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Sustainable Development of Agriculture in India Need for Organic Farming

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the prime activity of the Indian economy for a long time. This sector provides livelihood for the rural mass. For the development of agriculture the government of India has enacted several schemes and programmes ever since Independence. Despite the various programmes and policies, in these days, the agricultural sector is confronting with several problems, and the contribution of agriculture to the national GDP had shown decreasing trend. Further, the increased population demands more food and other articles. Hence to fulfill the demand for the growing population, sustainable development of agriculture is the need for the hour. Organic farming plays a pivotal role in sustainable development of agriculture in India by the way of increased agricultural production and productivity, minimizing poverty, improved soil fertility, improved quality of food and conservation of biodiversity... The objectives of this paper are to study the present status of organic farming and organic agricultural production by major states in India and to analyze the contribution of organic farming on sustainable agriculture development in India. The intended study is descriptive and analytical, and is based on secondary data such as books, journal articles, and e-sources. The study found that organic farming helps the sustainable agriculture by environmental protection, improved agricultural production and, minimized environmental degradation, conserved the biodiversity, improved the environmental quality and improved the standard of living of the people in India. The study concludes that, government should create more awareness and provide more incentives to the farmers those who practiced organic farming for the sustainable development of agriculture in the future India.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India's economy is based primarily on agriculture, which provides substantial employment opportunities and contribution to the GDP of the nation. More than half of the nation's workforce is employed in this industry, which has long served as the primary means of subsistence. India's unique topography, climate, and soil conditions have led to a reputation for its wide range of agricultural approaches. Crops such as



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ice, wheat, legumes, and cotton are among the most widely produced in the nation¹. Agriculture is the most basic kind of human activity, encompassing both crop production and animal domestication. Agricultural land is thus the most basic of the world's vast and varied resources, and it is from it that the world's population is fed and sheltered². Organic farming is one of the several approaches to meet the objectives of sustainable development of agriculture. It avoids the use of synthetic chemicals as well as genetically altered organisms and usually subscribes to the principle of sustainable farming. Different stakeholders who promote Organic Farming need to follow a holistic approach which focus on reviving soils and organic matter, capacity building of farmers, supply of efficient organic inputs, comprehensive certification standards, marketing, branding, awareness of consumers and integrating farmers with the market-led value chain³. Sustainable and organic farming is imperative for preserving environmental health, enhancing soil fertility, and ensuring long-term food security. These practices reduce reliance on synthetic chemicals, promote biodiversity, and mitigate climate change⁴. In the above back drop the intended study aimed at an analysis of Sustainable Development of Agriculture in India focused on the need for Organic Farming.

2. Statement of the Problem

After green revolution the Indian agriculture has considerably changed, the adoption of new agricultural techniques enhanced the agricultural productivity. Even with the increased agricultural productivity, the recent statistical data had shown that the contribution of agriculture to the National Gross Domestic Product had shown gradually declining trend. Farmers in India are facing several problems like that of lack of credit facilities, access to market facilities and lack of proper management their agricultural crops. The development programmes of the both central and state governments have not been effectively benefited to the farmers. Hence keeping this pertinent issue in mind, the intended study aimed at an analysis of the importance of organic farming on sustainable agricultural development in India.

3. Literature Review

Some of the useful past studies have been reviewed to identify the research gap which are as under:

Priya P. Gurav *et al.* (2019) in their study on 'Constraints in Organic Farming: An Indian Perspective' found that, the problems in adopting organic farming are Yield reduction in conversion to Organic farms, Increasing pest and weeds, Resource need, Certification, Technical constraints, Lack of clarity and marketing.⁵

¹ Nagendra Babu, K. and Chaithrakumari, D.M. (2024). Present Status of Organic Farming in India. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, *12*(3), 310.

² Ashoka Gamage, Ruchira Gangahagedara, Jeewan Gamage, Nepali Jayasinghe, Nathasha Kodikara, Piumali Suraweera and Othmane Merah (2023). *Role of Organic Farming for Achieving Sustainability in Agriculture, Farm System.* Published by Elsevier B.V., p. 1.

³ Sailaja, A. and Manohari, P.L. (2021). *Organic Farming for Sustainable Agriculture*. Extension Education Institute, Hyderabad and National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, India, p. 3.

⁴ Santosh Kumar, Sarla Meena, Sheetal Angral, Ritu Kataria and Abhinandan Sharma (2024). *Sustainable Farming - Sustainable Future Transforming Agricultural sector with Organic Farming Reforms (Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare*). Research Unit Press Information Bureau, GoI, p. 1.

⁵ Priya P. Gurav, Choudhari, P.L., Lakaria, B.L., Pramod Jha and Shinogi, K. C. (2019). Constraints in Organic Farming: An Indian Perspective. *Indian Farming*, 69(08), 16-19.



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Pubali Hazarika (2020), in a study on 'Organic Farming as a means of Sustainable Agriculture Practice in India' viewed that, Low investment, Less dependence on moneylenders, Traditional knowledge, and Employment Opportunities are the main factors motivating farmers to undertake organic farming and some of the constraints in organic farming are Lack of Awareness, High Input Costs, Lack of Financial Support Multiple certification systems and Shortage of Biomass.⁶

Awanindra Kumar Tiwari (2023) have analyzed on 'The Role of Organic Farming in Achieving Agricultural Sustainability: Environmental and Socio-economic Impacts' found that organic farming plays a significant role in both environmental benefits and socio-economic impacts, the environmental benefits are enhanced soil health, improved biodiversity, decreased pollution, minimizes the carbon and these are contribute more on conservation of ecosystem and overcome the impacts of climate change. Further, the socio-economic impacts are organic farming improves health by way of reducing exposure to harmful chemicals for both the consumers and farmers. In the economic point of view it provides proper places for markets and potentially higher product prices.⁷

Ashoka Gamage *et al.* (2023) conducted a research on 'Role of Organic Farming for Achieving Sustainability in Agriculture' argued that organic farming minimizes the adverse effect on the environment and improved the environmental sustainability by the way of reducing the negative impact on the environment and ecological impact of sustainable development, improves the food quality and improved the agricultural productivity, enhanced the quality of life of the large farmers.⁸

Shubham Garg *et al.* (2024), in a Paper on 'Economic Sustainability of Organic Farming: An Empirical Study on Farmer's Perspective' found that, hurdles faced by the organic farmers in Haryana shifting from conventional farming to organic farming, and low literacy rate, the farmers at the initial stage loss of production in conversion to organic farming so they are restricted conventional farming according to the farmers perspective in between 30-35 per cent less in organic farming in the study area and they faced difficulties in selling their organic products in the market in the state.⁹

4. Objectives

The objectives of the present study are

- **1.** To study the present status of organic farming and organic agricultural production by major states in India.
- 2. To analyze the contribution of organic farming on sustainable agriculture development.

5. Methodology

Geographically the present study restricted to India, and is descriptive and analytical based on the secondary sources of data gathered from various published sources like books, journal articles, reports

⁶ Pubali Hazarika (2020). Organic Farming as a means of Sustainable Agriculture Practice in India. *International Journal of Management (IJM), 11*(12), 2074-2080.

⁷ Awanindra Kumar Tiwari (2023). The Role of Organic Farming in Achieving Agricultural Sustainability: Environmental and Socio-economic Impacts. *Acta Biology Forum*, 02(02), 29-32.

⁸ Ashoka Gamage, Ruchira Gangahagedara, Jeewan Gamage, Nepali Jayasinghe, Nathasha Kodikara, Piumali Suraweera and Othmane Merah (2023). *Role of Organic Farming for Achieving Sustainability in Agriculture, Farm System.* Published by Elsevier B.V., pp. 1-14.

⁹ Shubham Garg, Karam Pal Narwal and Sanjeev Kumar (2024). Economic Sustainability of Organic Farming: An Empirical Study on Farmer's Prospective. *International Journal of Sustainable Agricultural Management and Informatics*, 10(2), 121-142.



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and e-sources.

1. Present Status of Organic Farming

The statistical data proved that India has occupied in the first position in terms of total number of organic producers and globally it is placed in the eighth position in the form of organic agriculture, despite challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2020-21, the organic agricultural food, and retail sectors shown remarkable export performance with organic product from India worth \$1 billion. The United States accounted for 54 per cent of these exports. Driven by enhancing preference for health-increasing and immunity-boosting foods, the domestic consumption of organic food products has also shown remarkable and substantial growth. As per the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) report of India, organic crop production touched at 3.2 million metric tons in 2020-21, which was increased at 36 per cent as compared to 2019-20. The state of Sikkim placed at the first position across the world to become fully organic and other States like Tripura and Uttarakhand have set similar targets. The North East India has traditionally been organic and the consumption of chemicals is far less than rest of the country. As well as the tribal and island territories are being nurtured to continue their organic story. In the financial year 2022, Chhattisgarh had the uppermost organic agriculture area with over three million hectares across India, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 2.3 million hectares of organic farming land in the country. Crops like Rice and wheat as cereal, tea and coffee as beverages, Cardamom, black pepper, ginger, turmeric as spices; black gram and red gram as pulses; mango, banana, pineapple, orange, cashew nut, walnut as fruits; okra, brinjal, garlic, onion, tomato, potato as vegetables; sesame, castor, sunflower as oilseeds; cotton as commercial crops are mainly cultivated in organic farming.¹⁰

Organic Products

The Table 1 represents the organic products in India.

Sl.No.	Products	Percentage
1	Rice	24.00
2	Теа	24.00
3	Fruits and Vegetables	17.00
4	Wheat	10.00
5	Cotton	08.00
6	Spices	05.00
7	Coffee	04.00
8	Pulses	03.00
9	Cashew	03.00
10	Others	02.00
	Total	100.00

Table 1	Organic	Products ,	2023
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¹⁰ Sourakanti Sarkar, Riddhit Bhattacharjee, Auindrila Biswas and Md. Mahmudul Hasan Middya, M. D. (2023). Organic Farming in India. Just Agriculture - Multidisciplinary e-Newsletter, 4(1), 333-334.



Source: Sourakanti Sarkar, Riddhit Bhattacharjee, Auindrila Biswas and Md. Mahmudul Hasan Middya, M. D. (2023). Organic Farming in India. *Just Agriculture - Multidisciplinary e-Newsletter*, 4(1), 333-334.

Organic Production in India

Based on the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) New Delhi projects India's organic agriculture sector to be valued a \$2.5 billion for the 2023/24 Marketing Year. As per the International Market Analysis Research and Consulting (IMARC) Group, the Indian organic food market size has reached \$1.6 billion in 2023 and expected to experience significant growth, reaching \$8.9 billion by 2032 at a projected Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 21.19 per cent for the period 2024-2032. For the Marketing Year (MY) 2021-22, India contributed 38 per cent of the total 98 per cent of global organic cotton production.10 Indian Oilcakes saw a rise in export by 18 per cent in 2021. For MY 2021/22, organic production of fiber crops was highest, followed by oilseeds, sugar, cereals and millets, spices and condiments, fresh fruits and vegetables, pulses, tea, and coffee India's APEDA reports state that Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan are the top producers of organic crops followed by Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat for the aforementioned MY. India produced 2.9 MT of certified edible organic products for MY 2022-23.

The details of organic production have been shown in Table 2.

Sl.No.	Products	Metric Tonnes
1	Теа	42,845
2	Sugar	336,883
3	Pulses	73,765
4	Processed Food	6,269
5	Fiber	1440,603
6	Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	85,548
7	Dry Fruits	14,459
8	Coffee	20,071
9	Cereals and Millets	242,417

Table 2 Organic Production in India by Commodity for MY 2021/22 (Metric Tonnes)

Source: APEDA, reproduced in India's Organic Agriculture Sector Finds Markets at Home and Abroad (2023).

The details of organic production in India are presented in Table 2. It is evident that, the Cereals and Millets production was the highest at 242,417 million tonnes, followed by fiber products which was about 1440,603 metric tonnes, Sugar production at 336,883 metric tonnes in the third position, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables produced was 85,548 metric tonnes, Pulses at 73,765 metric tonnes, tea 42,845 metric tonnes, Coffee at 20,071 metric tonnes and Processed Food about 6,269 metric tonnes in the country. It is found from the data that Cereals and Millets production was the highest in organic farming in the country.

2. Organic Production in India by State for MY 2021/22 (Metric Tonnes)

The state-wise Organic Production is concerned the state of Madhya Pradesh has occupied top most



position which produced at 1410,894 Metric tonnes, followed by Maharashtra at 6,91,420 placed in the second position, Rajasthan at 346961 metric tonnes occupied the third position, Gujarat placed at fourth producing 258,674 MT, Odisha in the sixth position with 183604 metric tonnes, Karnataka produced about 150,653 MT and is in the seventh position, Uttar Pradesh in the eighth position with 131813 metric tonnes, and Other states produced together about 236,176 MT in the country.¹¹

3. Major States of India with largest Organic Area

The details of largest area covered under organic farming has been presented in Table 3.

Sl.No.	States	Organic	Wild Harvest	Total Organic
		Cultivated Area	Collection Area	Area
1	Chattisgarh	0.17	32.36	32.5
2	Madhya Pradesh	15.17	8.05	23.2
3	Maharashtra	12.84	0.00	12.8
4	Rajasthan	5.81	3.57	9.4
5	Gujarat	9.36	0.00	9.4
6	Himachal Pradesh	0.11	2.02	2.1
7	Odisha	1.95	0.04	2.0
8	Uttarhand	0.98	0.06	1.0
9	Uttar Pradesh	0.68	0.30	0.98
10	Karnataka	0.82	0.03	0.8
	All other states	6.02	1.38	7.4
	India	53.92	47.80	101.72

Table 3 Top Ten States of India with Largest Organic Area, National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP), 2022-23 (Lakh Ha)

Source: APEDA, Statistics for the year 2022-23.Note: Total Organic Area = Cultivated Organic Area + Cultivated.

The data presented in Table gives the details of area covered under organic farming in India in the year 2022-23. It was found that, Madhya Pradesh covered the highest cultivated area under organic farming in the country being 15.17 lakh Ha, followed by Maharasthra 12.84 lakh ha, Gujarat 9.36 lakh ha, Rajasthan at 5.81 lakh ha and Odisha being about 1.95 lakh ha. With respect to Wild Harvest Collection Area Chattisgarh placed in the top position at 32.36 lakh ha followed by Madhya Pradesh at 8.05 lakh ha, followed by Rajasthan with 3.57 lakh ha, Himachal Pradesh at 2.02 lakh ha and Uttarhand at 0.06 lakh ha. The total organic are is concerned Chattisgarh has registered the highest among the states at 32.5 lakh ha followed by Madhya Pradesh at 23.3 lakh ha, Maharashtra 12.8 lakh tones, Rajasthan and Gujarat 9.4 lakh tones. Thus, it is found that the Chattisgarh state has highest in both Wild Harvest Collection Area and total organic area in the country.

¹¹ Shilpita Das (2023). India's Organic Agriculture Sector Finds Markets At Home and Abroad Global Agricultural Information Networks. United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, p. 5.



4. Top Ten States of India with largest Organic Production (2022-23)

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The details of top ten states of India with largest Organic Production in India during the period 2022-23 are given in Table 4.

Table 4 Top Ten States of India with Largest Organic Production (2022-23) (Thousand Metric
Tonnes)

Tomics)				
Sl.No.	States	Organic Farm	Wild Area	Total Organic
		Production	Production	Production
1	Madhya Pradesh	825.63	2.34	827.96
2	Maharashtra	790.33	0.02	790.35
3	Rajasthan	322.97	2.77	325.74
4	Karnataka	237.09	0.42	237.51
5	Uttar Pradesh	217.52	0.15	217.67
6	Gujarat	139.73	-	139.73
7	Odisha	130.08	0.32	130.39
8	Jammu& Kashmir	50.23	1.57	51.81
9	Uttarhand	43.95	0.11	44.06
10	Kerala	42.73	-	42.73
	All other states	15266	11.77	164.44
	India	2952.93	19.47	2,972.39

Source : APEDA, Statistics for the year 2022-23.

The data proved that, Madhya Pradesh is found at the top in organic production at 827.96 thousand Metric Tonnes followed by Maharashtra (second position) with 790.35 thousand Metric Tonnes, Rajasthan occupied the third position and the Karnataka is found in the fourth position and Uttar Pradesh is placed in the fifth position. These states are found producing larger organic products in the country during the period 2022-23, where the state of Madhya Pradesh is on the top.

5. State-wise Organic Farm Production during 2023-24

The details of state-wise organic farm production during 2023-24 are presented in the Table 5.

Table 5 State-wise Organic Farm Froduction - 2025-24 (in Minion Fonnes)				
States	Organic	Conversion	Total	
States	Production	Production	Production	
Maharashtra	10,44,382.88	1,16,847.77	11,61,230.65	
Madhya Pradesh	8,49,782.72	50,303.77	9,00,086.49	
Rajasthan	3,31,358.02	69,568.96	4,00,926.98	
Karnataka	1,97,328.09	0.00	1,97,328.09	
Gujarat	1,76,551.25	63,639.41	2,40,190.66	
Uttar Pradesh	1,59,149.53	0.32	1,59,149.85	
Odisha	1,37,635.67	21,885.72	1,59,521.40	
Uttarakhand	44,745.43	0.00	44,745.43	
Kerala	41,128.53	0.00	41,128.53	

 Table 5 State-wise Organic Farm Production - 2023-24 (In Million Tonnes)



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Bihar	39,937.73	0.00	39,937.73
Jammu & Kashmir	33,188.37	0.00	33,188.37
Andhra Pradesh	33,039.30	0.00	33,039.30
Tamil Nadu	29,994.00	0.60	29,994.60
Chhattisgarh	28,896.29	0.00	28,896.29
West Bengal	15,910.74	0.00	15,910.74
Meghalaya	13,671.39	0.00	13,671.39
Assam	12,522.43	0.00	12,522.43
Himachal Pradesh	11,767.84	0.00	11,767.84
Telangana	7,125.68	0.00	7,125.68
Punjab	6,801.79	0.00	6,801.79
Nagaland	3,888.31	0.00	3,888.31
Jharkhand	3,619.53	0.00	3,619.53
Haryana	3,015.53	0.00	3,015.53
Goa	2,496.72	1.68	2,498.40
Tripura	245.44	0.00	245.44
Arunachal Pradesh	25.15	0.00	25.15
Sikkim	24.68	0.00	24.68
Total	32,28,233.03	3,22,248.24	35,50,481.27

Note: The data on production is the commercial output for sale and not the actual production. **Source:** Information provided by the Certification Bodies Accredited under NPOP on Trace net https://apeda.gov.in/apedawebsite/organic/data.htm.

It is found that, the top in the list is the state of Maharashtra with about 11,61,230.65 MT of organic products followed by Madhya Pradesh with 9,00,086.49 MT, Rajasthan 4,00,926.98 MT, in Gujarat, the total production of organic products was 2,40,190.66 MT (fourth position) and Karnataka is placed in the fifth position with about 1,97,328.09 MT and the lowest is in Sikkim at 24.68 MT, in Arunachal Pradesh it was about 25.15 MT, Tripura produced 245.44 MT the states Goa at 2,498.40 MT and Haryana 3,015.53 MT, whose performance is yet to be improved as regards organic farming in the country.

6. Importance of Organic Farming

In the present days organic farming is more crucial because of various challenges confronting the conventional agricultural practices such as soil erosion, loss of water, and biodiversity and the reduction in soil fertility exacerbated by unsustainable agricultural practices. The practices of these sorts of agriculture do not fulfill the demand for food of the demographic pressure. Although modern agriculture in the beginning increased food grain production, by heavily using chemical inputs like fertilizers and pesticides, which results in various environmental and human health adverse effects such as degraded soil quality and loss of productivity over time, as well adversely affects biodiversity. Moreover, use of more pesticides in crops like paddy is not welcome. Organic farming helps sustainable agricultural development by the way of conserving the ecological balance and biodiversity, and plummeting chemical inputs. Practices such as using organic manure (like farmyard compost and vermicompost), integrated nutrient management, and adopting diverse cropping systems help maintain soil fertility and



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improve productivity. By integrating pest management techniques and conserving genetic diversity, organic farming promotes resilient ecosystems and reduces reliance on external inputs. A key benefit of organic farming is its ability to produce nutritious food without compromising environmental health. It ensures that agricultural practices are in harmony with nature, fostering healthier soil, cleaner water and richer biodiversity. Moreover, organic farming supports local economies by reducing input costs associated with synthetic chemicals and by fostering community based farming practices. Looking ahead, the shift towards organic farming is not just a choice but a necessity for sustainable agriculture. It offers a pathway to secure our future food production by safeguarding natural resources and enhancing agricultural resilience. Embracing organic practices is crucial for ensuring food security, protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development in agriculture.¹²

7. Results and Discussion

The thrust of the sustainable goals is reduction of poverty, improved nutrient, minimizing hunger, good health, and well being of the people, consumption and production, conservation of the environment, water, land, and partnerships for sustainable development. India has given more thrust since independence for attaining of sustainable goals in the form of reduction of poverty, hunger, environmental conservation, ecological balance, biodiversity, water conservation, and as well the well being of the people by introducing several policies and programmes. Since the adoption of SDGs in September 2015, by improving various developmental activities like development of infrastructure, employment generation, economic growth, availability of food, water, and energy availability, disaster management, and poverty alleviation. Even with implementation of various policies and programmes, the global hunger index has shown that still today millions of people are suffering from hunger in India. Organic farming fulfills the challenges of sustainable agriculture by the way of increasing the production and productivity of agriculture, provides nutrition, quality and sufficient food, improves income of the farmers, generates employment opportunities, conserves the biodiversity, soil conservation, enhance soil fertility, conserves the water, and balancing the ecology and improves the health and general well being of the people.

Based on the study it is evident that, the production of organic farming is gaining more importance in the current Indian scenario, due to the adverse effect of non-organic farming on environment and sustainable agriculture. Further, the reviewed past studies also revealed that organic farming plays a paramount role in achieving sustainable agriculture, it helps the farmers to undertake organic practices as it requires low investment, makes less dependent of the farmers on money lenders, provides traditional knowledge; further, organic farming also gained more importance due to environmental and socio-economic impacts which are more vital for sustainable agricultural development. From the environmental point of view, the organic farming plays a positive role in resulting environmental benefits in the form of enhanced soil health, improved biodiversity, decreased pollution, minimized carbon, and these contribute more to conservation of ecosystem and overcome the impacts of climate change and lead to sustainable development at large.

The socio-economic point of the contribution of organic farming is that it improves the health of human being by supply of quality and nutrient food, with reduced harmful chemicals for both the consumers and farmers and also provides proper channel for market access and potentially higher product prices.

¹² Avinash and Vikas Batra (2023). Organic Farming in India: Evolution, Current Status and Policy Perspectives. *Space and Culture, India*, pp. 26-27.



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The organic production in India has increased trends, and the farmers in several states have converted their land on to organic farming. Despite the contribution of organic farming farmers still face constraints of lack of awareness, and there is lack of financial support by the financial institutions and concerned authorities, multiple certification systems and shortage of Biomass in practicing organic farming. Despite these, organic farming helps sustainable development of agriculture and fulfills the human wants. In the present globalised era, organic farming plays a paramount role in agricultural growth, balancing the ecology, health, conserves the biodiversity, improves the soil fertility and climatic situations, and improves the use of technical skills by the farmers in the country.

8. Conclusion

India is an agrarian economy with majority of the population depending on this sector for their livelihoods. Due to the growing population, demand for food and other articles increases. Agriculture fulfills the demand for the growing population. The adoption of Organic Farming is gaining more importance in both economic and environment-friendly point of view. It helps the sustainable agriculture by the way of enhancing the well being of people by improved health and well being by supply of safe and nutritious organic food under a protected environment. Further, organic farming helps the protection of biodiversity, and reduces the risk of crop failures. Hence based on the study it is evident that, organic farming helps sustainable agricultural development by improving the agricultural production. Hence there is an urgent need for creating proper awareness about the organic farming for the sustainable agricultural development. The governments at levels and the concerned agencies should come forward to create more awareness and provide financial support for the production of agricultural produces for the more and sustained agricultural development in the future India. Let us all hope for the best.

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