



## Organic Farming in India: A Vision

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Food quality and safety are the two important factors that have gained ever-increasing attention in general consumers. Conventionally grown foods have immense adverse health effects due to the presence of higher pesticide residue, more nitrate, heavy metals, hormones, antibiotic residue, and also genetically modified organisms. Moreover, conventionally grown foods are less nutritious and contain lesser amounts of protective antioxidants. In the quest for safer food, the demand for organically grown foods has increased during the last decades due to their probable health benefits and food safety concerns. Organic food production is defined as cultivation without the application of chemical fertilizers and synthetic pesticides or genetically modified organisms, growth hormones, and antibiotics. The popularity of organically grown foods is increasing day by day owing to their nutritional and health benefits. Organic farming also protects the environment and has a greater socio-economic impact on a nation. India is a country that is bestowed with indigenous skills and potentiality for growth in organic agriculture. Although India was far behind in the adoption of organic farming due to several reasons, presently it has achieved rapid growth in organic agriculture and now becomes one of the largest organic producers in the world. Therefore, organic farming has a great impact on the health of a nation like India by ensuring sustainable development.

### Introduction

Food quality and safety are two vital factors that have attained constant attention in common people. Growing environmental awareness and several food hazards (e.g., dioxins, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, and bacterial contamination) have substantially decreased the consumer's trust towards food quality in the last decades. Intensive conventional farming can add contamination to the food chain. For these reasons, consumers are quested for safer and better foods that are produced through more ecologically and authentically by local systems. Organically grown food and food products are believed to meet these demands. Organic farming can be defined as an agricultural process that uses biological fertilisers and pest control acquired from animal or plant waste. Organic farming was actually initiated as an answer to the environmental sufferings caused by the use of chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilisers. In other words, organic farming is a new system of farming or agriculture that repairs, maintains, and improves the ecological balance.

### Types of Organic Farming

Organic farming is divided into two types, namely:

- **Integrated organic farming:** Integrated organic farming includes the integration of pest management and nutrients management to achieve ecological requirements and demands.
- **Pure organic farming:** Pure organic farming means avoiding all unnatural chemicals. In this process of farming, all the fertilisers and pesticides are obtained from natural sources such as bone meal or blood meal.

## Advantages of Organic Farming

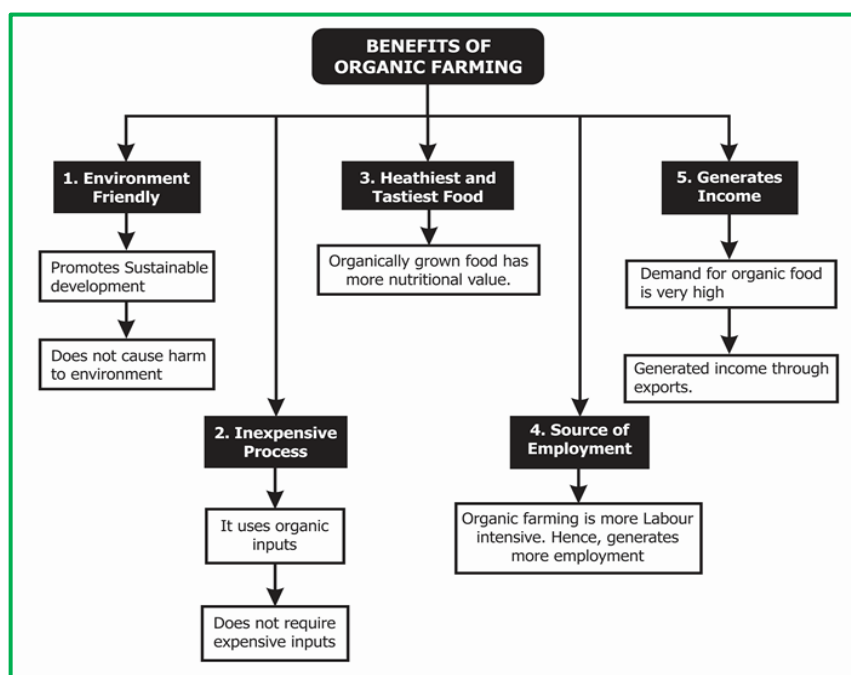
- **Economical:** In organic farming, no expensive fertilisers, pesticides, or HYV seeds are required for the plantation of crops. Therefore, there is no extra expense.
- **Good return on Investment:** With the usage of cheaper and local inputs, a farmer can make a good return on investment.
- **High demand:** There is a huge demand for organic products in India and across the globe, which generates more income through export.
- **Nutritional:** As compared to chemical and fertiliser-utilised products, organic products are more nutritional, tasty, and good for health.
- **Environment-friendly:** The farming of organic products is free of chemicals and fertilisers, so it does not harm the environment.

## Disadvantages of Organic Farming

- **Incompetent:** The major issue of organic farming is the lack of inadequate infrastructure and marketing of the product.
- **Less production:** The products obtained through organic farming are less in the initial years as compared to that in chemical products. So, farmers find it difficult to accommodate large-scale production.
- **Shorter shelf life:** Organic products have more flaws and a shorter shelf life than that of chemical products.
- **Limited production:** Off-season crops are limited and have fewer options in organic farming.

## Benefits of Organic Farming

- Environment-friendly.
- Promotes sustainable development.
- Healthy and tasty food.
- Inexpensive process.
- It uses organic inputs.
- Generates income.
- Generates income through exports.
- Source of employment.
- Organic farming is more labour intensive. Hence, it generates more employment.



## Organic Agriculture: It's Relevance to Indian Farming

Only 30% of India's total cultivable area is covered with fertilizers where irrigation facilities are available and in the remaining 70% of arable land, which is mainly rain-fed, negligible number of fertilizers is being used. Farmers in these areas often use organic manure as a source of nutrients that are readily available either in their own farm or in their locality. The north-eastern region of India provides considerable opportunity for organic farming due to

least utilization of chemical inputs. It is estimated that 18 million hectare of such land is available in the NE, which can be exploited for organic production. Technologies have been developed to produce large quantities of nutrient-rich manure/compost. There are specific biofertilizers for cereals, millets, pulses and oilseeds that offer a great scope to further reduce the gap between nutrient demand and supply. There is no doubt that organic agriculture is in many ways a preferable pattern for developing agriculture, especially in countries like India.

### **Conclusion**

The interest in organic agriculture in developing countries is growing because it requires less financial input and places more reliance on the natural and human resources available. Studies to date seem to indicate that organic agriculture offers comparative advantage in areas with less rainfall and relatively low natural and soil fertility levels. Labour realizes a good return and this is important where paid labour is almost non-existent. Organic agriculture does not need costly investments in irrigation, energy and external inputs, but rather organic agricultural policies have the potential to improve local food security, especially in marginal areas. Organic farming keeps soil healthy and maintains environment integrity thereby, promoting the health of consumers.