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Study on constraints faced by farmers regarding organic farming practices in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract
Organic farming is an agricultural method that eschews synthetic chemicals, focusing instead on natural processes to maintain soil fertility and manage pests. While organic farming promotes environmental sustainability and biodiversity, it faces several challenges. The researcher aims to investigate the problems, issues, and challenges that farmers encounter when adopting or practicing organic farming. The research titled, "Study of Organic Farming Practices and their Challenges in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh" was conducted in four villages randomly chosen from the selected blocks of Sarila, Sumerpur, and Muskara. A total of 25 farmers from each village were selected with assistance from PGS India and the Agriculture Department, resulting in a total sample of 300 farmers. The study reveals that higher costs, potentially lower yields, and more complex pest management were the major constraints experienced in the research study area. Certification and market access can also be barriers, requiring farmers to invest in specialized knowledge and skills to effectively implement organic practices.

Keywords: Agriculture, biodiversity, soil fertility, sustainability

1. Introduction
Organic farming is growing rapidly in India and offers a promising way to boost crop productivity and meet future food needs. This method uses various techniques such as vermicomposting, crop rotation, green manure, animal husbandry, bio-fertilizers, and biological pest control. Organic farming relies on eco-friendly fertilizers that improve soil health and support beneficial organisms. Its main goals are to keep the soil fertile and diverse, manage water resources responsibly, balance crop and animal farming, and reduce pollution. This method not only aims to produce healthy food but also strives to improve the overall quality of the environment. As interest in sustainable practices grows, organic farming has become an increasingly popular choice for those looking to support ecological balance and responsible agriculture.

2. Objectives of the Study
1. To study the constraints faced by farmers regarding organic farming practices.
2. To suggest suitable measures to overcome the constraints faced by the farmers.

3. Research Methodology
The study conducted during the year 2022 to 2024 in Hamirpur district of Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh. It explored the challenges of farmers faced and looked at strategies to overcome them, providing a broad understanding of the issues. The research covered 12 villages, 4 villages from each of the Sarila, Sumerpur, and Muskara blocks. In total, 300 farmers participated, with 25 farmers from each village. Statistical tools used in the analysis included percentage, weighted means, standard deviation, and rank order.

4. Results and Discussion

Constraints faced by farmers regarding organic farming practices n = 300

S. No.	Administrative Constraints	Mean Value	Rank
1.	Costly and complex organic certification processes	2.75	I
2.	Less incentives from government	2.50	II
3.	Lack of infrastructure facilities (like labs) and certification bodies	2.25	V
4.	Lack of government support	2.33	IV
5.	Lack of financing schemes	2.41	III
6.	Organic standards are too restrictive to be practical	2.33	IV
	Physical Constraints		
1.	Inputs for organic farming like bio-manures/fertilizers and bio-pesticides are not easily available	2.58	II
2.	Shortage of capital	2.25	III
3.	Unexpected climate change	1.97	IV
4.	Inadequate storage facilities	2.25	III
5.	Organic yields are too low	2.83	I
	Technical Constraints		
1.	Lack of business buyers	2.75	I
2.	Lack of training programmes on organic farming	2.42	II
3.	Non-availability of assistance from NGOs	2.08	VI
4.	Unavailability of irrigation facility	2.41	III
5.	No Govt. agency for guidance of organic farming	2.25	V
6.	Research supports is insufficient	2.33	IV
7.	Trained labour is not available for organic farming	1.92	VII

The data presented in table 5.1 reveals that the major administrative constraint greatly faced by the farmers, with rank I, was 'costly and complex organic certification processes. The mean score value was computed as 2.75. From the above data, majority of farmers faced incentives issues as another major constraint. Therefore, the constraint "less incentives from government' was ranked as II with mean score value 2.50. Third major constraint faced by the farmers was 'lack of financing schemes' with mean score value 2.41 and ranked as III. The above constraints conforms to the findings of Haneef, R., *et al*. (2019) [1], who also reported that the costly process of certification, and lack of incentives and financing schemes hinder the rise of practicing organic farming.

Another administrative constraint expressed by farmers in research study area were 'Organic standards are too restrictive to be practical', 'Lack of government support' and 'Lack of infrastructure facilities (like labs) and certification bodies', ranked as IV and V with mean score value 2.33, 2.33 and 2.20, respectively. These finding is in concurrence with the findings of Singh, P., & Kaur, J. (2024) [3].

Table also reveals the data regarding physical constraint faced by farmers regarding organic farming practices. Majority of farmers believed that organic farming results in lower yields compared to conventional farming methods. Hence, the constraint 'organic yields are too low' considered as rank I with mean score value 2.83. Haneef, R., *et al*. (2019) [1] and Mazurek-Kusiak A., *et al*. (2021) [2] also concluded that farmers not only perceive organic farming as resulting in lower yields but also view this as a major issue or obstacle in adopting organic farming practices. After this, the most prominent constraint was limited availability of essential inputs like natural fertilizers and pest control methods, making it harder for farmers to adopt and maintain organic farming practices. So, the constraint 'Inputs for organic farming like bio-manures/fertilizers and bio-pesticides are not easily available' ranked as II with mean score value 2.58. Sivaraj, P. *et al*. (2017) [4] also revealed that majority of the certified organic farmers faced constraints were inadequate availability of organic inputs in time (68.89 %).

Farmers are also constrained by limited access to capital and insufficient storage facilities for their yields, which further complicates their ability to adopt organic farming practices. Hence, the constraint ranked in III position are 'Shortage of capital' and 'Inadequate storage facilities' with mean score 2.25 and 2.25, respectively. The last physical constraint which was also highlighted by the farmers is 'Unexpected climate change' ranked as IV with mean score value 1.97.

Table 5.1 also describes the technical constraints faced by farmers regarding organic farming practices in which the constraint placed at rank I was 'Lack of business buyers' with mean score value 2.75. Singh, P., & Kaur, J. (2024) [3] also concluded that the limited demand and lack of well-developed market for organic products, making it harder for them to sell their produce at a fair price and sustain their livelihoods. The constraint that placed in rank II with mean score value 2.42 is 'Lack of training programmes on organic farming'. The third major constraint, as expressed by the farmers, was 'Unavailability of irrigation facility'. The mean score value was computed as 2.41. It shows that the farmers require adequate irrigation facilities supported by the government to help them overcome the challenges and be motivated to switch to organic farming practices.

Other major constraints, in rank order, include, 'Research supports is insufficient', 'No Govt. agency for guidance of organic farming', and 'Non-availability of assistance from NGOs' with the mean score of 2.33, 2.25 and 2.08 ranked at IV, V and VI, respectively.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the study highlighted that the most pressing challenge for farmers was the costly and complex process of organic certification, which has a considerable impact. The lack of financing schemes also moderately affects farmers, while minor administrative constraints include insufficient infrastructure and certification bodies. Unexpected climate change and a shortage of capital were less impactful, but low organic yields pose a significant physical constraint. Technically, the most severe issue was the lack of business buyers, with the unavailability of irrigation facilities and the absence of government guidance being less critical. Overall, these constraints collectively shape the challenges faced by the farmers in the organic sector. The above findings suggested that focus on simplifying certification processes and reducing costs,

expanding financing options, and investing in infrastructure and research. Providing comprehensive training, improving market access, and supporting climate adaptation and irrigation solutions will also contribute to more effective and sustainable practices.

6. Suggestions

1. Simplify and reduce the costs of the organic certification process.
2. Offer low-interest loans, grants, and other financing options for organic farmers.
3. Fund for research in organic farming techniques and improve infrastructure such as labs and certification bodies.
4. Develop new market channels and strengthen connections between farmers and buyers.
5. Offer education and technical assistance on organic practices, pest management, and climate adaptation.
6. Invest in efficient irrigation systems and water management practices.

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