

## Startups for Organic Agricultural Practices in India

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*Organic agriculture is the process of producing food naturally. This method avoids the use of synthetic and chemical fertilizers. The main concern behind it is 'zero impact' on the environment. Its Moto is to protect the earth's resources and produce safe and healthy food. The rise in demand for organic food has resulted in many upcoming startups to solve the health problems. Many developed countries including the United States and those in Europe have certification programs to restrict the liberal use of the term organic. This has benefited the consumer by ensuring that quality assurance and standards have been met that the source is reliable. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority ( APEDA) is the coordinating agency for organic food production and export under the brand name 'India Organic'. Organic farming requires certification by accredited agencies in India like The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), Tea Board , Coffee Board, Spices Board, Coconut Development Board and Directorate of Cashew and Cocoa. Agencies promoting organic farming in India are: National Steering Committee,*

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*Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India. Just Organic, Joy By Nature, i- Kheti, I Say Organic and Urban Green Fate Farms ( UGF) are examples of startups for Organic agricultural practices in India to provide healthy and natural organic product to people. Consumers take a conscious decision on how their food is produced, processed, handled and marketed. The consumer therefore has a strong influence over organic production. The purpose of this paper is to make the readers aware about the startups of Organic products.*

[**Keywords** : Chemical fertilizers, Environment, Certification, IFOAM, APEDA]

## **1. Introduction**

organic agriculture is a farming and food system, building on locally available resources, recycling of nutrients and organic matter. In 2008, after a long consultative process, the worldwide organic organization IFOAM decided on the following definition of organic agriculture, “organic agriculture is an agricultural system that promotes environmentally, socially and economically sound production of food, fibre, timber etc. In this system, soil fertility is seen as the key to successful production. Working with the natural properties of plants, animals and the landscape. Organic farmers aim to optimize quality in all aspects of agriculture and environment”. The concept of organic farming is based on related aspects like organic concept, holistic concept, living soil concept and healthy plant concept. It is more of a process based farming approach where the quality of produced is given importance. A farmer willing to go in for organic farming should further understand the broad areas covering these concepts. In low income countries, certified organic agriculture is a way for some farmers to access high value markets and improve their livelihoods through increased income. Many other smallholder farmers, certification is not an option but organic farming principles can help to improve yields and stability with little cash cost and low risk. People choose organic foods over conventionally produced fruits, vegetables and other food products. In fact, in developing countries, it is one of the fastest growing segment in the food industry with mainline retailers such as Safeway and Walmart in the US and Waitrose in UK and many others offering organic produce selections for their discerning customers. Startups in the field of organic agriculture can be one of the most satisfying business to improve health and energy levels. By using Organic products, one not only enjoys premium quality but also participate

in the empowerment of a holistic mission to support the environment, to promote sustainable organic agriculture and to protect the biodiversity of the earth .

## **2. Objectives**

The objectives of the study are as follows :

1. To make people aware about the options of startups in organic agriculture.
2. To improve farming systems with the help of farmers.
3. To provide food of high nutritional quality in sufficient quantity.

## **3. Agencies Involved in Certification of Organic Products**

Organic products are grown under a system of agriculture without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides with an environmentally and socially responsible approach. This is a matter of farming that works at Grass root level preserving the reproductive and regenerative capacity of the soil, good plant nutrition and sound soil management produces nutritious food rich in vitality which has resistance to diseases. India is bestowed with lot of potential to produce all varieties of Organic products due to its various agro climatic conditions. In several parts of the country, the inherited tradition of organic farming is an added advantage. This holds promise for the Organic producers to top the market which is growing steadily in domestic and export sector. As per the available statistics, India's rank 8th in terms of world's organic agricultural land and first in terms of total number of producers as per 2020 data. (Source: FIBL and IFOAM Year Book, 2020).The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was established by the government of India under the agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority act passed by the parliament in December 1985. The functions of APEDA are as follows<sup>1</sup> :

- Development of industries relating to the scheduled products for export by way of providing financial assistance or otherwise for undertaking surveys and feasibility, studies, participation in enquiry capital through joint ventures and other relief and subsidy schemes.

- Registration of persons for exporters of the scheduled products on payment of such fees as may be prescribed.
- Fixing of standards and specifications for the scheduled products for the purpose of exports.
- Improving of packaging of the scheduled products and marketing of the scheduled products outside India.
- Promotion of export oriented production and development of the scheduled products.
- Training in various aspects of the the industries connected with the scheduled products.

#### **4. IFOAM**

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) is the worldwide umbrella organization for the organic agriculture movement. It was established in 1972 and declares its mission is to lead, unite and assist the organic movement in its full diversity. It facilitates the development of organic standards and third-party certification worldwide and provide an international guarantee of these standards and organic certification. It offers a global platform for Organic standard setters to discuss standards and create synergies for standard development and harmonization at the global level.

#### **5. Organic Products**

By buying 'Organic India' products, one can supports the environment, promote sustainable organic agriculture and protects biodiversity of the Earth while supporting thousands of marginal Farmers and tribal communities in rural India.

- Organic India is proud and honored to be to be the first company to introduce to sacred Tulsi (Holy Basil) is delicious herbal tea. The Tulsi Tea collection includes original and delicious blends.
- Organic India offers superior Herbal Formulations developed to effectively address many important health needs. These can be taken as a remedy as well as for prevention.
- Organic India all for sale large variety of certified organic commodities and ingredients including grains, cereals,

pulses, spices, herbs, honey, dehydrated fruits and vegetables.

- A wide variety of full flavoured, delicious and nutritive certified organic spices and condiments. Many spices are not only delicious but have significant nutritive properties as well.
- Organic India offers many common and exotic in which collection of organically grown and certified organic herbs, including traditional ayurvedic, medicinal and nutritional herbs.
- Organic teas offer an excellent means of promoting and maintaining healthy lifestyle and when drunk regularly, they are said to be especially helpful in terms of playing an active role in the prevention of many common illnesses.
- Organic herbal supplements and herbal medicines have been used for centuries in order to promote general well-being and improved health.
- At Organic India, one of the main areas of focus as an international supplier of high quality organic health remedies lies in the provision of ayurvedic supplements.
- Just Organic aims to make organic food more accessible and affordable to the consumer and create new opportunities for farmers by motivating them to adopt organic farming practices. It was launched in 2013 by Pankaj Agarwal and Richa Agarwal. Just organic offers Organic products like cereals, pulses, millets, oils, spices, sweeteners and tea etc.
- i-Kheti is an urban farming enterprise that facilitates farming among City dwellers through workshops, consultancy and gardening resources started by Mumbai based Priyanka Amar Shah.
- Joy By Nature was launched in 2014 by two partners, Sailesh Mehta and Rahul Amrendra Kumar were concerned about the harmful effects that chemicals might have on children. They have products in about 10,000 categories including nutrition, food, beauty and health and keep adding more items to their ever increasing list of products.
- I Say Organic was founded by Ashmeet Kapoor an engineer from the University of British Columbia and Brown

University. this enterprise aims to provide people the option of eating safe food without toxic chemicals and pesticides.

## 6. Challenges of Organic Agricultural Practices

The multi-dimensional nature of food security includes food availability, access, stability and utilization. For each dimension, organic agriculture offers benefits and experiences constraints. It is important to keep in mind that for each of the food security dimensions, the benefits and challenges described will not apply evenly all organic farming systems which range from not certified production destined for local consumption to market-oriented certified systems seeking price premiums. In all cases, synergies are possible either by better linking good agro-ecological practitioner's to market or ensuring that specialized organic systems. Today the world is confronted with new challenges :

- Water scarcity and fossil fuel crisis, posing questions on the feasibility of sustaining productivity with high external agricultural inputs.
- Rural depopulation (world's urban population exceeded rural population in 2006) , posing questions on availability of food.
- Globalized food systems that erode local food systems, posing questions on the ability of small holders to produce food for themselves.
- Most certified organic food production in developing countries is exported, potentially encroaching on local food needs. Diversified and productive agricultural systems reduce household market dependency and import requirements. However, domestic market development in developing countries is a free condition for a healthy organic sector although higher prices may be a constraint to poor urban dwellers.
- Production inputs when available are not affordable to the poor and appropriate extension systems are considerably downsized.
- Agriculture can no longer developed in isolation as environmental services from the rural space are increasingly known to be essential for global ecosystem health and rural landscapes are increasingly used for tourism purposes.

- For developing countries, trade based food provisioning limits the competitiveness of small holders and ability of the market marginalized to cater for their needs. Considering that 75% of the poor live on the land and most are farmers or farm workers, it is in a small holder agriculture where change is needed to increase the food supply.

## **7. Conclusion**

Organic food systems ought to be evaluated in a wide development context which includes the fact that agriculture has often had a detrimental impact on the environment. Although organic agriculture is not a panacea and has its own limits in addressing challenges posed by modern lifestyle, its external environmental costs are much lower than those of conventional agriculture and in some areas it can reverse problems of natural degradation. Moreover, non certified organic systems increase food availability and access exactly in those locations where poverty and hunger are most severe. Although there is still space for improving its performance, organic agriculture continues to provide alternative models for sustainable development as a response to the pollution created by conventional agricultural production, organic farmers developed non chemical ways to form their land successfully. As a response to the lack of adequate technologies and technical advice, organic farmers became innovaters and experts in adaptive management and organic communities came together to provide some risk bearing economy of scale just creating self-reliant and vibrant rural economies. organic community began discussions on the enforcement of fair working conditions and trade transparency and again looking for efficient ways to put the concept of food miles into practice. India holds a unique position among 172 countries practicing organic agriculture. organic agriculture has always been India's inherent advantage and strength. The shift in the Global consumption patterns, health awareness among consumers and the increasing significance of sustainability is now putting Organic products to the fore front both internationally as well as in the domestic market.<sup>7</sup>

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