

Organic Certification And Marketing – An Inquiry On PGS India

C.M.Ezhilvani, Dr.A.Jayakumar

Abstract: Organic agriculture is a hasty emerging sector as the awareness towards health and environmental concerns are increasing among the world. Certification of the produce is really important in this sector, as the producers get easy access to fast-growing local, regional and international markets; and only then the organic products can be sold at premium price. There is short of detailed study on providing awareness on organic certification and required basic technical knowledge on digitalized organic products marketing to the organic products producer/farmers of our country. This study states about PKVY – Organic Certification Scheme by Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare for encouraging certified organic production in our country. This paper also includes “Jaivik-kheti”, an E-Commerce portal as well as a platform of knowledge; provided by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

Keywords: Organic certification, Organic farmers, PGS – Participatory Guarantee System for India, PKVY – Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, PGS – Jaivik-kheti, Online Market.

1 INTRODUCTION

Before the new regulation kicked in, only farmers and food processors exporting their products needed mandatory certification and domestic players could operate without a certification. “The certification mark for genuine farmers, processors and manufactures, as currently, anyone can claim they are organic”, says Pawan Kumar Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI; (Meenakshi Sushma). The first step taken by the Government was execution of the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) in the year 2001. Next big step was the establishment of National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF) which became responsible for implementation of the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), a kind of free certification programme for organic farming, particularly suitable for domestic market. For online operation of PGS certification system, a web portal has also been started and can be accessed at www.pgsindia-ncof.gov.in.

Table 1

Number of Farmer Groups, Farmers and Area cultivated under PGS India (2019)

S.No	Particulars	Tamil Nadu	India
1	Total Groups	308	11635
2	Total Group Members	5535	352928
3	Total Area (ha)	4164.4	266412.43

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare – Government of India – PGS)

Based on the report provided by PGS India the above table includes the data of total number of Farmer groups, number of Group member (i.e) farmers which includes both organic approved and not approved Farmers along with the Organic farming area under PGS all over India and Tamil Nadu. Of all certifications in India, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), where farmers keep a check on each other works best, if the nearby famers do not do organic farming or do not follow the organic standards properly my certification will run the risk to be revoked, so will make sure the farms around mine are following organic standards” so look out for PGS India certification says, Mahesh G. / BCCL Andhra Pradesh (Kalyani Prasher).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

(Ashish Gupta) Farming as a profession is uniquely distinct from others. Access to services of various professions is

required with a lesser frequencies e.g. the services of a doctor or a lawyer, whereas the services of the farmers are required for every meal we have, every day of our lives. (G Seetharaman 2017) PGS is more attuned to the India farming conditions and it can get a lot of farmers into the system. (IFOAM – Organic International PGS Team 2017) The unified regulation: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) released the “Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations 2017”. In direct conflict with the fact that PGS and third party are the two recognized systems for verification of compliance for organic food products One option to address this problem is to completely remove the requirement in a future revised version of the NPOP. (Joe K. W. Hill 2016) presents a case study of Vikas Kendra, a project of Society for Equitable Voluntary Actions (SEVA), West Bengal. Vikas Kendra supports 57 PGS groups, each of six farmers. Suggest that scaling up the total area under organic production remains a challenge as does creating linkages between rural farmers and urban markets.

3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM SECTIONS

Certification is really important especially when it comes to organic products production in our country; where the complete knowledge on organic certification and its marketing among organic farmers is still low. There are only 309 organic farmer groups and 5535 farmers cultivating 4164.4 hectares in Tamil Nadu, which shows that the farmers in our state has to be provided with the awareness and the technical knowledge about organic farming certification and digitalized marketing of organic produce.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study an attempt has been made based on secondary sources from Government website/portal, Journals, Magazines and Media reports, etc. Data Source: PGS – This Website belongs to Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India Designed and Developed by Agriculture Informatics Division, National Informatics Centre, Ministry of Communication and IT, Govt. of India.

5 ORGANIC FARMING CERTIFICATION IN INDIA

Organic farming acreage has increased to 27.7 lakh hectares during August 2019 from 23.02 lakh hectares which shows a

rise of 20%; and Madhya Pradesh tops the list among the states with 7.55 lakh hectares under organic farming. "To promote organic farming Goa has sets up 500 clusters with the objective to create a 'brand Goa' in organic agriculture" says Goa Agriculture Minister Vijai Sardesai.

5.1 PGS India

PGS India was set up in 2006 and formally registered on April 2011 as PGSOC – PGS Organic Council (www.wikipedia.org). PGS – Participatory Guarantee System, as defined by IFOAM, are "locally focused quality assurance systems. PGS facilitates the direct participation of producers, consumers and other stakeholders (www.wikipedia.org). According to the regulations, all organic food sold in the country needs to be certified either under National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) or Participatory Guarantee System in India (PGS-India), (The Hindu Business Line). FSSAI said, "Provision of direct sales of organic food to the end consumer by the small original produce of not more than INR12 lakh is permitted". They may be allowed to sell organic food without any certification i.e. NPOP/PGS – India till April 01, 2020 (Meenakshi Verma Ambwani).

PGS India – Log (PGS – Director of NCOF Division)



PGS – India Green is the certification issued for organic products obtained from the agriculture field which are under process of organic conversion.



PGS – India Organic is the certification issued for organic products obtained from the agriculture field which are completely converted into organic farming.

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare – Government of India – PGS)

5.2 Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

The produce is also recognized by the guidelines of the Centre's ambitious Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) scheme, was launched in 2015 to endorse organic farming (Meenakshi Sushma). The demand for organic agri products is on a constant increase worldwide (The Hindu Business Line). The government of India is promoting Organic Farming in the country. Honorable Prime Minister, Mr.Narendra Modi introduced Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, under which 2 lakh hectares has been made suitable for organic farming thereby benefitting 5 lakh farmers. This step will further boost organic farming in India in 2019 (Rishabh Chokhani).

Table 2
Certification under PKVY Scheme in 2019

S.No	Particulars	Farmer Groups	Farmers	Certificates
1	Approved	11695	406685	408657
2	Not Approved	-	18158	117348
3	Total	11695	424843	526005

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare – Government of India – PGS)

Based on the report provided by the PGS India the above table includes various data across India like Farmer groups, Farmers and Farming certificates under PKVY scheme in 258031.834 Ha of Area offered under organic farming with 326 Active regional councils.

5.3 Jaivik Kheti

Jaivik-kheti - Rasayan Mukh Bharat portal (i.e) a digital marketing portal for organic agri products is a unique initiative of ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Department of Agriculture (DAC) along with MSTC to promote organic farming globally. It is a one step solution for facilitating organic farmers to sell their organic produce and to help in promoting organic farming and its benefits.

Table 3
State-Wise Registered Farmers Based on Number of Farmers

S.No	State	Farmers	Place
1	Madhya Pradesh	40401	1
2	Maharashtra	37606	2
3	Rajasthan	21326	3
4	Tamil Nadu	3337	13
	Total	182156	

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers welfare – Government of India – PGS)

Based on the statistical report (Nov. 2019) provided in Jaivikkheti, Madhya Pradesh takes the 1st place with the total of 40401 registers farmers followed by Maharashtra in 2nd and Rajasthan in the 3rd place; where Tamil Nadu takes the 13th place with the total of 3337 registered farmers under Jaivikkheti.

Jaivik Kheti Portal – a dedicated portal for organic farming activities as both a knowledge platform as well as marketing platform will be developed. Details of farmers involved in Organic farming, input supplier, certification agency (PGS), and marketing agencies will be available for smooth implementation from production to marketing. PKVY/PGS groups can take the advantage of this portal for capacity building, technical know-how, communicating with marketing channels/ other groups and direct marketing of their produce to prospective buyers and consumers (PGS India – PKVY – Jaivik Kheti).

Table 4
Users of Jaivikkheti (2019)

S.No	Particulars	No. of Users
1	Registered Farmers	202509
2	Local Groups	6867
3	Input Suppliers	73
4	Buyers	773
5	Products	3452

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare – Government of India – PGS)

The number of users of Jaivikkheti may slightly differ according to the current or day to day usage of this digital marketing website throughout the country, and this report is based on data provided in the beginning of November 2019.

6 ORGANIC FOOD CERTIFICATION AND MARKETING

"Only India can meet the global organic food demand" stated by

our Minister Parshottam Khodabhai Rupala (The Hindu Business Line 2019). The certified organic food production is still low. The PGS brings together peer group of farmers and the costs are low. It is being popularized, Rita Teotia, chairperson of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said on the sidelines of a function of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization's (WHO) Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA) in Panaji Monday (The Indian Express). To bring relief to small organic food producers, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has decided to relax certification norms for small original producers or producer organizations with an annual turnover of up to INR 12 lakh till April 1, 2020 (Meenakshi Verma Ambwani). In Tamil Nadu – Salem District, Vashista Uzlavargal Organization and Thiruvalluvar Uzlavar Organization, has put their hands together to help 2000 organic food farmers to market their produce directly to the consumers, not only through direct market place but also through online market site by splitting them in to 200 for marketing their produce on the basis of cycling system. These organizations helps the organic farmers to market their produce after certifying them by registering those farmers under their organization (V.Srinivasan). It has to be mentioned that this is really a huge step for such a developing district of Tamil Nadu.

7 CONCLUSION

“One of the challenges is that here are a large number of producers and producer organization in the country who are not certified under any of the two systems of certification. Efforts are currently underway for simplification of PGS-India to make it small producer friendly” (Business Standard). The information about the simplified certification systems has to be spread among the small and medium organic producers for their better return as certified organic produce can only be sold at premium organic products price. These organic farmers and producing organizations are to be provided with complete awareness about liberalized certification and easy marketing through Jaivik Kheti. It has to be mentioned about putting a flash light on the step taken by Vashista Uzlavargal Organization and Thiruvalluvar Uzlavar Organization to help the small organic farmers to certify and market their produce through direct and digital market place.

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AUTHOR PROFILE

Prof. Dr.A.JAYAKUMAR, Former Professor of Commerce and Controller of Examination of Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu, India, is an eminent educationist in the field of Commerce & Management studies qualified with M.Com, M.Phil, MBA, Ph.D. He is in the field of Higher Education for more than 36 years and specializes in the domain of Finance & Organizational Behaviour. He has authored 7 Books and published more than 100 research articles in reputed journals with high impact factor. He is a well known speaker-chaired/delivered more than 150 lectures in Conferences & Seminars. The author is known for his reputation in research areas in contemporary areas of Commerce & Management. He has guided 100+ M.Phil & 24 Ph.D Scholars. Professor has completed a research project funded by UGC titled VAT 2007. He is member of Board of Studies in many Universities. To gain global exposure, he has visited/chaired/presented papers in Sri Lanka, UK (London) and Bangladesh (Dhaka). He won 4 National & International Awards. He was awarded Honorary D.Litt Degree by International Economic University for SAARC Countries. He is Life Member of Indian Accounting Association and Indian Commerce Association and Tamil Nadu Investors' Association and a member of All India Management Association. Global Association of Commerce and Management have nominated him as the Life Member and First President of Professional Body.



C.M.EZHILVANI, Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu, India, has qualified with M.Com, Advanced Diploma in Information and Technology (ADIT). She has published 11 papers in UGC listed, Peer reviewed and Scopus Indexed journals. She has participated and presented more than 20 papers in International and National Conferences and Seminars. So far she has completed 8 International/ National/ State level workshops.