

Research Note

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DOI:<https://doi.org/10.26725/JEE.2018.3.30.6140-6145>**Marketing Behavior of Certified Organic Farmers in Tamil Nadu****P. Sivaraj¹, H. Philip² and J. Venkata Pirabu³****ABSTRACT**

A study was conducted to assess the marketing behavior of organic Farmers. Ex post facto research design was used in this study. The study was conducted in Coimbatore, Erode and Tiruppur districts of Tamil Nadu. Three blocks were selected purposively and a sample of 20 certified organic farmers were selected from each of the blocks purposively. A total of 180 certified organic farmers were surveyed for the study. Three fourths of the certified organic farmers fell under the fully selling pattern of organic produce, and 38.89 per cent of the certified organic farmers sell the entire produce immediately after the harvest.

Keywords: Marketing Behavior; Certified Organic Farmers; Tamil Nadu.

India is bestowed with enormous potential to produce all varieties of organic products due to its various agro-climatic regions. In several parts of the country, the inherited tradition of organic farming is an added advantage which resulted in making the country to stand first in terms of number of organic farm producers and eight in terms of percentage of the area under organic farming practice to its total area under farming (APEDA, 2010). This holds promise for the organic producers to tap the market which is growing steadily in the domestic market and that related to the export market. Cultivated land under certification is around 5.71 million hectares (2015-16). This includes

1.49 million hectares under cultivation and the rest is under forest area (wild collection). The national programme involves the accreditation programme for certification agencies, norms for organic production, promotion of organic farming etc. States like; Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Nagaland, Mizoram, Sikkim have been promoting organic farming.

India produced around 1.35 MT (2015-16) of certified organic products which includes all varieties of food produces namely sugarcane, oilseeds, cereals and millets, cotton, pulses, medicinal plants, tea, fruits, spices, dry fruits, vegetables, coffee etc.

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The scope of organic farming in India has been tremendously increasing day by day. With this background, a study was conducted among certified organic farmers in Coimbatore, Erode and Tiruppur districts of Tamil Nadu to find out their marketing behavior in selected dimensions

METHODOLOGY

Ex post facto research design was used in this study to suit the objectives and type of information needed. A sample of 180 certified organic farmers was selected for the study, from a list of certified organic farmers provided by the Directorate of Tamil Nadu Organic Seed Certification Department and Indian Society for Certification of Organic Products (ISCOP), Coimbatore using simple random sampling procedure. Thus, a sample size of 60 certified organic farmers from each district were taken up for the study in Coimbatore, Erode and Tiruppur districts. In each district, three blocks were selected and in each block 20 certified organic farmers were selected through Purposive random sampling method.

A well structured and pre-tested interview schedule was used for data collection. Keeping in view the objectives and the variables under study, a comprehensive semi structured interview schedule covering all aspects of organic farming practices was prepared. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis to get inferences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Marketing Behavior of Certified Organic Farmers

The marketing behaviour of certified

organic farmers were evaluated with the identified five components namely selling pattern, post harvest technologies / value addition, marketing, mode of transport and distance of market. The results are presented in Table 1.

Selling Pattern

It could be seen from Table 1 that three fourths (75.00 %) of the certified organic farmers fell under 'fully selling pattern' of organic produce and remaining came under 'partially selling (25.00 %) category' of organic produce. In the recent years, there is a growing awareness among consumers about the importance of organic farming and its produces. High demand for organic produce might be the reason for this trend. The wholesaler and village merchants who procure the entire produce from the organic farmers pay them reasonable amount. The private organic shops which are involved in contract farming usually make onetime payment during procurement. This could be the possible reason for most of the organic farmers to be under fully selling pattern for their produce immediately after harvest.

Post Harvest Technologies/ Value addition

It is evident from the table that only 23.33 per cent of certified organic farmers were following value addition practices. To increase the economic value of the commodity, they prepare value added products like organic coconut oil, banana chips, millets cookies, pulses malt and organic soaps etc. About 26 per cent of the organic farmers were following grading for their produce / products. It could

be inferred from the findings that majority of the certified organic farmers were found to sell immediately after harvest in the nearby towns. Only those who took the produce to the market places availed grading facility.

Among the respondents, 26.67 per cent of the certified organic farmers were using gunny bags followed by polythene bags (20.00 %), wooden box (7.23 %) and bottle (12.23 %).

Moreover, 34.45 per cent of the farmers were not following package of their produce. It was observed during the survey that gunny bags were reported as the easiest available packing material to the farmers and moreover they felt that the gunny bags allow free aeration, which would be helpful in storing the produce for a long period. Hence, majority of the certified organic farmers preferred gunny bags as packing material.

Table 1.
Distribution of Respondents Based on their Marketing Behavior

(n=180)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Organic farmers' marketing behavior	
		Number*	Percentage
I.	Selling pattern		
1.	Fully	135	75.00
2.	Partially	45	25.00
II.	Post harvest technologies/ Value additions		
1.	Value addition	42	23.33
2.	Grading	48	26.66
3.	Packing/ Packing materials usage		
i.	Gunny bags	48	26.67
ii.	Polythene bags	36	20.00
iii.	Wooden box	13	7.23
iv.	Bottle	22	12.23
v.	No packing	62	34.45
4.	Storage		
i.	On farm	36	20.00
ii.	Storage godowns	27	15.00
iii.	Warehouse	13	7.23
iv.	Shops/market place	8	4.45

Marketing Behavior of Certified Organic Farmers in Tamil Nadu

Sl. No.	Particulars	Organic farmers' marketing behavior	
		Number*	Percentage
III.	Marketing		
1.	Time of sale		
i.	Soon after the harvest	70	38.89
ii.	When need in cash	44	24.44
iii.	When the price is attractive	56	31.11
iv.	Pre-harvest contract	10	5.56
2.	Place of sale		
i.	In the village itself	60	33.33
ii.	Nearby town	95	52.78
iii.	Distant town	22	12.22
iv.	Export other states/ country	3	1.67
3.	Mode of sale		
i.	Primary merchant	67	37.22
ii.	Commission agent	46	25.56
iii.	Wholesale market	35	19.45
iv.	Cooperative society	2	1.11
v.	Regulated market	11	6.11
vi.	Super market chain	9	5.00
vii.	Supply to hotels	10	5.55
IV.	Mode of transport		
1.	Own vehicle	72	40.00
2.	Public transport	30	16.67
3.	Hired vehicle	78	43.33
V.	Distance of market		
1.	Up to 5 km	60	33.33
2.	5-10 km	25	13.89
3.	>10-15 km	37	20.56
4.	>15-20 km	12	6.67
5.	>20-25 km	12	6.67
6.	More than 25 km	34	18.88

* Multiple responses obtained

i. Time of Sale

With regard to time of sale 38.89 per cent of the certified organic farmers sell the entire produce immediately after the harvest, whereas, 31.11 per cent sell their produce when the price is attractive followed by 24.44 per cent of the certified organic farmers sell their produce when they need cash. Only 5.5 per cent followed pre-harvest contract.

ii. Place of Sale

More than half (52.78 %) of the certified organic farmers sold their produce in the nearby town followed by village itself (33.33 %), distant town (12.22 %) and export to other states/ country (1.67 %). As majority possessed motor vehicles, selling would be done at the markets located within 10 km distance. Those who possessed tractors would have preferred the local sale in the village itself. Those who have more area of cultivation and harvested huge quantities of corn, would have preferred the public transport and hire vehicles.

iii. Mode of Sale

About 37 per cent of the certified organic farmers sell their produce to primary merchants followed by commission agents (25.56 %), whole sale market (19.45 %), regulated market (6.11 %), supply to hotels (5.55 %), super market chain (5.00 %) and only 1.11 per cent of the farmers preferred cooperative societies. The primary merchants were easily approachable and accessible. There existed pre-harvest contract, confidence on

wholesalers and local merchants due to their familiarity, supply of gunny bags at the time of harvest and immediate payment of cash. These would have been the possible reasons for influencing majority of the farmers to sell their produce to village merchants.

Mode of Transport

There were 43.33 per cent of the certified organic farmers, who used hired vehicle for transporting their produce. Moreover, 40.00 per cent of the certified organic farmers owned vehicles for transporting and only 16.67 per cent of the farmers were depending on public transport. It was observed during the survey that considerable number of the certified organic farmers owned hired vehicles and therefore they utilized the hired vehicle to transport their organic produce to nearby towns and distant towns. Tractors have been used for transporting the produce within the local village itself. Others used public transport like town bus for transporting the produce to far off places. Moreover, certified organic farmers themselves form groups and they were joint arrangement for transporting their produce to differential market places.

Distance of Market

A glance at the table reveals that majority (33.33 %) preferred short distance markets (up to 5 km) followed by more than 10 km to 15 km (20.56 %), more than 25 km (18.88 %), 5 km to 10 km (13.89 %) and both more than 15 km to 20 km and more than 20 km to 25 km distance of market up to 6.67 per

cent of certified organic farmers. The proxy of the market is wholly dependent on number of organic producers and consumers.

The government should fix premium price for organic produce and establish more number of organic outlets in all the districts through commodity groups/ Farmer Producer Organizations(FPOs), which will encourage the farmers. Policy interventions should be made in order to establish organic processing industries and organic oil extraction and organic soap making units.

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