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Factors Influencing Towards Adoption of Organic Fruits and Vegetable Farming Practices: A Comparative Analysis in Karnataka, India

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Abstract

The organic food sector in India has experienced important growth during recent years. Despite the growth potential, the area under organic farming is very negligible. Indian smallholder farmers are facing challenges to enter and stay in the organic food sector, as well as to derive benefits from this growth in a sustainable way. In this context, the aim of this study was to investigate factors influencing the adoption of organic fruits and vegetable farming practices by smallholder producers in Karnataka. The source of information used was generated through face-to-face interviews with 200 smallholder farmers, among which 100 were organic farmers and 100 conventional farmers. Collected data was analysed by using descriptive statistics and factor analysis methods. Results revealed that younger farmers, affiliated with institutions, counting on higher education, better training, and extension contacts, and having smaller farms are more likely to adopt organic farming. Also, results from the factor analysis showed that issues of cost and benefits, health consciousness, marketing and environmental aspects are the primary factors influencing farmers' decisions on adoption of organic farming. All the four factors together explained 69.5 percent of the total variance in the case of organic farmers. Whereas, in case of conventional farmers all factors together explained only 46.7 percent of the total variance. This research results may help to improve policy interventions targeting smallholder farmers and stakeholders oriented towards organic agriculture development by designing appropriate strategies to promote organic farming in Karnataka state, India.

Keywords: Factor analysis, Karnataka, organic farmers, organic fruits and vegetable