Smallholder Organic Farmers' Attitudes, Objectives and Barriers Towards Production of Organic Fruits and Vegetables in India: A Multivariate Analysis

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Abstract

The Indian organic food sector has experienced important growth during recent years. Despite growth potential, the area under organic farming is meager. Indian smallholders (<2 ha) are facing challenges to enter and stay in the organic food sector and benefit from this growth in a sustainable way. In this context, the aim of this paper was to analyse smallholder farmer's attitudes, objectives and barriers towards production of organic fruits and vegetables (F&V) in Karnataka State, South India, as well as to identify farmers' profiles based on attitudes and objectives. The source of information used was based on a field survey carried out during early 2014. Purposive random sampling technique was used to draw the sample (n=127) and the mode of data collection was face-to-face interviews; collected data were analysed by using descriptive, factor and two-step cluster analysis (SPSS 16.0). The results of factor analysis based on attitudes revealed that five factors including "Market", "Environmental", "Support", Benefit & Cost" and "Community" explained 70.9 % of the variance. Further, factor analysis based on objectives acknowledged presence of three latent factors including "Economic", "Environmental" and "Socio-cultural" explaining 77.1 % of the total variance. Similarly, four latent factors were identified based on factor analysis of sixteen barrier variables, representing "Production", "Marketing", Techno-managerial" and "Economic & Financial" barriers, which explained 68.5 % of the variance. Further, three clusters emerged on these attitudes and objective factor scores representing, 45.0 %, 23.6 % and 31.5 % of the sample size. All three clusters have different levels of orientation to produce organically on the basis of each factor. The "Market" and "Economic" factors are most important in two clusters followed by "Support" and "Environmental" factors; a third cluster was fairly indifferent towards the organic F&V production. Farmer's age, gender, education, family size, years of experience in organic farming, farm size and cattle population enable the three clusters to be differentiated. Results of this research have implications for policy makers and marketing professionals towards organic agriculture development by calibrating appropriate strategies to promote organic farming and enabling supporting environment in Karnataka State.

Keywords: Attitudes, barriers, India, multivariate analysis, organic farming

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