CHAPTER-I

A Study of Organic Fanning in Tamil Nadu

1.1. INTRODUCTION

"Agriculture is the mother of nil arts for when agriculture flourishes all other arts are in full vigour"

Socrates

Agriculture is the life line of humanity. Any change in agriculture will result in a corresponding change in the life of people and of nature and vice versa too. There has been a very rapid change in the way we do farming in the past few decades. It is characterized mainly by the dominance of machinery and chemical technology in agriculture replacing the traditional wisdom, which has altered the society considerably.

Every thing in nature is balanced. If we disturb the nature it will result in series of changes within and without nature which will ultimately effect the society adversely. Now exactly that is what has happened to agriculture. Previously agriculture was the part and parcel of nature. Over years agriculture has undergone several changes, thus drifting away from nature. The changes in agriculture has taken a quantum jump during Green
Revolution such changes have resulted in environmental pollution, degradation of soil health, loss of bio-diversity, ill-effects of the agrochemicals and others.

In her book 'The Violence of the Green Revolution' Vandana Shiva has dealt at length about the problems possecd by the Green Revolution. She has gone to the extent of naming "Green Revolution" as "Green Violence". She has brought out the following points against Green Revolution.

The term 'High yielding varieties' is a misnomer because it implies that the raw seeds are high yielding, in themselves. The distinguishing feature of the seeds is that they are highly responsive to certain key inputs, such as fertilizer and irrigation water, the term 'High Responsive Varieties' IN thus more appropriate. In the absence of the additional inputs such as fertilizer, water, pesticides and herbicide, the new seeds will not perform well than the indigenous varieties because of the 'Raw of Limiting factors' that is, when any one of the aforementioned inputs is deficient, the new High Yielding Varieties will actually yield less than the traditional varieties, which are better adopted to natural environment.

Diversity contributes to ecological stability. Rower the diversity in an ecosystem higher the vulnerability it has to pests and diseases. Large number of traditional strains are being replaced by relatively few High Yielding Varieties, destroying the variability. Because of their narrow
genetic base. High Yielding Varieties are inherently vulnerable to major pests and diseases. Most of the High Yielding Varieties released so far are susceptible to major pests with a crop loss of 30 to 100 percent.

Marginal lands and forests have been cleared to make way for the expansion of agriculture. Rotations have been abandoned and crop land is now used to grow soil depleting crops year-in, and year-out. In addition, the new High Yielding Varieties reduce the supply of fodder and organic manure available to the farmers.

Increased fertilizer use, has not compensated for the overuse of the soil. High Yielding Varieties rapidly deplete micronutrients from soils and chemical fertilizers could not compensate for the loss. Micronutrients deficiencies of zinc, iron, copper, manganese, magnesium, molybdenum, boron are thus common, among High Yielding Varieties.

The larger clams, the integrated part of the Green Revolution, have become the source of interstate water disputes apart from the damage they cause to the eco-system. The increased capital intensity of farming, in particular the need to purchase inputs, has generated new inequalities between those who could use the new technology profitability and those who could not. Small farmers who make up nearly half of the farming
population have been particularly badly hit. The prime beneficiaries have been large farmers and agro-chemical companies. As peasants have become more and more dependant on "off-farm" input, they have become increasingly dependent on those companies that control the inputs.

Because of these, a new agricultural technology is needed which will protect the soil, enable it to absorb precipitation, allow for perennial surface run off, also provide the food, fiber, fuel and other materials needed to sustain the population, save energy, increase production and productivity, and also be economically viable at the small farm's level, environmentally friendly and socially acceptable. In so doing the technology should not fail to take full advantage of the knowledge of the traditional farmers. This is possible only by switch over to Organic Farming from Conventional Farming. Now, we are left with two options. Either to completely go in for the Organic Farming or to choose the combination between the Organic Farming and Conventional Farming. In our country few farmers are turning towards Organic Farming because of the efforts taken by the Non-Governmental Organisations like LEISA (Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture Network in Keeranure and Kodaikanal Organic Farming Association in Kodaikanal, to promote "the Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu."
The present research aims to study the Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu with special reference to the Horticultural Crops in Kodaikanal Block with the following objectives.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

a) Cross section analysis of farmers and examining the pattern and level of Organic Farming, practiced in their farms.

b) To evaluate the Organic Farming in terms of productivity and cost effectiveness

c) To examine the problems and prospects of popularizing Organic Farming and to suggest appropriate policies and extension supports and

d) To study the future of Organic Farming.

1.3. UTILITY OF THE STUDY

The study will be helpful for the policy makers to frame suitable policies in the field of agriculture. This study will also be of great use to the farmers to take appropriate farming decisions with respect to Organic Farming.

1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
Farmers do not maintain records and they give information from their memory. Therefore particulars collected are not without recall bias. However care has been taken to make the estimates as accurate as possible through cross checking.

As the data collected related to one year and confined to a particular area, the findings of the study have to be generalized to other situations with caution.

As this is a pioneering study in Organic Farming, only limited literature were available.

As all the State Agricultural Universities and Government Extension Agencies are reared to promote the Conventional Farming practices, information from these sources about the Organic Farming practices was not very much encouraging and

Exclusive Organic Farmers were very difficult to find.
1.5. ORGANISATION OF USE THESIS

Chapter I gives the introduction, definition of the problem, objectives of the study, limitations of the study, and organisation of the thesis in this chapter.

Chapter II relates to a brief review of the relevant literature.

Chapter III explains a comprehensive plan of the design of the study followed by tools of analysis.

Chapter IV discusses the results obtained from the study.

Chapter V presents the summary and conclusion of the study.