CHAPTER - III

METHODOLOGY

The present study is an attempt to examine the organic farming practices of SHG members and also the problems and prospects of organic farming with reference to Tirunelveli district. In doing so, the study aims at bringing out the socio-economic status of the SHG members practicing organic farming and also the factors influencing them to go for organic farming together with the problems faced by them. The perception of the SHG members about organic farming is also analysed as it reflects the prospects of organic farming from the respondents’ perspective.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the organic farming practices followed in the study area.
2. To assess the socio-economic status of the Self Help Group (SHG) members practicing organic farming.
3. To examine the factors influencing the SHG members to practice organic farming.
4. To understand the perception of the SHG members about organic farming.
5. To analyse the problems and prospects of organic farming practiced by the SHG members.
HYPOTHESES

Following hypotheses were formulated and tested for finding out the relationships and associations between and among the selected variables of the study:

- The ‘respondents’ level of perception about organic farming is independent of their age’
- The ‘respondents’ level of perception is independent of their caste status
- The respondent’s level of perception is independent of their religion
- The respondents’ level of perception about organic farming is independent of their family type
- The respondents’ level of perception is independent of their marital status
- The respondents’ level of perception about organic farming is independent of their level of education’
- The respondents’ level of perception about organic farming is independent of their family income
- The respondents’ level of perception about organic farming is independent of their period of membership in shgs
- The respondents’ level of perception about organic farming is independent of their nature of membership in shgs
- The respondents’ level of perception is independent of their participation in shg activities
• The respondents’ level of perception about organic farming is independent of the initiatives taken by their SHGs to promote organic farming

• Size of land used by the respondents for organic farming is independent of their level of perception about organic farming

• The respondents’ level of perception about organic farming is independent of their duration of cultivation of organic farming

• Source of irrigation is independent of the respondents’ level of perception about organic farming

• Perception of the respondents about organic farming is independent of their motivation for practising organic farming

SELECTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Tirunelveli district was purposively selected for this study for many reasons. Tirunelveli district enjoys the benefit of the early showers of southwest monsoon and of the later rains of the north-east monsoon. The district is chiefly irrigated by rivers rising in Western Ghats. The dams and check-dams constructed on Tamiraparani and Manimuthar rivers serve both agriculture and power generation. The Tamiraparani river affords perennial irrigation to a fairly large area on which two crops are normally raised. Several tanks and wells form part of the other source of irrigation. Tirunelveli district is predominantly an agricultural district raising two cropping seasons - the first crop from June to September and the second crop from October to February. Considering the environmental potentials of the district, the researcher desired to study the organic farming practices among the members of SHGs in the study area.
The heterogeneous features of the district were considered while selecting the study areas. Hence, the administrative division of the district is taken as the basis for the selection of sample Development Blocks. Out of 19 Blocks in Tiruvelveli district, 10 Blocks were selected by using Systematic sampling i.e., every second Block in the list was selected. The selected Blocks are Manur, Kadayam, Ambasamudram, Keelapavoor, Cheranmahadevi, Alangulam, Tenkasi, Kadayanallur, Palayamkottai and Melaneelithanallur. From each selected Block, four village Panchayats were selected randomly and again from each Panchayat five SHG members who were also practicing organic farming were picked up purposively. Thus, a total of 200 organic farmers from the SHGs constituted as the sample respondents for the study.

DATA COLLECTION

The present study is mainly based on primary data. Interview schedule was used to collect the primary data from the respondents. A well structured interview schedule was prepared after consulting the experts in the field. It was subjected to pre-tested for suitability and adequacy. After the necessary modifications, it was finalised. The interview schedule was administered among the selected respondents at their convenience. Observation and visits to organic farms enriched the knowledge and understanding of the researcher on the life, work and organic farm practices of the respondents. The field work for collection of the primary data was made during 2013-14.

The relevant secondary data were collected from the books, journals, magazines, reports and records. The information available in website was also used in the study.
DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were checked, edited, coded, classified and tabulated before they were subjected to further statistical analysis. Necessary tables were prepared and the tabulated data were analysed with the help of appropriate statistical tools to arrive at relevant inferences. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used in order to narrate the variables into factors. The test of validity of data for EFA have been conducted with the help of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The overall reliability has been estimated with the help of cronbach alpha test. To test the significant differences between the profile variables and the perception of the SHG members and factors influencing the organic farming, problems of organic farming and measures to improve the prospects of organic farming one-way Analysis of Variance has been applied. Chi-square test was used to test the independence of variables. The Wilks Lambda tool was applied to find out discriminant power of factors influencing organic farming. The multiple regression analysis has been applied for testing the impact of factors influencing the organic farming on the perception of organic farming and motivation for practicing organic farming.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is an attempt to understand the nature and extent of organic farming practiced by the SHG members and also to find out the problems of these organic farmers and prospects of organic farming from the respondents’ perspective in Tirunelveli district. The socio-economic status of the SHG members practicing organic farming was assessed and correlated with selected variables so as to understand the factors influencing organic farming.
farming practices and the problems in organic farming faced by them. The study has also dealt with the perception of these organic farmers about the prospects of organic farming in the study area.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Farmers are not trained in maintaining records and they do not maintain any record; but could give information from their memory. Therefore the particulars and details collected from them are not without recall bias. However, care has been taken to validate their estimates only after possible cross-checking. As the data collected related to one year only and that too confined to a particular area, the findings of the study have to be generalized to other situations with caution. Only through the NGOs the farmers practicing the organic farmers were identified as there is no statistics available on them. In few cases, it became very difficult to identify the farmers who are practicing organic farming throughout the year.