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Profile of organic vegetable growers from Palghar district

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Abstract
Organic agriculture is a whole system of approach based upon a set of processes resulting in a sustainable ecosystem, safe food, good nutrition, animal welfare and social justice. The present study was conducted in Palghar district of Konkan region of Maharashtra to know the socio-economic characteristics of the organic vegetable growers. The study employed an ex-post facto research design. The study was conducted by taking total sample of 90 respondents. The data was collected with the help of pre tested interview schedule through personal interview. Study concluded that majority (63.33%) of the organic vegetable growers belonged to 45 to 63 years age group. Around 65.55 percent of the respondents belonged to medium family education status category. Majority (37.78%) of the respondents belonged to small family size. 75.56 percent of respondents had medium annual income. Most of the (72.22%) of the respondents had medium area under organic vegetable cultivation. Majority (65.56%) of the respondents had medium yield. About (64.44%) of respondents had fair level of irrigation status. Most of the (73.34%) of the respondents had medium use of organic inputs. Majority (82.22 percent) of the respondents had medium marketable surplus, 77.78 percent respondents had medium use of social media, about 56.67 percent of the respondents had received two to three trainings.

Keywords: Profile, organic vegetables, Palghar, organic input

1. Introduction
Agriculture is considered as the back bone of Indian economy and it is a "Fundamental Source of National Prosperity". Organic farming is a production system which avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetically compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulator and livestock feed additives. To the maximum extent feasible rely upon crop rotations, crop residues, animal manuals, legumes, green manures, off farm organic waste, mechanical cultivation, mineral bearing rocks and aspects of biological paste control to maintained the soil productivity and tilled, to supply the plant nutrients and to control insects, weeds and other pest. In India 22,99,222 ha area comes under certified organic agriculture (FiBL survey, 2021) [5] in organic cultivation growing of organic vegetables is necessary to maintained health of people and for provision of healthy food for people. Vegetable plays a major role in fulfilling the nutritional requirement of human beings. Farmers use chemicals in larger quantities to maximize productivity, thus causing serious damage to the agro-ecological environment. If the consumers consume a larger quantity of such vegetables, there can be adverse effect on their health. Therefore, consumers shift from general vegetables to organic vegetables. So, it is necessary to create authenticity in production of organic vegetables.

2. Methodology
The study was conducted in Palghar district of Konkan region of Maharashtra. From Palghar two tahsils i. e. Palghar and Dahanu were selected randomly. The list of the villages growing organic vegetables in each tahsil was obtained from Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and from each tahsil, 3 villages were randomly selected. From each village 15 organic vegetable growers were selected on the basis of list of certified organic vegetable growers obtained from ATMA of selected district. The study used the personnel interview method to gather data from respondents using a well-structured questionnaire. Frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation, and the Chi-square test were among the appropriate statistical tools used to edit, tabulate, and analyze the data gathered from the respondents.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings regarding to socio-personal and socio-economical characteristics of the respondents were studied and data is presented in Table1.

3.1 Age

It refers to the chronological age of the organic vegetable growers in completed years at the time of investigation.

From Table 1, it was revealed that majority (63.33%) of the organic vegetable growers belonged to 'middle' age group, while 18.89 percent of the organic vegetable growers were in the 'old' age group and 17.78 percent of them were in 'young' age group.

The findings lead to conclude that middle age category is in stage of earning, having livelihood responsibility and they considered as organic farming is a better way of earning profit for them and they adopted technology earlier and have more work efficiency than younger and old category.

The above findings of the study were in agreement with the studies of Sapate (2018) [13], Nagar (2020) [7] and Sontakke (2020) [15].

3.2 Family education status

It refers to the educational status of all the members in a family in the eligible age group for formal education i.e., excluding the children below six years of age.

From Table 1, it was found that majority (65.55%) of the organic vegetable growers belonged to 'medium' family education status category, while 17.78 percent belonged to 'high' family education status category and 16.67 percent of them were in 'low' family education status category.

This result is a reflection of the good literacy rate in the study area. It means that, by and large, the organic farmers were educated to a satisfactory level.

The above findings of the study were in agreement with the studies of Santoshkumar (2008) [12] and Shigwan (2019) [14].

3.3 Family size

Family size was defined as total number of members living together in the family. The total score was obtained by the addition of number of the family members.

From Table 1, it was observed that majority (37.78%) of the organic vegetable growers belonged to 'small' family size, while 32.22 percent of the organic vegetable growers were in the 'large' family size and 30.00 percent of them were in 'medium' family size.

This might be due to that social changes in community and younger generation want to maintain their individuality rather than live together in joint family.

The above findings of the study were related with the studies of Pawar (2014) [11].

3.4 Annual income

It refers to the total annual income obtained by the respondent and his/her family members from all sources.

From Table 1, it was reported that out of total organic vegetable farmers, 75.56 percent respondents belonged to 'medium' category of annual income, 15.56 percent respondent belonged to 'high' category of annual income and 8.88 percent respondents belonged to 'low' category of annual income. The findings lead to conclude that majority of the organic vegetable growers belongs to medium income group. This might be due to that getting better prices to produce, proper management resulted in getting better income from organic farming.

These findings were in conformity with the findings of Korde (2017) [6] and Patil (2018) [10].

3.5 Area under organic vegetables

Area under organic vegetables was operationally defined as the total area in hectares of land covered under organic vegetables.

From Table 1, it was shows that, majority (72.22%) of the organic vegetable growers have 'medium' area under organic vegetable cultivation followed by 'large' and 'small' area under organic vegetable cultivation were 18.89 percent and 8.89 percent, respectively.

It might be due to that of the proper handling and management of moderate area is accessible for obtaining more production from organic farming as well as perceiving the benefits of group certification.

The results were in accordance with the findings of Pawar (2014) [11], and Chavan *et al.* (2022) [2].

3.6 Yield of organic vegetables

It refers to the total yield of organic vegetables in kilogram.

From Table 1, it was revealed that, majority (65.56%) of the organic vegetable growers had 'medium' yield, followed by 17.77 percent and 16.67 percent of growers had 'high' and 'low' yield of organic vegetables, respectively.

The findings lead to conclude that the variation in the yield might be due to climate change, wild animals attack and lack of diseases and pest management.

The above findings of the study were related with the studies of Parab (2016) [9].

3.7 Irrigation status

It refers to the situation of the respondents with regard to availability of water lifting device irrigation method followed and percentage of irrigation potential used.

From Table 1, it was observed that, majority (64.44%) of organic vegetable growers had 'fair' level of irrigation status, followed by 25.56 percent of 'poor' level of irrigation status and 10.00 percent with 'good' level of irrigation status.

This might be the due to fact that some studied villages are situated in interior zone where less water/power supply for irrigation. While, cost of irrigation equipment's and unavailability of equipment's in villages might be reasons for such result.

The results of the present study were supported by the studies of Chengappa (2017) [3] and Shigwan (2019) [14].

3.8 Use of organic inputs

It was operationalized as the frequency of use of organic inputs in production process of organic vegetables.

From Table 1, it is observed that, majority (73.34%) of the organic vegetable growers had 'medium' use of organic inputs, followed by 14.44 percent and 12.22 percent of growers had 'low' and 'high' use of organic inputs, respectively.

The findings lead to conclude that, majority of the farmers uses their own organic inputs it might be due to that availability of FYM in general and organic inputs in particular.

3.9 Marketable surplus

Marketable surplus was operationally defined as quantity of the produce which was made available to the non-farm population by the respondent after meeting his requirements for family consumption, farm needs, for seeds and feed for cattle, payment to labour, landlord and social, religious payments in kind.

From Table 1, it was concluded that, majority (82.22%) of the respondents had 'medium' marketable surplus followed by 17.78 percent and none of respondents had 'high' and 'low' marketable surplus respectively.
This clearly indicates that a large proportion of the respondents had medium marketable surplus might be due to perishable nature of vegetables.
The results were in line with the findings of Nirban (2004) [8].

3.10 Use of social media
Use of social media was defined as the frequency of use of different social media platforms in day-to-day life in order to get information about agriculture and allied activities.
It was evident from Table 1 that 77.78 percent organic vegetable growers had 'medium' use of social media followed by 16.67 percent with 'low' and 5.55 percent with 'high' use of social media.
Thus, it can be said that the majority of organic vegetable growers use social media to a moderate extent because of mobile network issues and also, they are not received training on how to use social media to market their produce.
This result was in accordance with the findings of Suchita Adate (2022) [1] and Tejashri Dahiphale (2022) [4].

3.11 Training received
Training received operationally defined as number of trainings attended by respondents at the time of data collection was considered.
From Table 1, it was revealed that, majority (56.67%) of the respondents had received 'two to three trainings', while 23.33 percent respondents received 'one training' and 11.11 percent and 8.89 percent respondents received 'no training' and 'four and above trainings' respectively.
The probable reason might be the farmer's higher education which makes them aware of the advantages received from attending training, and the motivational nature of the agriculture organizations working on organic farming in this area.
This finding was support from the studies of Shigwan (2019) [14] and Chavan *et al.* (2022) [2].

Table 1: Distribution of organic vegetable growers according to their socio-economic characteristics (N=90)

Sl. No.	Profile of the organic vegetable growers	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Age (years)**		
	Young (Up to 44)	16	17.78
	Middle (45 to 63)	57	63.33
	Old (64 and above)	17	18.89
2	**Family education status (std.)**		
	Low (Up to 8)	15	16.67
	Medium (9 – 13)	59	65.55
	High (14 and above)	16	17.78
3	**Family size (Number of members)**		
	Small (Up to 4)	34	37.78
	Medium (5 to 6)	27	30.00
	Large (7 and above)	29	32.22
4	**Annual income (Rs)**		
	Low (Up to 173018)	08	8.88
	Medium (173019 – 1897691)	68	75.56
	High (1897692 and above)	14	15.56
5	**Area under organic vegetables (ha)**		
	Small (Up to 0.23)	08	8.89
	Medium (0.24-3.06)	65	72.22
	Large (3.07 and above)	17	18.89
6	**Yield of organic vegetables (kg)**		
	Low (Up to 10682)	15	16.67
	Medium (10683 - 37231)	59	65.56
	High (37232 and above)	16	17.77
7	**Irrigation status (Score)**		
	Poor (Up to 7)	23	25.56
	Fair (8 – 18)	58	64.44
	Good (19 and above)	09	10.00
8	**Use of organic inputs (Score)**		
	Low (Up to 3)	13	14.44
	Medium (4 – 5)	66	73.34
	High (6 and above)	11	12.22
9	**Marketable surplus (kg)**		
	Low (Up to 504)	00	00.00
	Medium (505 – 10721)	74	82.22
	High (10722 and above)	16	17.78
10	**Use of social media (Score)**		
	Low (Up to 10)	15	16.67
	Medium (11 – 12)	70	77.78
	High (13 and above)	05	5.55
11	**Training received**		
	No training	10	11.11
	One training	21	23.33
	Two to three trainings	51	56.67
	Four and above trainings	08	8.89

4. Conclusion

From the study it was concluded that majority of the organic vegetable growers were from middle age group, with medium family education status and small family size. More than half of the respondents belonged to medium annual income category. Majority of the respondents had medium area under organic vegetable cultivation. Most of the respondents had medium yield. More than half of the respondents had fair level of irrigation status. Majority of the respondents had medium use of organic inputs, marketable surplus and use of social media. More than half of the respondents had received two to three trainings. The study has brought to light the personal and socio-economic characteristics of organic vegetable growers those who are involved in the marketing of organic vegetables. On the basis of these, it would be possible for extension workers and other agencies to improve the profile of respective categories. Further, they may consider these characteristics while planning and executing programs for the development of organic vegetables in the Konkan region.

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