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Research Note

Knowledge Gap about Organic Farming Practices of Farmers of Bageshwar District of Uttarakhand

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Organic farming is not new to our country. For almost the last fifty years indian agricultural practices have mainly concentrated on increasing yield, leading to cultivation of mono crops. This in turn has made the crops highly vulnerable to pest attacks, soil becoming barren and ground water, toxic. In addition, the raising input cost and fertilizer shortage have made farmers try organic methods as an alternative to chemical farming.

In India, organic farming has received considerable attention and the Government of India emphasized to give boost to organic farming in rainfed areas and in the area of limited use of agricultural chemicals especially in North-Eastern states. Uttarakhand and Sikkim have declared themselves as organic states. It is estimated that there is around 76,00 ha of certified organic food at the farm level and 2.4 million ha of certified forest area for collection of wild herbs in India, but the actual area under organic is much more. (Kumar and Singh, 2009)

Possibilities of organic farming in Uttarakhand are bright because of low use of chemical fertilizers in fields (10 kg/ha/annum). By this practices environment balance and sustainability, can be maintained, besides in national and international market, a good earning can be made possible by export of organic produce. Among various practices of organic farming. Present studies were undertaken to assess the knowledge gap of organic farming practices of farmers of Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Bageshwar block of the Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand. Out of three blocks (Bageshwar, Kapkot and Garur) only Bageshwar block was randomly selected. Six villages namely Karala gaon, Bhatkhola, Kholseer, Okhlisirot, Tana and Pasdev were selected randomly. From these villages 5 organic practicing farmers were selected by simple random sampling technique for the study purpose by proportional allocation method. Thus, there were total 30 numbers of farmers. To measure the knowledge gap of farmers they were asked to reply different questions knowledge about concept of organic farming. Use of bio-fertilizers, vermicompost, use of bio-pesticides, use of organic manure and crop residues, use of mechanical cultivation, use of Ha NPV, use of NADEP compost and use of trichocards.

The following device was developed to measure the knowledge of farmers on the basis of organic farming practices.

$$\text{Knowledge} = \frac{\text{Total obtained knowledge scores}}{\text{Maximum obtained knowledge scores}} \text{ X } 100$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Knowledge level

Knowledge is defined as the set of concepts, meanings, skills and routines developed over time by individuals and groups through processing of information. Once the knowledge is acquired, it also brings about changes in overt behavior such as adoption. Knowledge level of farmers refers to the information they posses in respect of organic farming practices.

It is clear from table 1 that majority (46.7%) of farmers had high knowledge level of organic farming practices. While 36.7 per cent had medium and 16.7 per cent had low knowledge level of organic farming practices. Similar findings were also reported by Dube and Sawarkar (1992) and Naik et.at. (2009).

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Table 1 Distribution of farmers according to their knowledge level about organic farming practices

S.No.	Category of knowledge	Numbers of farm women	Percentage
1.	Low	5	16.7
2.	Medium	11	36.7
3.	High	14	46.7

Knowledge gap of farmers on the basis of the organic farming practices.

The data presented in Table 2 reveals that overall knowledge gap of the farmers in organic farming practices were 32 .10 per cent, respectively.

As reported by the farmers, the major contributing practices for this knowledge gap were use of HaNPV (43.34%) followed by use of trichocards (41.12%), use of bio-pesticides (38.88%), use of NADEP compost (37.77%), use of bio-fertilizers (35.55%) ,use of mechanical cultivation (32..22%), use of organic manure and crop residues (26.66%), use of vermin-compost (17.77%) and knowledge about concept of organic farming (15.56%). These finding were found to partially supported by reports of Singh (2007) and Kirar and Mehta (2009).

Table 2 Knowledge gap of farmers on the basis of the organic farming practices.

S.No.	Organic farming practices	Maximum knowledge (score)	Total obtained Knowledge (score)	Knowledge gap percentage	Rank
1.	Knowledge about concept of organic farming	90	76	15.56	IX
2.	Use of bio-pesticides	90	55	38.88	III
3.	Use of organic manure and crop residues	90	66	26.66	VII
4.	Use of mechanical cultivation	90	61	32.22	VI
5.	Use of vermicompost	90	74	17.77	VIII
6.	Use of bio-fertilizers	90	58	35.55	V
7.	Use of HaNPV	90	51	43.34	I
8.	Use of NADEP compost	90	56	37.77	IV
9.	Use of trichocards	90	53	41.12	II
	Over all knowledge gap	810	550	32.10	

CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that majority farmers were found in the range of high level of knowledge of organic farming practices. The wide knowledge gapes are in the areas of organic farming practices like use of HaNPV, use of trichocards,. use of bio-pesticides and use of NADEP compost. The farmers need to be made well aware about the use of such practices so that the basic concept of organic farming and its application part could be familiar to the farmers.

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