



ISSN (E): 2277-7695
ISSN (P): 2349-8242
NAAS Rating: 5.23
TPI 2022; 11(12): 6084-6086
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www.thepharmajournal.com
Received: 25-10-2022
Accepted: 27-11-2022

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Problems perceived and suggestions offered by the beneficiary farmers of PKVY in the adoption of organic farming technology

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Chhattisgarh state. Three districts namely, Sarguja from Northern Hills, Korba from Chhattisgarh Plains, and Kondagaon from Bastar Plateau zone were selected purposively. Twelve clusters from each district and six beneficiary farmers from each selected cluster were selected randomly. Thus, a total sample of 216 respondents was selected to identify the problems and to obtain suggestions to overcome the problems in the adoption of organic farming technology. The results showed that the unavailability of markets at the block level for selling organic produce, no minimum support price (MSP) for organic produce, lack of knowledge about effective control measures for insects pests and diseases, and low yield in organic farming were the important problems faced by the beneficiary farmers. The important suggestions given by beneficiary farmers were that the government should develop a market at the local level for organic produce, provide critical organic inputs at low prices to the organic farmers, govt. should have a separate organic certification department, and declare a minimum support price for organic produce.

Keywords: Beneficiary farmers, organic farming, problems and suggestions

Introduction

Over the past three decades, farming in India has become more and more unsustainable. Organic farming is the most effective method for promoting sustainable agriculture. Organic farming is one such natural, recyclable and sustainable approach to farming which is an effective and cost-efficient way to achieve sustainable development in the agriculture sector (IFOAM, 2010) [6]. It is a holistic production management system that promotes and strengthens agro ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. This is accomplished by using, on-farm agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials, to fulfill any specific function within the system (FAO, 1999) [5].

Globally, organic farming is expanding. It is practiced in 186 nations, and 71.5 million hectares of land were farmed in this way. Australia has the largest organic agricultural area (35.7 million hec), whereas India is ranked ninth (1.94 million hec). 1.5 percent of the world's agricultural land is organic. India ranks 1st in terms of the number of organic producers (1.15 million), followed by Ethiopia and Uganda (Willer *et al.* 2020) [10].

In India, the domestic market has seen a rise in the demand for organic products. A significant gain from the previous year, organic farming occupied more than 2% of India's net land area in the 2020 fiscal year. The total value of organic products exported from India is Rs 5150.99 crore (for 614089.614 MT) in 2018-19 (Anonymous, 2019) [2]. Day-by-day demands for healthy and residue-free food increase in the international as well as domestic markets. People are now willing to pay more if they can be convinced that they are buying legitimately grown food through natural systems. Keeping these in focus, and to improve the economic condition of farmers in the country, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare of the Government of India launched two specific programmes in 2015, namely Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for the North East Region (MOVCDNER), to help farmers adopt organic farming and improve remuneration due to premium prices, maintain soil fertility, and speed up the growth of agro-businesses.

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), a sub-component of the soil health management scheme under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) initiated during the year 2015-16 in 29 states & UTs (Anonymous, 2019) [1].

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It aims to increase soil fertility and thereby help in the production of healthy food through organic practices. It also aims to empower farmers through institutional development through a cluster approach not only in farm practices management, input production, and quality assurance but also in value addition and direct marketing (Dwedi, 2018) [4]. The first phase of PKVY, from 2015–16 to 2017–18, enrolled 0.59 million farmers and covered an area of 0.24 million ha. The second phase of three years end in 2020–21 and aims to cover 0.4 million ha under organic farming. As of February 2020, in a total of 29,859 clusters, 1.49 million farmers have adopted organic farming, covering an area of 0.59 million ha. (Khurana *et al.* 2020) [7].

The PKVY scheme was implemented in 6 districts of Chhattisgarh state during 2016-17, with 188 clusters and 12 new clusters started in Narayanpur district during 2017-18 (phase I). While phase II, a total of 1000 groups were started during 2018-19 in selected one block from every district of the state. This has resulted in the coverage of a total of 24000 hectares across the state and 60,000 farmers [8]. During the 2018–19 fiscal year, PGS-India produced a total of 25087328.65 quintals of organic products, of which 1330025 quintals were produced in Chhattisgarh (Anonymous, 2019) [2]. The present investigation was designed to identify the problems faced by the beneficiaries and to obtain suggestions to overcome the problems in the adoption of organic farming technology, so that the findings of this study will serve as a guideline or will also be helpful to the planners, administrators and those who are directly or indirectly associated with organic farming.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in the Chhattisgarh state. The scheme has been implemented in 6 districts of Chhattisgarh state, out of which 3 districts namely, Surguja from Northern Hills, Korba from Chhattisgarh Plains and Kondagaon from Bastar Plateau zone were selected purposively. 12 clusters (formed by Regional Council) from each district was selected randomly, thus total number of 36

(12x3) clusters were selected for this study. A comprehensive list of beneficiary farmers was collected from PGS India portal and organic farming cell of directorate of agriculture, C.G., six beneficiary farmers were selected randomly from each selected cluster. Thus the total 216 beneficiary farmers (36 X 6 =216) were considered as respondent for this study, and the data were collected personally through structured interview schedule. The respondents were asked to indicate the difficulties they have faced regarding the various aspects, and to overcome the same the respondents were also asked to give the valuable suggestions connected with the adoption of organic farming technology. The problems and suggestions reported by the respondents were listed out and frequencies and percentage were worked out and ranked accordingly.

Results and Discussion

Problems faced by the beneficiary farmers in adoption of organic farming technology

The problems faced by the beneficiary's farmers in adoption of organic farming technology are presented in Table 1. The data showed that 60.19 per cent of the beneficiary farmers faced the problem of unavailability of market at the block level for selling organic produce, followed by no minimum support price (MSP) for organic produce (52.78%), lack of knowledge about effective control measures for insects pest and diseases (49.07), low yield in organic farming (47.69%), lack of trust in PGS-certified organic products by consumers in the market place (39.81%), heavy incidence of pest and diseases in organic farming (37.96%), dependency on middleman for disposal of organic produce (37.50%), non-availability of organic inputs like bio-pesticides, bio-agents and pheromone traps (35.19%), there is no special incentive or awards for organic farmers (25.00%), and inadequate training programmes in organic farming (24.07%). Thimmareddy (2001) [9] and Dayalal (2010) [3] also reported similar findings that the main constraint faced by the farmers was the lack of a suitable or separate market for organic produce.

Table 1: Problems faced by the beneficiary farmers in adoption of organic farming technology

Sl. No.	Problems	F*	%	Rank
1	Unavailability of market at the block level for selling of organic produce	130	60.19	I
2	Lack of trust in PGS-certified organic products by consumers in the market place	86	39.81	V
3	Low yield in organic farming	103	47.69	IV
4	No minimum support price (MSP) for organic produce	114	52.78	II
5	Lack of knowledge about effective control measures for insects pest and diseases	106	49.07	III
6	Dependency on middleman for disposal of organic produce	81	37.50	VII
7	Inadequate training programmes in organic farming	52	24.07	X
8	There is no special incentive or awards for organic farmers	54	25.00	IX
9	Non-availability of organic inputs like bio-pesticides, bio-agents and pheromone traps well in time	76	35.19	VIII
10	Heavy incidence of pest and diseases in organic farming	82	37.96	VI

*Data are based on multiple responses

Suggestions given by the beneficiaries to overcome the problems in adoption of organic farming technology

Considering the problem faced by the organic farmers, they

were asked to suggest the probable solutions in order to overcome the problems.

Table 2: Suggestions given by the beneficiaries to overcome the problems in adoption of organic farming technology

Sl. No.	Suggestions	F*	%	Rank
1	Government should develop a market at the local level for organic produce.	138	63.89	I
2	Government should provide critical organic inputs at low prices to the organic farmers	112	51.85	II
3	PKVY officers should be ensured that all information related to organic farming is made available according to the farmer's needs	93	43.06	VI
4	Agriculture officers should provide good quality organic inputs at proper time	84	38.89	VIII
5	Government should declare minimum support price for organic produce	108	50.00	IV
6	Government should have a separate organic certification department	110	50.93	III
7	Subsidies for the purchase of implements and equipments should be provided by the govt.	82	37.96	IX
8	More training programmes should be organized by the government for organic farming.	89	41.20	VII
9	Government should provide special insurance for organic farmers to minimize the risk	95	43.98	V
10	Some incentives should be provided by the government to the organic farmers for popularization of organic farming	73	33.80	X

*Data are based on multiple responses

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that 63.89 per cent of the beneficiary farmers suggested that government should develop a market at the local level for organic produce, followed by government should provide critical organic inputs at low prices to the organic farmers (51.85%), government should have a separate organic certification department (50.93%), government should declare minimum support price for organic produce (50.00%), government should provide special insurance for organic farmers to minimize the risk (43.98%), PKVY officers should be ensured that all information related to organic farming is made available according to the farmer's needs (43.06%), more training programmes should be organized by the government for organic farming (41.20%), agriculture officers should be provided good quality organic inputs at proper time (38.89%), subsidies for the purchase of implements and equipments should be provided by government (37.96%), and some incentives should be provided by the government to the organic farmers for popularization of organic farming (33.80%).

Conclusion

It was concluded from the study that, unavailability of market at the block level for selling organic produce, no minimum support price (MSP) for organic produce, lack of knowledge about effective control measures for insects pest and diseases, low yield in organic farming were the major problems faced by the beneficiary farmers. Majority of the beneficiary farmers suggested that government should develop a market at the local level for organic produce, government should provide critical organic inputs at low prices to the organic farmers, government should have a separate organic certification department, and declare minimum support price for organic produce. Therefore, in order to boost the adoption of organic farming, extension officials must pay careful attention to the issues that farmers face.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my Major Advisor Dr. R.S. Sengar, Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension, Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur (C.G.). I am also thankful to the farmers who helped me by providing necessary, valuable information during my survey visit.

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