

Organic Farming in India: A Vision towards a Healthy Nation

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Introduction

Organic farming system in India is not new and is being followed from ancient time. It is a method of farming system which primarily aimed at cultivating the land and raising crops in such a way, as to keep the soil alive and in good health by use of organic wastes (crop, animal and farm wastes, aquatic wastes) and other biological materials along with beneficial microbes (bio-fertilizers) to release nutrients to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco-friendly pollution free environment. According to FAO “Organic agriculture is a unique production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity, and this is accomplished by using on farm agronomic, biological and mechanical methods in exclusion of all synthetic off-farm inputs”.



Principles of Organic Farming:

- ✚ **Principle of health:** Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible. Healthy soils produce healthy crops that foster the health of animals and people. Health is the wholeness and integrity of living systems.
- ✚ **Principle of ecology:** Organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them. This principle roots organic agriculture within living ecological systems. It states that production is to be based on ecological processes, and recycling. Nourishment and well-being are achieved through the ecology of the specific production environment.
- ✚ **Principle of fairness:** Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. This principle emphasizes that those involved in organic agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels.
- ✚ **Principle of care:** Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future Generations.



The Important Goals of Organic Farming are:

- A sufficiently high level of productivity
- Compatibility of cultivation with the natural cycles of the production system as a whole
- Maintaining and increasing the long-term fertility and biological activity of the soil
- Maintaining and increasing natural diversity and agro-biodiversity
- Maximum possible use of renewable resources
- Creation of a harmonic balance between crops and animal husbandry

Advantages of Organic Farming:

- 1. Nutritional, poison-free and tasty food:** The nutritional value of food is largely a function of its vitamin and mineral content. In this regard, organically grown food is dramatically superior in mineral content to that grown by modern conventional methods. A major benefit to consumers of organic food is that it is free of contamination with health harming chemicals such as pesticides, fungicides and herbicides.
- 2. Lower growing cost:** The economics of organic farming is characterized by increasing profits via reduced water use, lower expenditure on fertilizer and energy, and increased retention of topsoil. To add to this the increased demand for organic produce makes organic farming a profitable option for farmers.
- 3. Enhances soil nourishment:** Organic farming effectively addresses soil management. Even damaged soil, subject to erosion and salinity, are able to feed on micro-nutrients via crop rotation, inter-cropping techniques and the extensive use of green manure. The absence of chemicals in organic farming does not kill microbes which increase nourishment of the soil.
- 4. Environment-friendly practices:** The use of green pesticides such as neem, compost tea and spinosad is environment-friendly and non-toxic. These pesticides help in identifying and removing diseased and dying plants in time and subsequently, increasing crop defence systems.

Disadvantages of Organic Farming:

- ✓ **Lower productivity:** An organic farm cannot produce as much yield as a conventional or industrialized farm. Though this point is debatable as the productivity and soil quality of an industrialized farm decreases rapidly over the years.
- ✓ **Requires skill:** An organic farmer requires greater understanding of his crop and needs to keep a close watch on his crops as there are no quick fixes involved, like pesticides or chemical fertilizers. Sometimes it can be hard to meet all the strenuous requirements and the experience to carry out organic farming.
- ✓ **Time-consuming:** Significant amounts of time and energy are required to execute the detailed methods and techniques that are required for a farm to be called an organic farm

Future Prospects:

The movement started with developed world is gradually picking up in developing countries. But demand is still concentrated in developed and most of the countries. Local demand for organic food is growing. India is poised for faster growth with growing domestic market. Success of organic movement in India depends upon the growth of its own domestic markets. India has traditionally been a country of organic agriculture, but the growth of modern scientific, input intensive agriculture has pushed it to wall. But with the increasing awareness about the safety and quality of foods, long term sustainability of the system and accumulating evidences of being equally productive, the organic farming has emerged as an alternative system of farming which not only address the quality and sustainability concerns, but also ensures a debt free, profitable livelihood option.

Conclusion:

Organic farming works in harmony with nature rather than against it. This involves using techniques to achieve good crop yields without harming the natural environment or the people who live and work in it. An organic farmer produces vegetables, fruit, cereal crops, or livestock without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. In another way organic farming is kind of agricultural that provide the consumers, with fresh, tasty and reliable food while regarding natural life cycle systems. In addition to health benefits of organic products for consumers, there are vital environmental benefits for the earth. An organic farming keeps biodiversity and reduce environmental pollutions such air, water and soil. Organic agriculture has grown out of the conscious efforts by inspired people to create the best possible relationship between the earth and men.

