ABSTRACT

Organic Farming has attracted the attention of farmers, agronomists, academics and policy makers, as the negative externalities of chemical agriculture have become well-known. The present research makes an inquiry into the organic farming technique to test its economic viability, with special emphasis on India’s agricultural development and strategy, particularly in the post Green Revolution Era. The term 'economic viability' includes in its scope, the private as well as social and environmental costs and benefits, in addition to the study of viability on the micro and macro levels; and the short run and long run considerations.

The primary data collected through the pot-culture experiments and interviews of farmers, particularly those who have converted to organic farming, and discussions with stakeholders, tend to confirm that organic farming can be economically viable, particularly in the long run, after the initial conversion period is complete. It would prove to be economically viable even in the short run, if externalities could be imputed. Primary and secondary data of experiments as well as farmers, have proved that organic farming is economically viable on the micro level.

However, there is no single recipe under organic farming that will be universally applicable under all agro-climatic conditions. Considering the problem of food security on the macro level, lack of easy accessibility of organic inputs, and the fact that yield drops under organic farming in the initial years of conversion, the study concludes that a sudden or immediate shift to organic farming is not advisable. The
goal of the agricultural policy should be to gradually phase out chemicals, and follow a technique of mixed farming, which as far as possible relies on organic inputs, but allows the use of chemicals when absolutely unavoidable. Such a policy would reduce the unfavourable ecological implications, without compromising on yield in the short run. Green Agriculture, as such a technique is often referred to, is the only way of achieving a sustainable future.