

Research Note

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Marketing Behaviour of Organic Farmers in Karur district of Tamil Nadu

P. Raahinipriya¹ and R. Jansi Rani²

ABSTRACT

In the recent past, most of the developed countries and some of the developing countries are returning to organic farming cultivation. For sustaining a healthy ecosystem there is a need for adoption of organic farming in India. The study was conducted in Karur district of Tamil Nadu to assess the marketing behavior of organic farmers. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents had medium level of marketing behavior.

Keywords: Marketing behavior; Organic farming; Food security; Market information; Price fixing; Tamil Nadu

The need for organic farming in India arises from the unsustainability of agricultural production and the damage caused to ecology through the conventional farming practices. Many techniques used in organic farming like inter-cropping, mulching and integration of crops and livestock are not alien to various agriculture systems including the traditional agriculture practiced in old countries like India. However, organic farming is based on various laws and certification programmes, which prohibit the use of almost all synthetic inputs, and health of the soil is recognised as the central theme of the method (Narayanan, 2005). Organic agriculture is practiced in 172 countries, and 43.70 million hectares of agricultural land are managed organically by approximately 2.3 million farmers. The study assessed the marketing behaviour of

the organic farmers which would provide an understanding about the status of organic farming in Karur district of Tamil Nadu.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Karur district of Tamil Nadu. Karur district comprises eight blocks, viz., Karur, Thanthoni, Aravakurichi, K.Paramathi, Krishnarayapuram, Kulithali, Thogamalai, and Kadavur. Among these eight blocks, Kadavur, Aravakurichi and Kulithalai blocks were selected for the study based on more number of organic farmers. Among these blocks, a total of 90 organic farmers were selected for the study by using convenient sampling technique. The overall marketing behaviour of the organic farmers was studied using 10 components. Simple percentage analysis was carried out for the study.

1.PG Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, TNAU, Coimbatore and 2.Professor (Agr. Extension), Dept. of Sustainable Organic Agriculture, TNAU, Coimbatore-641 003, Tamil Nadu.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Marketing Behaviour of the Organic Farmers

The distribution of respondents according to their marketing behaviour is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Marketing Behaviour of Respondents
(n = 90)

Particulars	Number *	Percentage
Overall Marketing behaviour		
Low	14	15.60
Medium	66	73.30
High	10	11.10
Time of sale		
As soon as harvest is over	51	56.66
When price is attractive	23	25.56
When need of cash	16	17.78
Price fixing criteria		
Based on cost of production	75	83.33
Based on demand for the produce	15	16.67
Mode of sale		
Local Merchants	52	57.78
Contractors	5	5.56
Wholesalers	17	18.89
Commission <i>mandi</i>	16	17.77

Particulars	Number *	Percentage
Mode of transport		
Bicycle	3	3.33
Tempo van/ Tractor	49	54.45
Moped	27	30.00
Lorry	11	12.22
Expenditure incurred on transport		
High	35	38.89
Medium	40	44.44
Low	15	16.67
Place of sale		
Field itself	23	25.56
In the Village	16	17.78
Nearby town	43	47.78
Other State/ District	8	8.88
Reasons for selection of market		
Proximity to the place of production	52	57.78
Higher price	31	34.44
Cash payment	7	7.78
Distance to the Market		
Up to 5 km	6	6.67
5- 10 km	11	12.22
11-15 km	22	24.44
16-20 km	16	17.78
More than 20 km	35	38.89

Particulars	Number *	Percentage
Source of market information		
Relatives and friends	51	56.67
Local marketing centers	19	21.11
Commission agents	13	14.44
Contractors	6	6.67
Retailers	1	1.11
Collection of money		
Immediately after sale	63	70.00
1-2 days after sale	16	17.78
A week after sale	7	7.78
15 days after sale	2	2.22
A month after sale	2	2.22

* Multiple responses

Nearly three-fourth (73.30 %) of the respondents had medium level of marketing behaviour where as 15.60 per cent of the respondents had low level of marketing behaviour.

Item-wise Marketing Behaviour of the Respondents

The marketing behaviour of organic farmers was studied with the identified 10 components namely time of sale, price fixing criteria, mode of sale, mode of transport, expenditure incurred on transport, place of sale, reason for selection of market, distance of the market, source of market information and collection of money.

More than half (56.66 %) of the respondents had sold the entire produce immediately after harvest because they would be in need of money for meeting their farm and home expenses. Sivaraj et al (2018) had obtained similar results in an analogous study. Majority (83.33 %) of the respondents fixed the price based on the cost of production, the reason being farmers would expect more returns as well as to overcome the future risks. More than half (57.78 %) of the respondents sold their produce directly to local merchants because they needed immediate payments for their produce. More than half (54.45 %) of the respondents used tempo van/ tractor for transporting their produce because most of the respondents owned tractor and therefore they utilized it to transport the produce to nearby towns and outside the towns. Less than half (44.44 %) of the respondents had medium level of expenditure on transport and the reason behind this was that most of the respondents had used their own tempo van/ tractor for transporting their produce. Nearly half (47.78 %) of the respondents sold their produce in nearby towns because they would have preferred marketing the produce at the markets located within 10 km distance. About 57.78 per cent of the respondents selected the market based on proximity to the place of production as the respondents did not want to spend more money on transport. More than one-third (38.89 %) of the respondents marketed their produce in the markets located at the distance of more than 20 km because they preferred to sell their produce in semi urban / urban areas. Over half (56.67 %) of the respondents came to know the price trends in

the market through relatives and friends and the reason might be that the farmers living in the villages were found to have acted as the sources of market information. More than two-thirds (70.00 %) of the respondents sold their produce for immediate payment of money in order to meet their expenses of household activities and also to clear the debts.

This study revealed that the respondents were found to have medium to high level of marketing behaviour. The result might be due to the reason that the respondents had a good knowledge about the marketing trend so as to get good price for their produce. The respondents also received market information through mobiles and some of the respondents were registered farmers of Domestic & Exports Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Most of the farmers had subscribed to monthly

magazines like TNAU's *Valarum Velanmai* and *Pasumai Vikadan*. In order to improve the marketing behaviour of organic farmers, direct marketing / linkages by farmers groups with their end user institutions can be created by government intervention. Government may provide price related information to the organic farmers for their organic produce at correct time for enhancing their marketing abilities.

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