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Organic farming in context of sustainable agriculture development and food security: An empirical experience of Indian Punjab

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Abstract

The intensive farming practiced for the last over four decades in India, especially in agriculturally most advanced state of Punjab has led to contamination and pollution of soil , water, air, atmosphere, plants and crops. Organic farming is considered as one of the several approaches found to meet the objectives of sustainable agriculture. There are three categories of opinions about the relevance of organic farming for India. The first one simply dismisses it as a fad or fashion. The second category, which includes many farmers and scientists, opines that there are merits in the organic farming but should proceed vigilantly considering the national needs and circumstances in which Indian agriculture functions. The third one is all for organic farming and advocates its adoption unconditionally. They think that tomorrow's ecology is more important than today's conventional farm benefits. The present study has been based on the empirical experiences of 85 organic and 75 inorganic cereal growers in Indian Punjab during 2008-09. Though organic farming has been viewed more eco friendly yet the yield losses has been recorded as 15 % and 34 % in case of organic paddy and wheat as compared to inorganic ones. The comparative cost benefit analysis of both organic as well as inorganic paddy and wheat crops has brought out that the organic farming of both these crops have been more profitable even at lower yield levels , basically owing to the premium price of organic produces fetched by the organic producers. Hence, though organic farming of these cereal crops has been found more remunerative for the producers, yet the significant reduction in its yield have serious repercussions in term of national food security issues.

Key words: Organic farming, conservation agriculture, sustainable agriculture

Biography

Davinder Kumar Grover completed his Ph..D in 1988, presently working as Director of Agro–Economic Research Centre at the internationally renowned Punjab Agricultural University in India - with major mandate of advising Indian/Punjab Government on various agro-socio economic issues. He gained work experience of about 25 years in the field of Agricultural/ Socio Economics; both at National/ international levels. He has published one research book and contributed more than 125 research papers, published in the referred journals of national/ international repute. He has been Visiting Fellow/Scientist at AVRDC- World Vegetable Centre, Taiwan, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines and International Food policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington, DC, USA and as World Bank Consultant of Agricultural Economics under Agricultural Research and Training Project at Alemaya University of Agriculture, Ethiopia. He has also been a member of several expert panels/committees/ editorial boards and interdisciplinary teams both at National/international level along with session chairman/discussant in many international conferences.