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Farmers attitude towards organic farming in Marathwada region

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Abstract

Maharashtra is leading state in adopting organic farming practices since from the year 2002-03. In the year 2021-22, in the area under of organic cultivation (Cultivation + Wild harvest), Maharashtra ranked third with production of 691419.72 MT, making the Maharashtra stands second highest producer of organic products. As attitude indicate tendency to react positively or negatively to object, situation and event. Hence the research objective was formulated to measure attitude of the farmers towards organic farming. For measurement of attitude a scale was prepared and same scale was used to measure attitude toward organic farming. A final list of 38 used to measure attitude of the farmers towards organic farming. The scale consist twenty six positive statements and twelve negative statements and attitude measured on five continuum i.e. strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. For positive statements score ranging from five to one respectively and vice-versa for negative statements. It was observed that majority (60.00%) of the respondents had favourable attitude towards organic farming.

Keywords: Attitude, organic farming, organic farming followers and Marathwada region

Introduction

Organic farming 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 wastes, animal, wastes farm wastes and 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. Organic methods are able to increase farm productivity, repair environmental damages and weave small farm families into more sustainable distribution networks leading to improved food security if they organize themselves in production, certification and marketing. During last years an increasing number of farmers have shown lack of interest in farming and the people who used to cultivate are migrating to other areas. Organic farming is one way to promote either self-sufficiency or food security.

Organic Agriculture defined as a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-eco system health including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It emphasizes the use of management practices in preference to the use of on farm inputs. This is accomplished by using, where possible, agronomic, biological and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials to fulfill any specific function within the system" (Definition proposed for adoption by FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission). India holds a unique position among 172 countries practicing organic agriculture, it has 15,99,101 organic producers, 1703 processors, and 745 traders. But, with merely 1.3 per cent of organic share of total agricultural land under organic cultivation, the organic industry has a long journey ahead. India plays an important role in organic farming with 9119865.91 ha. area under organic cultivation and production of 3430735.65 MT organic produce, having export value of 5249.32 Crore.

Maharashtra is leading state in adopting organic farming. Since the year 2002-03 schemes for promotion of organic farming were initiated, apart from centrally sponsored schemes/missions, Maharashtra has initiated their efforts through department of Agriculture, NGOs, Farmers groups, progressive farmer and Contribute the Organic movement in the Maharashtra. In the year 2021-22, in the category of organic area (Cultivation + Wild harvest) Maharashtra ranked 3rd with production of 691419.72 MT, making the Maharashtra second highest producer of organic products. During year Maharashtra exported 85526.16 MT organic produce having market value of 696.71 Crore.

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As the increase in the cost of production, inputs and inorganic fertilizers became more expensive and it also affects the soil productivity adversely. Organic farming emerge as a obvious choice. As organic farming became popular and gaining importance insight of the organic farming follower is important. Keeping in this mind the research objective was formulated to measure attitude of the farmers towards organic farming also the constraints faced by the respondents and suggestion to overcome. All the information generated through the present research will be helpful to the communities engaged in the promotion of organic farming. Also the present study will be useful for farmers, administrators, policy makers, researchers and Non Government organizations for making future strategies and also explore the weakness of the organic farming followers.

Material and Methods

1. Research design

A research design is a plan or proposal to conduct research, which entails the intersection of philosophy, inquiry strategies and specific methods. An *ex-post facto* research design was adopted in this study. An *ex-post facto* research is a systematic empirical inquiry. The researcher does not directly control the variables because their manifestation have already occurred and inherently unmanipulable (Kerlinger,1964) ^[5].

2. Method of sampling

A multistage sampling technique was used for the present study. Sampling was done at four stages viz., the selection of districts, selection of talukas, selection of villages and selection of respondents.

Three districts selected purposively viz., Aurangabad, Beed and Nanded from on the basis of maximum number of farmers following organic farming practices, from these selected districts two talukas were selected purposively on the basis of maximum number of farmers following organic farming practices so from Nanded district Loha, and Billoli. From Beed district, Parali V., and Ambajogai. From Aurangabad district Gangapur and Paithan. Thus, total six talukas were selected from the three districts for the study. From each selected taluka 3 villages were selected purposively on the basis of maximum number of farmers following organic farming practices for that purpose list obtained from Organic Farming Research and Training Centre, VNMKV, Parbhani, and State Department of Agriculture, Maharashtra. Hence eighteen villages were selected for conducting the study. So from each village ten respondent organic following farmers were selected randomly and we considered them as respondents, thus making a sample of 180 respondents.

3. Selection of variables

The focus of the present investigation was to measure attitude hence Attitude was selected as the variable.

4. Statistical tools and techniques

Data were collected with the help of pre-tested, well structured interview schedule. The data were filled in excel and basic statistical tools like frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. The final categories were made on the basis of mean+ standard deviation.

Results and Discussion

Attitude of farmers towards organic farming.

Attitude of the farmers was calculated by collecting data through the scale developed to measure attitude of the farmers towards organic farming. Attitude was calculated by using eight components namely, eco-friendliness, scepticism, risk taking, economic attitude, marketing behaviour, technological attitude, input availability/ required and funding and support with 38 statements. These different components of the attitude are discussed and presented below.

It was observed from Table 1, that, as regard with eco-friendliness, 67.22 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and 32.78 per cent of them agree with the statement "It is possible to solve environmental problems through organic farming." 83.88 per cent of the respondents agree 12.24 per cent and 03.88 per cent undecided and strongly agree with the statement "Organic farming ensures optimum utilization of natural resources for long-term benefits and helps in conserving them." 80.00 per cent of the respondents strongly agree, 19.44 per cent of them agree and 00.56 per cent undecided with the statement "It reduces human and animal health hazards by reducing the level of residues in the product." 85.00 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and 15.00 per cent respondents agree with the statement "Organic farming helps to improve the quality of soil fertility status." 91.11 per cent of the respondents agree, 05.00 per cent of the respondents undecided, 03.33 per cent strongly agree and 00.56 per cent disagree with the statement "The quality of organic produce is better than the conventional produce." 56.66 per cent of the respondents agree, 40.00 per cent undecided, 02.77 per cent strongly agree and 00.56 per cent of the respondents disagree with the statement "Organic farming helps in keeping agricultural production at a sustainable level."

Regarding skepticism, 46.67 per cent of the respondents undecided, 30.00 per cent of them agree, 17.23 per cent disagree and 06.10 per cent strongly agree with the statement "Yield obtained through organic farming cannot meet to the expectations of the farmers." 41.11 per cent of the respondents undecided, 28.33 per cent disagree, 27.22 per cent agree and 03.34 per cent strongly agree with the statement "There is a lack of awareness regarding organic produce."

About risk taking it was observed that, 53.88 per cent of the respondents agree, 30.56 per cent undecided, 13.33 per cent strongly agree and 02.23 per cent disagree with the statement "Price risk to the organic produce is the major concern." 43.89 per cent of the respondents agree, 28.89 per cent undecided, 20.00 per cent disagree and 07.22 per cent strongly agree with the statement "Risk is also associated with the production, less yield obtained through organic farming." 82.77 per cent of the respondents agree, 08.33 per cent undecided, 06.11 per cent strongly agree, 02.23 per cent disagree and 00.56 per cent of them strongly disagree with the statement "As the organic farm produces become more popular it is worth to take risk." 72.77 per cent of the respondents agree, 19.45 per cent undecided, 07.22 per cent strongly agree and 00.56 per cent of them disagree with the statement "Risk in organic farming can be reduced when farmers operates in groups."

Regarding economic attitude it was observed that, 51.66 per cent of the respondents disagree, 37.77 per cent undecided, 08.34 per cent strongly disagree, 01.67 per cent agree and

00.56 per cent strongly agree with the statement “Financial assistance is needed for the organic farmers.” 58.34 per cent of the respondents undecided, 24.44 per cent agree, 14.45 per cent disagree and 02.77 per cent strongly agree with the statement “Organic farming helps to improve the economic condition of farmers.” 63.34 per cent of the respondents agree, 32.22 per cent undecided and 02.22 per cent of the respondents strongly agree as well as disagree with the statement “Organic farming is labour intensive.” 73.88 per cent of the respondents agree, 21.67 per cent of them undecided, 02.78 per cent strongly agree and 01.67 per cent disagree with the statement “Organic farming is beneficial when farmers produce organic products for commercial purpose.” 54.45 per cent of the respondents disagree, 37.23 per cent of them undecided, 06.66 per cent agree and 01.66 per cent of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “Demand in foreign countries driven me to do organic farming.”

About marketing behaviour it was observed that, 80.55 per cent of the respondents agree, 10.56 per cent undecided, 06.66 per cent strongly agree and 02.23 per cent disagree with the statement “Farmers want to develop their own marketing strategies.” 43.88 per cent of the respondents agree, 37.22 per cent undecided, 12.23 per cent disagree, 05.55 per cent strongly agree and 01.12 per cent of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement “Marketing facilities for organic produces is not properly streamlined.” 64.44 per cent of the respondents agree, 32.22 per cent undecided and 03.34 per cent of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “Organic farmers want to concentrating on marketing quality not on quantity.” 52.77 per cent of the respondents undecided, 41.11 per cent of them disagree, 05.56 per cent agree and 00.56 per cent of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “Organic farmers have to approach market of other countries.” 66.11 per cent of the respondents agree, 31.11 per cent of them strongly agree, 01.66 per cent undecided and 01.12 per cent of the respondents disagree with the statement “Organic farmers required to conduct market survey.” 45.56 per cent of the respondents undecided, 43.88 per cent disagree and 10.56 per cent agree with the statement “There will always be market for organic produce but it cannot overtake conventional produce.” 58.88 per cent of the respondents strongly agree, 40.56 per cent agree and 00.56 per cent of the respondents undecided with the statement “Labeling is beneficial for marketing of organic produce.”

Regarding technological attitude it was observed that, 80.56 per cent of the respondents agree, 12.22 per cent of them strongly agree, 06.66 per cent undecided and 00.56 per cent disagree with the statement “As increase in awareness regarding organic produce there will be good opportunities in near future for organic production.” 74.45 per cent of the respondents agree, 21.66 per cent undecided and 02.23 per cent strongly agree and 01.66 per cent of the respondents disagree with the statement “Cultivation technology used in organic farming are easy and simple.” 46.12 per cent of the respondents agree, 33.33 per cent undecided, 15.00 per cent disagree and 05.55 per cent of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “Organic farming strengthens the use of indigenous knowledge.” 50.56 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and 49.44 per cent of the respondents agree with the statement “A proper training is effective for practicing organic farming.”

With respect to input availability / required it was observed

that, 50.00 per cent of the respondents agree, 32.78 per cent strongly agree, 14.44 per cent undecided and 02.78 per cent disagree with the statement “Organic manure is not easily available, as there is a shortage in supply.” 63.34 per cent of the respondents disagree, 17.22 per cent agree, 16.66 per cent undecided and 02.78 per cent of the respondents strongly with the statement “Organic manure is more expensive than chemical fertilizers.” 51.66 per cent of the respondents agree, 41.11 per cent strongly agree, 06.11 per cent undecided and 01.12 per cent of the respondents disagree with the statement “Large quantity of input required for organic farming.” 91.12 per cent of the respondents agree, 03.88 per cent strongly agree and undecided while 01.12 per cent of the respondents disagree with the statement “Farmers can make input on their own basis.” 46.66 per cent of the respondents agree, 34.44 per cent strongly disagree, 17.23 per cent undecided and 01.67 per cent of the respondents disagree with the statement “Initially it is difficult to manage input supply.”

Regarding funding and support it was observed that, 51.66 per cent of the respondents agree, 43.89 per cent undecided, 02.78 per cent strongly agree and 01.67 per cent disagree with the statement “Government have been taken adequate efforts for popularizing organic farming.” 78.88 per cent of the respondents agree, 16.66 per cent undecided and 04.46 per cent of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “Government agencies provided proper training on organic farming.” 52.78 per cent of the respondents agree, 42.78 per cent undecided, 02.77 per cent strongly agree and 01.67 per cent of the respondents disagree with the statement “Subsidies given by the government is beneficial for organic farming.” 68.88 per cent of the respondents disagree, 26.12 per cent undecided and 05.00 per cent of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement “Certification process is easy.” 51.13 per cent of the respondents agree, 31.66 per cent undecided, 14.44 per cent disagree and 02.77 per cent of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “Incentives given by the government to local/ subsidiary groups for organic farming proved to be beneficial.”

From Table 2, it was observed that, majority (60.00%) of the respondents had favourable attitude towards organic farming, while 23.34 per cent of them had less favourable and 16.66 per cent of them had most favourable attitude towards organic farming.

From results it was observed that, majority (60.00%) of the respondents had favourable attitude towards organic farming. This might be because of respondents known about organic farming and its importance regarding to the environment and human and animal health. They also know that in near future there is increase in awareness to the organic produce and that's why they are willing to take risk. Also respondents developing their own marketing strategies according to the market survey and taking organic products for commercial purpose, they also get the benefits of labeling of organic produce. As the organic farming practices are easy and simple to understand respondents can able to make the input on their own basis, that reduce the cost cultivation and help respondents to increase their profit margin. Now a days government focusing on farmers to increase their affection towards organic farming, government provide training to the farmers through different institutions such as SAU's, KVK's and Agriculture department. Government also provide subsidies and initial incentives that motivate them to take organic practices.

The above findings are in line with the findings of Jaganathan *et al.* (2009)^[3], Damor (2013)^[1], Korde (2017)^[6], Patel *et al.* (2017)^[7], Dharmanand *et al.* (2020)^[2] and Ingale (2020)^[4].

Table 1: Statement wise distribution of the respondents according to their attitude towards organic farming

Sr. No.	Statement	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
A)	Eco-friendliness					
1	It is possible to solve environmental problems through organic farming.	121 (67.22)	59 (32.78)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
2	Organic farming ensures optimum utilization of natural resources for long-term benefits and helps in conserving them.	07 (03.88)	151 (83.88)	22 (12.24)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
3	It reduces human and animal health hazards by reducing the level of residues in the product.	144 (80.00)	35 (19.44)	01 (00.56)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
4	Organic farming helps to improve the quality of soil fertility status.	153 (85.00)	27 (15.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
5	The quality of organic produce is better than the conventional produce.	06 (03.33)	164 (91.11)	09 (05.00)	01 (00.56)	00 (00.00)
6	Organic farming helps in keeping agricultural production at a sustainable level.	05 (02.77)	102 (56.66)	72 (40.00)	01 (00.57)	00 (00.00)
B)	Scepticism					
1	Yield obtained through organic farming cannot meet to the expectations of the farmers.	11 (06.10)	54 (30.00)	84 (46.67)	31 (17.23)	00 (00.00)
2	There is a lack of awareness regarding organic produce.	06 (03.34)	49 (27.22)	74 (41.11)	51 (28.33)	00 (00.00)
C)	Risk taking					
1	Price risk to the organic produce is the major concern.	24 (13.33)	97 (53.88)	55 (30.56)	04 (02.23)	00 (00.00)
2	Risk is also associated with the production, less yield obtained through organic farming.	13 (07.22)	79 (43.89)	52 (28.89)	36 (20.00)	00 (00.00)
3	As the organic farm produces become more popular it is worth to take risk.	11 (06.11)	149 (82.77)	15 (08.33)	04 (02.23)	01 (00.56)
4	Risk in organic farming can be reduced when farmers operates in groups.	13 (07.22)	131 (72.77)	35 (19.45)	01 (00.56)	00 (00.00)
D)	Economic attitude					
1	Financial assistance is needed for the organic farmers.	01 (00.56)	03 (01.67)	68 (37.77)	93 (51.66)	15 (08.34)
2	Organic farming helps to improve the economic condition of farmers.	05 (02.77)	44 (24.44)	105 (58.34)	26 (14.45)	00 (00.00)
3	Organic farming is labour intensive.	04 (02.22)	114 (63.34)	58 (32.22)	04 (02.22)	00 (00.00)
4	Organic farming is beneficial when farmers produce organic products for commercial purpose.	05 (02.78)	133 (73.88)	39 (21.67)	03 (01.67)	00 (00.00)
5	Demand in foreign countries driven me to do organic farming.	03 (01.66)	12 (06.66)	67 (37.23)	98 (54.45)	00 (00.00)
E)	Marketing behaviour					
1	Farmers want to develop their own marketing strategies.	12 (06.66)	145 (80.55)	19 (10.56)	04 (02.23)	00 (00.00)
2	Marketing facilities for organic produces is not properly streamlined.	10 (05.55)	79 (43.88)	67 (37.22)	22 (12.23)	02 (01.12)
3	Organic farmers have to concentrate on marketing quality not on quantity.	06 (03.34)	116 (64.44)	58 (32.22)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
4	Organic farmers have to approach market of other countries.	01 (00.56)	10 (05.56)	95 (52.77)	74 (41.11)	00 (00.00)
5	Organic farmers required to conduct market survey.	56 (31.11)	119 (66.11)	03 (01.66)	02 (01.12)	00 (00.00)
6	There will always be market for organic produce but it cannot overtake conventional produce.	00 (00.00)	19 (10.56)	82 (45.56)	79 (43.88)	00 (00.00)
7	Labeling is beneficial for marketing of organic produce.	106 (58.88)	73 (40.56)	01 (00.56)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
F)	Technological attitude					
1	As increase in awareness regarding organic produce there will be good opportunities in near future for organic production.	22 (12.22)	145 (80.56)	12 (06.66)	01 (00.56)	00 (00.00)
2	Cultivation technology used in organic farming are easy and simple.	04 (02.23)	134 (74.45)	39 (21.66)	03 (01.66)	00 (00.00)
3	Organic farming strengthens the use of indigenous knowledge.	10 (05.55)	83 (46.12)	60 (33.33)	27 (15.00)	00 (00.00)
4	A proper training is effective for practicing organic farming.	91 (50.56)	89 (49.44)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
G)	Input availability/ required					

1	Organic manure is not easily available, as there is a shortage in supply.	59 (32.78)	90 (50.00)	26 (14.44)	05 (02.78)	00 (00.00)
2	Organic manure is more expensive than chemical fertilizers.	05 (02.78)	31 (17.22)	30 (16.66)	114 (63.34)	00 (00.00)
3	Large quantity of input required for organic farming.	74 (41.11)	93 (51.66)	11 (06.11)	02 (01.12)	00 (00.00)
4	Farmers can make input on their own basis.	07 (03.88)	164 (91.12)	07 (03.88)	02 (01.12)	00 (00.00)
5	Initially it is difficult to manage input supply.	62 (34.44)	84 (46.66)	31 (17.23)	03 (01.67)	00 (00.00)
H)	Funding and Support					
1	Government have been taken adequate efforts for popularizing organic farming.	05 (02.78)	93 (51.66)	79 (43.89)	03 (01.67)	00 (00.00)
2	Government agencies provided proper training on organic farming.	08 (04.46)	142 (78.88)	30 (16.66)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
3	Subsidies given by the government is beneficial for organic farming.	05 (02.77)	95 (52.78)	77 (42.78)	03 (01.67)	00 (00.00)
4	Certification process is easy.	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	47 (26.12)	124 (68.88)	09 (05.00)
5	Incentives given by the government to local/ subsidiary groups for organic farming proved to be beneficial.	05 (02.77)	92 (51.13)	57 (31.66)	26 (14.44)	00 (00.00)

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to their overall attitude towards organic farming

Sr. No.	Attitude	Respondents (n=180)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	Less favourable (Up to 121)	42	23.34
2	Favourable (122 to 138)	108	60.00
3	Most favourable (139 and above)	30	16.66
Total		180	100.00
Mean= 129.85 SD =8.81			

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Conclusions

From result it can be said that, majority of the organic farming followers had favourable to less favourable attitude towards organic farming. It was observed that respondents known about importance of organic farming regarding environmental benefit, human health and also regarding soil health, by doing organic practices with proper training, conducting market survey help them, and their willing to take organic farming for future perspective making their attitude positive, while they facing the problems of marketing organic produce, availing organic material, problems in certification, lower yields, higher risks, non-availability of labours so these factors affect the attitude of the farmers towards organic farming.

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