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Opinion about organic mango farmers in Muthalamada Panchayath

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Abstract: Muthalamada panchayath is now called as the mango city of Kerala is in the victim hands of pesticides and chemicals. Very few land holders only practicing organic farming. These farmers primary occupation is other business. Now days only they realize that mango farming is a huge income generating business. There is no market for organic products due to insufficient quantity. Lease holders who are not interested in practicing organically. Organic mango has demand outside and everywhere but there is no good platform for this business in Muthalamada. This paper reviews the importance of and opinion of organic mango farmer in Muthalamada Panchayath.

Keywords: organic mango farming, organic manures, bio pesticides.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mango (*Mangifera indica*) is one of the popular commercial fruit crop. Mango trees are inevitable components of homesteads of Kerala state. The area under cultivation of mango during 2013-14 is 77,158 Ha. It occupied 24 percent of the category of fresh fruits and has 2nd top position in this category. Palakkad, Kozhikode and Malappuram districts stands 1st, 2nd and 3rd positions with 12 percent, 11 percent and 10 percent areas and production of 9399 tones, 8275 tones and 8010 tons respectively. On analyzing the area of last 10 years, mango production is maximum during the agricultural year 2004- 05 and the area is 90,631 Ha. (T Radha, S R Nair – Status of mango cultivation in Kerala 2010) (Department of economics and statistics, Govt. of Kerala)

Palakkad district alone accounts for 40 percent of mango area in the state. Among the seven block panchayaths. Muthalamada panchayath known as “mango city” is the one, where mango farming taken as a commercial activity (more than 5000 hectare)

Mango harvest seasons in India

The main feature of Muthalamada mango is its early harvest. In major mango producing states harvesting starts at April. The first mango fruits of the season come to the Indian markets is from Kerala. The flowering commences by September, October. Harvesting starts at December, January, and the middle of February (Peak season starts), March-April and May (Lean season) which helps to fetch the maximum price for the fruits to the growers due to the high demand for the fruits. The main markets of the fruit are in the other parts of the country like Delhi, Mumbai, Indore, Bangalore and Chennai.

‘Jaivam’ or organic is the catchword now gaining popularity in Kerala. The tide seems to be turning in favour of bio-manure, bio-pest control and bio-disease control in all forms of agriculture. The state controlled Vegetable and Fruits Promotion Council, Kerala (VFPCCK) is also taking slow steps in promoting the ‘bio’ trend as against the overriding importance given to the chemical methods of farming.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The importance of Organic farming has increased day-to-day. People in not only developed countries but also our country are conscious about health. In the recent survey the increased number of child death, physically and mentally retarded, and handicapped children and infertility in men in Muthalamada Village, Palakkad district make a wide space in the main news in our society.

Highly literate state like Kerala automatically has an assumption that people are aware of knowing the demerits of this inorganic farming. Even then, Palakkad is a big victim hand of pesticides and fertilizers. The research studies reveal that the application of over dosage of chemicals in Mango orchards makes a society grabbed by the serious diseases and disorders in life. These issues raise the following questions: What is the opinion of farmers on organic cultivation? What is their perception on organic farming?

III. OBJECTIVES

- To seek answers to the questions raised above, the following objectives are framed.
- To know the socio-economic profile of organic mango farmers in Muthalamada Panchayath.
- To examine the opinion of organic farmers on organic Mango cultivation in Muthalamada panchayath.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The data used for the study is primary in nature. Interview schedule has been administered to collect the required information. It contains questions relating to socio-economic profile, opinion on organic Mango cultivation in Muthalamada panchayath.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

Draught, labour shortage more than that high loss in paddy cultivation makes them to fetch back from paddy cultivation. Most of the land owners in Muthalamada stopped agriculture practices and get engaged in other jobs like government sectors, private etc. The significance and scope of mango farming gradually known by the people in Muthalamada make them to attract in this field. But lack of training, agricultural practices hesitate them to enter in to this field with whole hearted. . Majority of the orchards are under lease land pattern obviously they are practicing non organic farming to take back their lease investment. "Taking risk or chance in business is not fair" said by one of the mango leasee in Muthalamada panchayath.

Socio economic profile of organic mango farmers

The samples were selected with the help of agriculture officer and Muthalamada mango merchant association.

Only 20 mango orchards are under organic cultivation with an average of below 5 acres of land. These 20 mango orchards owners primary occupation is Business in other field of agriculture, with an annual income of above Rs. 10lakhs. They belong to the age group between 25 and 40 years. Main intention for organic farming is mental relaxation and for keeping their inherit property well and good. The ownership of land is with them. No lease land farming is activate in organic farming. All the respondents belong to joint family and their orchards are in rural area. The distance between orchard and home is below 5 km. Hired labours are assisted for all the activities (intercultural operation to harvesting) in the orchard. Both manual and machine labours are used. Every respondent have at least two cows in their farm land. They properly utilize the waste from the cows to the mango orchards. Very recently they prepare new bio fertilizers like Panchagavaya, jeevamritham etc. from cow dung and urine. All the work is done by the farm labours family members are mainly assisted for supervising.

When starts organic farming

Majority of the respondents start the organic farming below 5 years. Every one lease out their mango orchard to others and they apply high dosage of chemicals results damages to mango trees, pest resurgence, contamination in soil and water and health issues to nearby resides make them to avoid leasing and start organic farming.

Problem faced by the respondents at the time of conversion

Mango traders are not ready to take organic mango orchard. The main reason they opined for the rejection is organic mangos yield, shape colour and weight is very low compare to in-organic mangos. There is no trusted bio chemicals in organic for pest management, flowering and fungal diseases.

Threats in organic farming

- No proper guidance, training
- Lack of support from the government, agricultural office and other officials authorities.
- No subsidies and financial benefit provided for non organic farming.
- Market availability is very low (due to limited quantity)
- Maintaining environmental balance is very risk as and when the neighbour is practicing non organic farming.
- Lack of knowledge in biological control of pest and disease
- Lack of knowledge and technical assistance in nutrient imbalance in soil and water.

Opinion of organic mango farmers

Majority of the respondent's opined that organic mango farming is highly profitable only after five years. Market is too low. Lack of storage facilities and value added products make the business in loss status. All the farmers, who sell their organic mango in local market with non organic price.

Every respondent opined that they have good profit now days that the yield is high compare to year to year, with low cost of cultivation. The cost of cultivation include land preparation, wedding, organic manures, bio pesticides, irrigation, harvesting and marketing cost with a consolidated average amount of Rs. 3500 per tree with an average yield of 185 kg / tree. The average rate per kg is Rs. 55. They can enjoy an average profit of Rs. 6000 per tree. Comparing this with non organic mango farming cost of cultivation is Rs. 5500 and rest of the yield and rate are same. They get an average profit of Rs. 4500 per tree. The cost of fertilizers and chemicals is high from year to year. More than 5 – 6 times application of pesticides is there in most of the non organic mango orchards

VI. CONCLUSION

Organic Kerala is now a prestigious talk among the people. It's like an advertisement. There is no proper knowledge and experience person to remove the doubt about organic farming. Lack of technology in application of fertilizers and pesticides, handling difficulties of organic manures, the proper recommended, trusted bio chemicals are less available in the market. Government is not providing subsidies to the organic manures. If the government subsidies or government provide funds to promote organic mango farming, and is distributed to the initial period (first five years - conversion time) of organic mango farming. Muthalamada can become organic mango city.

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