conservative farming, use biological means of manuring, crop protection and soil enrichment which are mostly eco-friendly.

## 2.5 Problems of Organic farming in India

Major problems and constraints of organic farming in India are –

- (i) Lack of awareness:** Many of the farmers who opt for these methods of farming lack proper knowledge of how scientifically to go with the process for better yielding.
- (ii) Marketing problems:** Inability to obtain a premium price is a major setback to this sector.



- (iii) **Lack of Govt. policies:** There is not a clear and unambiguous direction available in terms of financial and technical supports from government side is another problem.
- (iv) **Shortage of Bio-mass :** The organic farmers are not sure whether all the nutrients with the required quantities can be made available by the organic materials
- (v) **Inadequate infrastructure :** It is the failure of state governments to formulate policies and credible mechanism for inspecting and assuring productivity of organic farming
- (vi) **High productive cost:** The costs of organic inputs are higher than those of industrially produced chemical fertilizers.
- (vii) **Low production:** In many cases, the farmers experience loss in yields due to low production.

### 3. SUGGESTION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC FARMING IN INDIA:

Since India is lagging far behind in the organic farming sector compared to other countries of pacific regions, a revolutionary step needed to boost the development of this sector.

Some suggestions for accelerating the growth of organic farming in India follow-

- 1) Creation of awareness about the advantage and benefits of organic products in terms of human health, soil health and the environment.
- 2) Government should come forward with a time bound policy to boost this sector.
- 3) Incentives, bank loans and subsidy thereof should be made easily accessible to the competent and promising farmers.
- 4) Creation of steady and sustainable market and commercialization of organic products.
- 5) A holistic and community driven approach should be adopted for accelerating the trend of organic farming.
- 6) Training to farmers in modern trends of organic farming and supporting services in terms of infrastructure and financial mechanism should be made readily accessible.
- 7) A clear and comprehensive government policy initiative is of utmost importance for developing this sector.

### 4. CONCLUSION:

Organic farming is becoming increasingly popular all over the world. Extensive use of chemicals in inorganic food production technology compelled people to think better alternative of organic farming. But currently organic agriculture covers only a small area in developing countries like India. At present



around 1% of agricultural land of the world is under organic agriculture to which India's Contribution is 1.6%. This shows that India has a great prospect to shine in this sector of farming in near future. But for this government and NGOs should act jointly to make it a grand success.

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