

Awareness of Farmers Regarding Organic Farming

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ABSTRACT

In spite of growing opportunities in regarding organic product there have been little efforts in research to create database on various aspects of organic farming. The present investigation was an attempt to identify important characteristics of the farmers, their awareness and attitude towards organic farming. This study was conducted in Banaskantha and Sabarkantha district of Gujarat state. Three talukas in each of the districts viz, Dantiwada, Danta and Amirgadh in Banaskantha and Khedbrahma, Vijaynagar and Bhiloda in Sabarkantha were selected purposively for the study. From each selected taluka two villages were selected randomly and ten farmers from each village were selected randomly. Thus, final sample was consisting of 120 farmers for the study. It can be concluded that a majority of the farmers were found having medium of knowledge and moderately to highly favourable attitude toward organic farming. Moreover majority farmers were aware about the practices viz., intercropping, crop rotation, weed management, water management, use of FYM, vermicompost, biofertilizers and oil cake. While considerable number of farmers were aware about practices viz; use of pheromone trap and cow dung/urine, growing trap crop, use of herbal insecticide. On the other hand majority of the farmers found less aware about rest of the practices. Awareness of farmers regarding crop management practices and nutrient management practices was better than the plant protection practices. In case of post harvest, marketing and certification awareness of farmers was found too poor.

Keywords: Organic farming, Awareness

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade organic farming has gained international recognition as a viable option to conventional farming. Farmers practice organic farming by default or in absence of resources in many parts of the country. The organic farming movement is spreading gradually in all most all states of the country. Indian organic sector is steadily making in-roads into world organic food market. India having variety of geographical and climatic regions has great potentiality to export various agricultural commodities in world market.

In spite of these growing opportunities in this field there have been little efforts in research front to reorient the research agenda to create database on various aspects of organic farming. The present investigation was an attempt to identify important characteristics of the farmers, their awareness and attitude towards organic farming. The study was undertaken with the following specific objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To study the level of awareness of farmers regarding organic farming.
- (ii) To know the attitude of the farmers towards organic farming.
- (iii) To study the practice wise awareness of farmers regarding organic farming.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Banaskantha and Sabarkantha district of Gujarat state. The district was purposely selected for the study. Considerable area of both the district is hilly, and in these pockets farmers are using less fertilizer and other agrochemical inputs. Hence there are the chances of organic farming. The main purpose of the study was to know the awareness of the farmers regarding organic farming. Because this system of farming may be beneficial

to the farmers in future as the demand of organic products is increasing among the consumers in the country day by day.

Three talukas in each of the districts viz, Dantiwada, Danta and Amirgadh in Banaskantha and Khedbrahma, Vijaynagar and Bhiloda in Sabarkantha were selected purposively for the study. From each selected taluka two villages were selected randomly and ten farmers from each village were selected randomly. Thus, final sample was consisting of 120 farmers for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 : Distribution of the respondents according to their level of awareness regarding organic farming

n=120

Sr. No.	Level of awareness	Frequency	Per cent
1	Low (Below 8.50 score)	25	20.84
2	Medium (8.50 to 15.90 score)	75	62.50
3	High (Above 15.90 score)	20	16.66
Mean= 12.20		S.D. = 3.70	

The data given in Table 1 reveal that nearly three-fourth (62.50 per cent) farmers possessed medium level of awareness regarding organic followed by 16.66 per cent of the farmers possessed high level of awareness and 20.84 per cent of the beneficiary farmers with low level of awareness regarding organic farming respectively. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that a majority of the beneficiary farmers were found having medium of knowledge regarding organic farming.

This might be because the farmers of the area followed the organic farming practices by default.

Table 2 : Distribution of the respondents according to their level of attitude toward organic farming

n=120

Sr. No.	Level of Attitude	Frequency	Per cent
1	Less favourable	30	24.20
2	Moderately favourable	130	62.50
3	Highly favourable	40	13.30
Mean=62.86		SD=13.31	

The data in Table 2 portray that 62.50 per cent of the beneficiary farmers had moderately favorable attitude towards organic farming followed by nearly one-fourth (24.20 per cent) beneficiary farmers had less favourable attitude towards organic farming. Only 13.30 per cent beneficiary farmers had highly favourable attitude towards organic farming.

This clearly indicates that a great majority (75.80 per cent) of the beneficiary farmers had moderately favourable to highly favourable attitude toward organic farming. This might be due to the fact that respondents have realized the advantages of the organic farming

Awareness of farmers about organic farming

Table 3. Awareness of the farmers regarding organic farming practices

n=120

Sr. No.	Practices	No.	per cent	Rank
I Crop Management				
1	Inter cropping	92	76.66	I
2	Mixed cropping	25	20.83	V
3	Crop rotations	72	60.00	III
4	Weed management	85	70.83	II
5	Water management	61	50.83	IV
6	Mulching	21	17.50	VI
II Nutrient management				
1	Use of FYM	120	100.00	I
2	Use of Compost	36	30.00	V
3	Use of Vermicompost	76	63.33	III
4	Green manuring	34	28.33	VI
5	Use of oil cakes	59	49.16	IV
6	Use of Natural minerals	18	15.00	VIII
7	Use of Poultry manure	20	16.66	VII
8	Use of Biofertilizers	78	65.00	II
III Pest/ disease management				
1	Seed treatment	36	30.00	V
2	Use of herbal insecticide	48	40.00	III
3	Use of Cow dung/urine	55	45.83	I
4	Use of Pheromone trap	39	32.50	IV
5	Use of Fruit fly trap	22	18.33	VII
6	Use of Bird purcher	27	22.50	VI
7	Preparing Live hedge	09	7.50	X
8	Sowing Trap crop	54	45.00	II
9	Hand picking of insects	13	10.83	IX
10	Use of Biopesticide	17	14.16	VIII
IV Post Harvest				
1	Cleaning	90	75.00	I
2	Grading	37	30.83	II
3	Packing	21	17.50	III
4	Labeling	00	0.00	
5	Processing	00	0.00	

Sr. No.	Practices	No.	per cent	Rank
V	Marketing			
1	Local Market	15	12.5	II
2	NGO	12	10.00	III
3	Private Dealers	23	19.16	I
4	Factory owners (processor)	00	0.00	-
VI	Certification			
A	Do you know about certification?			
1	Yes	11	9.16	II
2	No	109	90.83	I

The data in Table 3 indicate that among crop management practices, maximum number of farmers (76.66 per cent) were aware about intercropping and was ranked first, followed by weed management without chemical (70.83 per cent)crop rotation (60.00 per cent)and water management (50.83 per cent) which were ranked second, third and fourth respectively.

The poor awareness was found in the practices of mixed cropping and mulching because in mixed cropping, it is difficult to perform farming operations like weeding, intercropping and harvesting. Further the advantages of mulching might not be popular among farmers.

Data with regards to nutrient management practices revealed that application of FYM (100.00 per cent) ranked first and all the farmers found aware about FYM, followed by use of bio-fertilizers (65.00 per cent), use of vermicompost (63.00 per cent), and use of oil cakes (49.16 per cent) ranks second, third and fourth respectively.

Use of FYM is quite natural as it is age-old traditional practices. While use of vermicompost, bio-fertilizers and oilcakes might have become popular among farmers, as they are rich organic sources of nutrient and comparatively cheap for nutrient management in organic farming. Regarding rest sources the farmers might not aware because they are not easily accessible to the farmers.

The data in Table 4 further reveal that among pest/disease managements practices, awareness of use of cow dung/urine among farmers (45.83 percent) ranked first followed by, growing trap crop (45.00 percent) use of herbal insecticides (40.00 percent) use of pheromone trap (32.50 percent) to control pests/diseases were ranked second, third and fourth respectively.

Considerable number of farmers were aware about the practices viz., seed treatment and use of bird purcher while the practices viz., fruit fly trap, hand picking of insects and use of bio pesticide were less aware among the farmers might be because they are crop specific and insect specific. Further the practice, live hedge is least aware as it has not direct bearing with insect control. It serves as supportive medium for insect control.

Data regarding post harvest practices revealed that among all the practices, cleaning ranked first and three fourth (75.00 per cent) of the farmers reported aware about cleaning, followed by grading (30.83 per cent), and packing (17.50 per cent) ranks second and third respectively. No farmer was aware about the labeling and processing of organic produce because both the practices are more concerned with marketing. It is known that marketing of organic farming is yet limited to big companies only and hence the farmers might not aware about it.

The data in Table 3 further reveal that marketing of the organic produce, less number of farmers were aware about the marketing channels viz; private dealers, local market and NGO engaged in marketing of organic produce. On the other hand only eleven farmers were found aware about certification of the organic products.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it can be concluded that majority farmers were aware about the practices viz., intercropping, crop rotation, weed management, water management, use of FYM, vermicompost, biofertilizers and oil cake. While considerable number of farmers were aware about practices viz; use of pheromone trap and cow dung/urine, growing trap crop, use of herbal insecticide. On the other hand majority of the farmers found less aware about rest of the practices. Awareness of farmers regarding crop management practices and nutrient management practices was better than the plant protection practices. In case of post harvest, marketing and certification awareness of farmers was found too poor.

Hence it is highly required that government should put more emphasis on promotion of organic farming and extension agencies should organize training for extension functionaries on organic farming so that they can train the farmers accordingly in these aspects.

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