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# *Need and Status of Organic Farming in India*

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**Organic farming is a method of farming that focuses on biodiversity, natural cycles, and healthy inputs rather than destructive ones. It uses organic fertilisers including compost manure, green manure, and bone meal. It has resulted in a profitable and rapidly increasing Organic Food Industry. Its goal, unlike other farming methods, is not only to increase yield and improve the economy. The total production of major organic commodities produced and exported during the 2020-21 fiscal year was 3.2 million MT, which included oil seeds, fibre, sugar, cereals, spices and condiments, pulses, medicinal plant products, fresh fruits and vegetables, tea, coffee, flowers, dry fruits, fodder, on farm processed food, tuber products, and others. The Government of India announced a plan and a form of organic certification, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), in 2015, with the goal of supporting and promoting organic farming and therefore improving soil health. Continuing advancements in organic farming led to Sikkim becoming India's first organic state in 2016. As a result, organic farming and agriculture should be viewed as the sole path to a more sustainable food future in order to address the existing environmental consequences and public health challenges.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Crop rotation and companion planting are prioritised in organic farming, which also uses organic fertilisers including compost manure, green manure, and bone meal. It started in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to constantly developing farming techniques. Today, a number of organisations continue to seek to improve organic farming. Mixed agriculture, insect predator breeding, and biological pest management are promoted. The goal of organic standards is to allow the use of components that exist

naturally while prohibiting or severely limiting the use of artificial substances. Advocates of organic farming cite advantages including self-sufficiency, independence and autonomy, healthcare, food and nutrition security, and food hygiene. Although people were not aware of the term "organic" in the past, the whole agricultural industry used organic processes. Organic farming was the foundation of the Indian economy. However, due to a series of natural disasters and India's rapidly growing population in the 1950s and 1960s, there was a severe food shortage. The state had to boost food production in order to enhance food security, which led to the Green Revolution in India under the direction of M. S. Swaminathan. Advanced technologies and technologies were implemented as a consequence of this revolution, which included the use of high yielding variety (HYV) seeds, tractors, irrigation systems, herbicides, and fertilizers. This, however, resulted in items that are carcinogenic in nature and produced a number of health issues. So, in order to maintain a natural equilibrium at all costs for the survival of life and property, a more sustainable and ecologically friendly farming system was required.

**CHEMICAL FARMING V/S ORGANIC FARMING**

<b>Chemical Farming</b>	<b>Organic Farming</b>
The land and soil quality degrade over time because of the use of artificial pesticides.	Use of natural fertilizers, crop rotation improves soil quality
Artificial fertilizers like DDT are used	Natural fertilizers like manure, compost, etc. are used
Nutrient loss is observed	The food is higher in nutrients
The farming methods are focused only on increasing the yield and improving the economy.	Use of mixed crops, crop rotation, companion planting etc. retains soil quality
The soil becomes infertile due to exploitation	The soil remains fertile
GMOs are not used or encouraged	GMOs are used to increase crop yield
Produce obtained will have chemical residues accumulated in it	Produce is free from chemical residues
Air, water and soil pollution is common	No such problem is observed
Pollution due to a low input: output ratio	Optimum input: output ratio with no pollution
Soil fertility is maintained for shorter period	Soil fertility is maintained on long term basis
Intensive irrigation is required	Irrigation requirements are reduced

**WHY ORGANIC FARMING?**

- Because of its fast-growing Organic Food Industry and its high profitability.
- It reduces the cost of agricultural production.
- Encourages ecological balance, biodiversity, and biological cycles, all of which are essential for the survival of the ecosystem.
- Organic agriculture can help to mitigate the effects of global climate change by reducing fossil fuel emissions primarily through the inclusion of cover crops and grass clovers in organic seasons.
- The produce delivers the finest food products for human usage compared to other options for improving human health.
- Organically cultivated fruits, vegetables, and grains have a better flavour and are richer in minerals like Vitamin C, iron, magnesium, and phosphorus with much less exposure to pesticide residues and nitrates.
- It strengthens the soil's nutrients and raises the quality of the soil.

**Table 1. Organic agricultural Statistics at a Glance in 2020-21**

<b>Area</b>	
Cultivated Area (Organic + In-conversion)	26,57,889.33 ha
Wild Harvest Collection Area	16,81,295.61 ha
<b>Total Area (Cultivated + Wild Harvest)</b>	<b>43,39,184.93 ha</b>
<b>Production</b>	
Farm Production	34,68,991.98 MT
Wild Harvest Production	27,808.36 MT
<b>Total Production</b>	<b>34,96,800.34 MT</b>
<b>Operators Organic Exports</b>	
Total exports quantity	8,88,179.68 MT
Total Export Value (INR)	7,07,849.52 Lakhs
Total Export Value (US\$)	1,040.95 million USD

(Source: FAO)

In Table 1, we can observe that India has a total area of **4.3 million hectares** dedicated to organic farming which also includes wild harvest area. Total production is 3.4 million Metric Tonnes (including both farm and wild harvest production) and the total export quantity is 0.88 million MT which amounted to Rs. 7078.50 crores.

**CONCLUSION**

The term "organic farming" refers to an agricultural system that relies on biological processes, biodiversity, and cycles that are suited to local conditions rather than use of inputs that have negative impacts. Examples of such fertilizers include compost manure, green manure, and bone meal. It has led to a fast growing Organic Food Industry with high profitability. Unlike other farming methods, it does not aim at just increasing the yield and improving the economy. Within the past 20 years, there has been a growth in interest and awareness concerning organic agriculture practises since the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) was introduced by APEDA in 2001. The Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), a scheme and a type of organic certification created by the Indian government in 2015, seeks to assist and promote organic farming and enhance soil health. As a result of continuous developments in organic farming, Sikkim had become the first organic state of India in 2016. Therefore, organic farming and agriculture should not be looked upon as an option but an only solution towards a more sustainable food future to overcome the current environmental impacts and the curbing public health.

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