

## Organic Farming In India- Challenges And Policy Support

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### ABSTRACT

In recent times, Organic farming has gained popularity and relevance, becoming a buzzword that is quickly embraced by both producers and consumers. Growing crops and raising livestock without the use of pesticides, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms, antibiotics, or growth hormones is just one aspect of organic farming. Globally, there was 72213.3 thousand hectares of organic farming in 2019 compared to 29211.2 thousand hectares in 2005. In 2019, 2299.2 thousand hectares, or 1.3% of India's total agricultural land, was used for organic farming. From 2014 to 2019, the global CAGR for area under organic farming is 9.77%, and in India, it is determined to be 26.14%. Even though organic farming is a very appealing practice in terms of the nutritious and edible quality of the vegetables, the prevention of human diseases, the maintenance of soil biology in terms of diversity, population, and activity levels, and the preservation of soil health, it still seeks the question of whether the crops can be managed in the field sustainably over an extended period of time without affecting yields without the use of inorganic fertilizers or pesticides. To help individual farmers in organic farming to overcome their obstacles, a cooperative model might be highly beneficial. The Indian government has also launched many programs to help organic farming to reach its full potential. Therefore, in order to boost organic agricultural production in a sustainable way, authorities must give careful consideration to the challenges encountered by farmers. Key words: organic farming, antibiotics, sustainable, soil biology.

### INTRODUCTION

Among the many different types of sustainable agriculture, organic farming limits the use of artificial inputs and promotes environmental sustainability (Stockdale et al., 2001). Adopting organic farming preserves the health of the land, keeps the production system viable, and yields food that is of a high enough quality to satisfy dietary needs (Lampkin, 1990). The last three decades have seen the emergence of "Organic Agriculture" as a vibrant "Alternate Farming System." By providing farmers with low-cost agro-ecological farming training and by using local management resources and abilities, we can empower farmers to produce nutritious food, combat hunger, and lessen poverty in their communities (Sarker and Itohara, 2008). Despite its environmental and health benefits, organic farming faces several challenges that can hinder its growth and adoption. These challenges include lower yields compared to conventional farming, the higher costs associated with organic inputs, the complexity of organic certification processes, and limited access to markets. Additionally, organic farmers often struggle with pest and disease management without the use of synthetic chemicals, leading to potential crop losses.

To address these challenges and promote the widespread adoption of organic farming, supportive policies are crucial. Government initiatives, subsidies, and research funding can play a pivotal role in easing the transition from conventional to organic farming. Policies that provide financial incentives, technical assistance, and access to markets can help mitigate the challenges faced by organic farmers, making organic farming a more viable and attractive option for producers.

### Challenges for organic farming in India:

Organic farming has several advantages for the environment and human health, but it also has drawbacks, including lower yields than conventional farming, greater labor expenses, and the difficulty of controlling pests and illnesses without the use of artificial pesticides. Critics also raise concerns about whether organic farming can adequately feed the world's expanding population, pointing out that organic products are more expensive. The following list of key challenges faces India's organic agricultural industry.

- Inadequate availability and affordability of organic manures and other inputs.
- Insufficient knowledge about organic farming methods
- Obstacles in the sale of organic produce: Failure to secure a higher price for the product, at least in its early phases, results in a loss.
- Lack of Awareness about Benefits
- Among these challenges, lack of training, lack of capital and lack of organic inputs are important.

### Policy support for spread of organic farming in India:

Low organic farming coverage prevails in several states, despite at least 20 of them having a policy or a scheme with regard to organic farming. States like Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh have expressed their desire to become fully organic or natural-farming states. To promote the organic farming in India, Government has taken number of Initiatives to Promote Organic Farming and important among them are given below.

- **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North East Region (MOVCD):** This scheme was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in 2015 for implementation of organic value chain in North Eastern States as Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. It aims to develop certified organic production in a value chain mode to link growers with consumers and to support the development of the entire value chain.
- **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY):** Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, launched in 2015 and is an elaborated component of Soil Health Management of major project National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture. In this scheme, Organic farming is promoted through adoption of organic villages by cluster approach and Participatory Guarantee System certification.
- **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI):** It is for regulating organic food in the domestic market and imports. Thus, it assists in promotion of organic products.
- **Participatory Guarantee System:** PGS is a process of certifying organic products, that ensures that production is done as per standards. PGS Green is given to chemical free produce under transition to 'organic' which takes 3 years. It is mainly for domestic purpose.

**National Program for Organic Production (NPOP):** It grants organic farming certification through a process of third-party certification for export purposes.

- **Soil Health Card Scheme:** Soil Health Card Scheme has led to a decline of 8-10% in the use of chemical fertilizers and also raised productivity by 5-6%.

- **Agri-export Policy 2018:** Focus on clusters and Marketing and promotion of “Produce of India” have positively impacted the organic farming in India
- **One District - One Product:** The programme aims to encourage more visibility and sale of indigenous and specialized products/crafts of Uttar Pradesh, generating employment at the district level. The presence of aggregators is imperative to bring about economies of scale for the small and marginal farmers.
- **PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME):** The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) launched the PM FME scheme as a part of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’. It aims to bring in new technology, apart from affordable credit to help small entrepreneurs penetrate new markets.
- **Zero Budget Natural Farming:** Zero budget natural farming is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices. Other than this, there are regular capacity building programmes from ICAR, State Agriculture Universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendra’s and Agriculture departments for trainers, farmers and other stakeholders.

Table 1: States/UTs with highest absolute area and highest percent area under organic farming in India in 2019.

State with higher area under organic farming of net sown area of that state/UTs			States/UTs with highest percentage of area under organic farming of total net sown area in 2019		
States/UTs	Ranking of Organic area in thousand ha	Organic area in percent	States/UTs	Organic area in thousand ha	Ranking of Organic area in percent for state/UTs
Madhya Pradesh	756	4.9	Sikkim	155	100
Rajasthan	350	2	Andaman and Nicobar	9	60
Maharashtra	284	1.6	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	10	53
Sikkim	155	100	Delhi	10	45.5
Andhra Pradesh	144	2.3	Daman and Diu	1	32
Uttarakhand	128	18.2	Meghalaya	56	19.5
Odisha	118	2.6	Uttarakhand	128	18.2
Karnataka	111	1.1	Goa	23	18.1
Gujarat	103	1	Mizoram	14	10
Uttar Pradesh	79	0.5	Arunachal Pradesh	22	9.8
Chhattisgarh	71	1.5	Puducherry	1	8
Meghalaya	56	19.5	Nagaland	23	6
Kerala	54	2.7	Manipur	19	5

Assam	43	1.5	Madhya Pradesh	756	4.9
Jharkhand	31	2.2	Jammu and Kashmir	26	3.4
Tamil Nadu	30	0.6	Tripura	9	3.4
Telangana	28	0.6	Himachal Pradesh	18	3.3
Jammu and Kashmir	26	3.4	Kerala	54	2.7
Goa	23	18.1	Odisha	118	2.6
Nagaland	23	6	Andhra Pradesh	144	2.3
Arunachal Pradesh	22	9.8	Jharkhand	31	2.2
Manipur	19	5	Rajasthan	350	2
Himachal Pradesh	18	3.3	Maharashtra	284	1.6
Punjab	17	0.4	Chhattisgarh	71	1.5
Mizoram	14	10	Assam	43	1.5
Bihar	12	0.2	Karnataka	111	1.1
Delhi	10	45.5	Gujrat	103	1
Dadar and Nagar Haveli	10	53	Tamil Nadu	30	0.6
Andaman and Nicobar	9	60	Telangana	28	0.6
West Bengal	9	0.2	Uttar Pradesh	79	0.5
Tripura	9	3.4	Punjab	17	0.4

Haryana	7	0.2	Bihar	12	0.2
Lakshadweep	3		West Bengal	9	0.2
Chandigarh	3		Haryana	7	0.2
Daman and Diu	1	32	Lakshadweep	3	
Puducherry	1	8	Chandigarh	3	
(Total (India	2777		( Total ( India	2777	

Table 1 continued.

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers welfare, GoI), Khurana, A. and Kumar V. Down to Earth. Sept 2020.

## CONCLUSION

It's evident that organic farming is expanding on a national and worldwide scale (Heena et al., 2021). But there are a lot of difficulties. Globally, endeavors are undertaken to tackle these issues. To assist individual farmers overcome this difficulty, a cooperative-style arrangement might be highly beneficial. In addition to securing an additional premium for the nation's impoverished farmers, this will allow the industry to satisfy the standards for producing and marketing organic goods in both the local and export markets (Sarker and Itohara, 2008). The Indian government has started a number of policies to support organic farming and to maximize its potential. Therefore, Indian organic farmers will soon be reaffirming their legitimate position in the world's agricultural commerce with increased knowledge and capacity building of the producers in accordance with international norms.

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