Study of Socio-Economic Profile and Challenges Faced by the Farmers in Practicing Organic Farming in Hamirpur District of Uttar Pradesh

ABSTRACT:

Aims: 1**.** To study the socio-economic status of farmers. 2. To study the challenges faced by farmers in organic farming practice and suggest suitable measures to overcome the challenges faced by the farmers.

Study Design: Ex-post facto research design was used for this study and was deemed suitable for this kind of study.

Place and Duration of Study: The study was carried out in Hamirpur District of Uttar Pradesh. The duration of study was from 2022 to 2024.

Methodology: The research was carried out in 12 villages (4 from each block) of Sarila, Sumerpur, and Muskara blocks, which are part of the Hamirpur district in the larger region of Uttar Pradesh. The 25 farmers from each of the 12 villages were selected randomly making a total of 300 farmers participating in the research. Percentage, Frequency, and Mean were the statistical tools that was used in the analysis.

Results: The study reveals a predominantly middle-aged (65.66%) farmers demographic. The farmer demographic was largely comprised of general category (41.7%) individuals who identify as Hindu and reside in sizable joint families. Most of the farmers reside in mixed-type houses. The majority of farmers exhibited high levels of social engagement and active participation in community activities. Most of the farmers had moderate resources and widely adopt dairying farming. According to the findings, organic farming hindered by various challenges, such as information gaps, labor intensity, cumbersome certification process, lower yields, and limited market access and buyer availability.

Conclusion: Enhancing support services, such as training programs, technical assistance, certification guidance, subsidies, and insurance, is crucial to encourage farmers to adopt organic farming practices and promote sustainable agriculture on a large scale.

Keywords: *Challenges, Climate Change, Organic Farming, Soil health, Sustainable agriculture.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Organic farming, which has been expanding more quickly in India, can become a substitute technique to address crop productivity and the impending food demand. A form of agriculture, organic farming relies on various techniques such as vermicomposting, crop rotation, green manure, animal husbandry, bio-fertilizers, and biological pest control. Organic farming is a form of crop/plant cultivation using organic fertilizers which are eco-friendly fertilizers that improve the soil and support the life of other useful organisms in the soil. Maintaining long-term soil fertility and genetic diversity of the production system and its surroundings, including plant and wildlife, encouraging healthy use with proper care of water resources, creating a harmonious balance between crop production and animal husbandry, and minimizing all forms of pollution are among the major goals of organic farming.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study was undertaken during 2022-2024 in Hamirpur district of Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. The study delved into the challenges faced by farmers and explored strategies to overcome them, offering a holistic perspective on the subject. The research was carried out in 12 villages (4 from each block) of Sarila, Sumerpur, and Muskara blocks, which are part of the Hamirpur district in the larger region of Uttar Pradesh. The study recruited 25 farmers from each of the 12 villages, making a total of 300 farmers participating in the research. The statistical tools were used as percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, rank order etc.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Table 1: Distribution of farmers according to their Socio-Economic Profile

n = 300

S.No.	Profile	Frequency	Per cent
1	**Age**		
	Young (below 37)	58	19.33
	Middle Age (37 to 57)	197	65.66
	Old Age (Above 57)	45	15.0
2	**Caste**		
	Scheduled Caste	25	8.3
	Scheduled Tribe Caste	50	16.7
	Other Backward Caste	100	33.3
	General Caste	125	41.7
3	**Religion**		
	Hindu	267	89.0
	Muslim	6	2.0
	Christian	3	1.0
	Sikh	24	8.0
4	**Family type**		
	Nuclear family	84	28.0
	Joint family	216	72.0
5	**Family Size**		
	Up to 6 members	102	34.0
	6-8 members	110	36.7
	Above 9 members	88	29.3
6	**House type**		
	Kuchcha house	90	30.0
	Mixed house	147	49.0
	Pucca house	63	21.0
7	**Material possession**		
	Low (below 15.52419)	37	12.33
	Medium (15.52419 to 24.90241)	187	62.33
	High (above 24.90241)	76	25.33
8	**Milch Animals**		
	Low (below .69149)	44	14.66
	Medium (.69149 to 2.84191)	74	24.66
	High (above 2.84191)	182	60.66

Age

The table 1 reveals the distribution of farmers according to their age that 65.66 per cent of farmers belonged to middle age group, followed by 19.33 per cent of young age group and 15.0 per cent of old age group respectively. The mean age of farmers is 47 years. The findings are in line with the findings of **Prasanth, et al. (2023)** and **Karamjit et al. (2015).**

Caste

Table .1 reveals the distribution of farmers according to their caste, the 41.7 per cent of farmers belonged to general category, followed by 33.3 per cent of farmers belonged to other backward caste, while 16.7 per cent of farmers belonged to scheduled tribe caste and remaining 8.3 per cent of farmers belonged to scheduled caste category. From the overall view, it may be accomplished that most of the farmers belonged to general category in the research study area which is similar to the findings of **Bhadu (2021)** findings.

Religion

Table .1 also reveals the distribution of farmers according to religion, the maximum 89.0 per cent of farmers belonged to Hindu religion, followed by 8.0 per cent of farmers belonged to Sikh religion, 2.0 per cent of farmers who belonged to Muslim religion and minimum 1.0 per cent of farmers belonged to Christian religion. Thus, it can be inferred that most of the farmers followed the Hindu religion.

Family Type

The table .1 reveals that the majority 72.0 per cent of farmers belonged to joint family and the remaining 28.0 per cent of farmers belonged to nuclear family. It may be inferred from beyond the outcome that almost three quarters of the farmers were living in joint family in the rural area which is similar to the findings of **Baskaur and Tyagi R. (2021)** who had also concluded the same.

Family size

Table no. .1 reveals that the maximum 36.7 per cent of farmers belonged to the family which had 6-8 members, followed by 34.0 per cent of farmers who had up to 6 members and only 29.3 per cent of farmers had 9 members and above in their family. Hence, it is concluded from the data that majority of farmers had 6-8 members in their family which is line with the findings of **Pandya (2010)** findings.

House type

The table .1 represents the distribution of farmers according to their type of house, a maximum 49.0 per cent of farmers lived in the mixed type of houses, followed by 30.0 per cent of farmers lived in kuchcha type of houses, and remaining 21.0 per cent of farmers lived in pucca house. Therefore, it may be concluded that almost fifty per cent of farmers lived in mixed type of houses which is in line with the findings of **Desai, R. and Sumangala, P.R. (2015)** findings.

Material Possession

Table .1 indicates the distribution of farmers according to their overall material possession where majority (62.33%) of the farmers had medium level of material possession, followed by 25.33 per cent of farmers who had high level of material possession and the remaining 12.33 per cent had low level of material possession. Hence, it is concluded on the basis of above data that the majority of farmers had medium level of material possession included household material, farm power and agriculture implements.

Milch animals

Table .1 indicates the distribution of farmers according to their milch animals that most of the farmers (60.66%) had highly adopted milch animals, followed by medium (24.66%) and low (14.66%) adoption of milch animals respectively, by the farmers in the research study area.

Table .2: Challenges faced by Farmers regarding Organic Farming Practices

n = 300

S.No.	Statement	Mean Value	Rank
1.	Lack of information regarding organic farming	2.58	**I**
2.	Lack of decision making	2.08	**IV**

3.	Difficulty in control of weeds, pests & diseases in organic farming	2.50	**II**
4.	Undesirable behavior of conventional farmers	2.42	**III**
5.	Adjacent farm conventional	1.75	**V**
6.	Organic farming is too labor intensive	2.58	**I**

The perusal of table 2 shows the challenges faced by the farmers regarding organic farming practices. The 'lack of information regarding organic farming and it is too labor intensive' was the largest cruel challenges that come across by greater part of farmers with mean score value 2.58 and get rank I. The findings support the assertions of **Krishnamurthy, et al. (2016),** who concluded that the major constraints expressed by the respondents were, high wages of labor and non availability of labor. According to the table, majority of farmers expressed that they faced difficulty in controlling weeds, pests, and diseases in organic farming. Therefore, the challenge 'difficulty in control of weeds, pests & diseases in organic farming' was ranked as II with mean score value 2.50. The third major challenge faced by the farmers was 'undesirable behavior of conventional farmers' with mean score value 2.42 and get ranked as III. Other major constraints, in rank order, include 'lack of decision making' (IV) and 'adjacent farm conventional' (V), with the mean score 2.08 and 1.7, respectively.

4. CONCLUSION:

Farmers encountered several obstacles when transitioning to organic farming, including 'lack of information regarding organic farming' and 'organic farming is too labor intensive' were the extremely prevalent while 'undesirable behavior of conventional farmers' was noticeable but not overwhelming extent and 'adjacent farm conventional' had negligible amount. The findings suggested, streamlining certification process, offering free soil testing, and boosting technical support promotes sustainable agricultural practices and helps increase the adoption of organic farming practices among the farmers.

5. SUGGESTIONS:

1. Simple procedure for certification of organic products should be followed by the certification agency.
2. Technical guidance/training should be provided to the farmers regarding organic farming.
3. Government should control the use of chemical fertilizer to the required level.
4. Scientists are requested to evolve suitable product and process technology to be followed for organic farming.
5. Free soil testing facility should be provided.

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