Chapter 6
Relevance and Need for Sustainable Agricultural Policy in India

The preceding analysis is instrumental in revealing that the major cause of productivity decline in the agricultural sector is the environmental degradation in the form of declining land fertility resulting from internal factors such as reckless agricultural practices without a wider vision and long-term objective and external factors such as climate change. The internal causes as described here include weed management methods and soil tillage leading to soil erosion, and application of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and lack of scientific information about novel and harmless agricultural practices. Land fertility can be included into the renewable resource category which can be regenerated but with a very slow pace than it was deteriorated.

Environmental damage is a public bad to be rectified as early as possible on the objective of welfare grounds for which framing and implementation of tight environmental policy is essential. A sustainable agriculture policy needs to be evolved. This involves many stages of activities and preparations as listed below.

1. Setting the broad objectives of the policy
2. Ensuring the constitutional and legislative provision for policy
3. Fixing tools to be adopted to achieve the broad objectives.

4. Time bound evaluation of these tools in evaluating their suitability to cope with the changing conditions.

The broad policy objective must be to ensure inter-generational and intra-generational equity of using environmental resources. The available tools or instruments can be broadly classified into two major categories such as the Command and Control instruments (CACIs) and Market Based Instruments (MBIs). Even though India had initiated and shifted to a more Market Based Economy in 1991 and has been continuing the process of opening markets for efficiency, the suitable instruments of environmental protection are the Command and Control Instruments. However, as the system develops, the country can shift from the Command and Control Instruments to Market Based Instruments.

6.1 International Policy Status

The evolution of international policy for environmental protection can be summarized under the following heads.

The Stockholm Conference 1972

The International conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm in 1972 can be taken as the well organized effort to evolve environmental protection policy at the international level. The conference
enunciated 26 principles, which every participating nation should resolve to take appropriate and necessary legislative measures to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.

**The Brundtland Commission Report**

Another important event in the international environmental policy was the publication of the report of the World Commission for Environment and Development (WCED) on ‘Our Common Future’ in 1987. The report put forward the idea of sustainable development and emphasized the need for integrating economics, environment and ecology in decision making. This is essential because decisions based on conventional economic theory involve externalities.

**The Rio Conference**

The United Nations’ Conference on Environment and Development (UNECED) held at Rio de Janerio in 1992 is another milestone in the evolution process of international environmental protection policy. The conference recognized the rights of developing countries in enjoying environmentally supporting development and criticized the developed countries as they contribute much towards environmental pollution and degradation. The conference emphasized three major objectives of the environmental policy.
1. To incorporate environmental costs in production and consumption decisions. This is essential to treat environment as a scarce commodity and to prevent the tendency to shift environmental costs to other part of the society, other countries and future generations.

2. To reflect the prices of commodities resulting from economic activities the true scarcity and total value of resources so that environmental degradation can be prevented.

3. To include wherever appropriate, the use of market principles in the framing of economic instruments and policies to pursue sustainable development.

6.2 Constitutional and Legislative Provisions in India

Until 1970, environmental considerations did not play a major role in the making of environmental policy in India. The UN Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm in 1972 exerted influence on environmental legislations in India. India has provided constitutional protection against environmental degradation and pollution with the 42\textsuperscript{nd} amendment of its constitution in 1976. The parliament of India recognized that pollution is a slow agent of death. Hence it incorporated \textbf{Article 51 A and Article 48A} with the constitution of India. These Articles make environmental protection a joint responsibility of the state and every citizen of India.
Article 48A provides, “the state shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country”. This Article is on the Directive Principles of State Policy, which are non-justiciable. The direction of Article 48A, therefore, has become an obligation of the state organs including the court.

A constitutional duty has also been assigned to citizens of India under the Article 51-A (g) It is the duty of each citizen “to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures”.

The Constitution of India also provides the Fundamental right to have a Healthy Environment in Article 21. This Article guarantees the fundamental right “to life and personal liberty” to all persons living in India. This right includes the right to have a “living environment” congenial to human existence. It is implicit that any activity which pollutes the environment and makes it unhealthy is a violation of this Article. More over, Article 47 of the constitution declares that the state has a duty to prohibit health hazard activities and to remove the unsanitary conditions.

In pursuance of the Stockholm principles, Indian Parliament introduced the 42nd amendment of its constitution. Later the government adopted many Acts with a view to conserve the environment. For example,
the water (Prevention and control) Act, 1974, the Air (Prevention and control) Act, 1981, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 were enacted.

The environment protection Act - 23rd May 1986 provides India with a legislative framework accommodating for:

1. protection and improvement of the environment and
2. Implementation of India’s commitment relating to the protection and improvement of the environment, the prevention of hazards to human beings, other living creatures and property.

In 1992, the 73rd and 74th amendments were incorporated with the constitution of India. These amendments recognized the three tier structure of the government by devolution of powers to local bodies, panchayaths in rural areas and municipalities in urban areas, in matters of environmental protection. This amendment has facilitated people participation in environmental protection to a greater extent and local problems can be addressed more vigorously. The eleventh schedule contains environmental activities such as soil conservation, water management, social forestry and non-conventional energy that panchayaths can undertake. The twelfth schedule contains activities such as water supply, public health and
sanitation, solid waste management and environmental protection which the municipalities can undertake.

6.3 Department of Environment

Government of India established a separate Department of Environment (DoE) in 1981 on the recommendations of the Tiwari Committee headed by N.D Tiwari. The objective was to provide explicit recognition to the pivotal role that environment conservation must play for sustainable national development. The department is authorized to serve as a nodal agency for environmental protection and economic development of the country, conduct various studies about instances, causes and consequences of environmental degradation in all sectors, and carry out environmental appraisal of development projects all over the country.

6.4 Sustainable Agriculture in India

Organic farming appears to be one of the options for sustainability. In India, organic agriculture was initiated in 1900 by Albert Howard, a British agronomist in North India, Development of Indore Method of Aerobic Compost (Howard, 1929), Bangalore Method of Anaerobic compost (Archarya, 1934) and NADEP Compost (ND Pandari Panda, Yeotmal, 1980) (Bhattacharya and Chakraborty 117). Basically Indian agriculture was
organic in nature. This qualification was drastically changed during the green revolution period. The revival move of organic farming in India was initiated during the year 2000 which witnessed some drastic steps taken by the Government of India and its agencies.

1. The Planning Commission constituted a steering group on agriculture (2000) to address the problems involving agriculture. The steering group identified organic farming as a way to sustainability and recognized as national challenge to implement and suggested that it should be undertaken in the form of a project as major thrust area for the 10th plan as a first step to the solution.

2. The National Agricultural Policy (2000) recommended promotion of traditional knowledge of agriculture relating to organic farming and its scientific improvement for efficient use of resources, conserving soil, water and biodiversity. In addition, the policy emphasized sustainable agriculture as its prime broad objective.

3. The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC), Ministry of Agriculture constituted (2000) a Task force on organic farming under it and this task force recommended promotion of organic farming. The Ministry of Commerce launched the National Organic Programme in April 2000 and Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export
Development Authority (APEDA) is implementing the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP).

6.5 Government Policy on Organic Farming in India

The Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India initiated a National Policy on agriculture which seeks to promote technically sound, economically viable, environmentally non-degrading, and socially acceptable use of natural resources in favour of organic farming. The policy seeks to:

1. Maximize the area and crop potential through multi-cropping and inter-cropping.

2. Strengthen rural economy by promoting organic farming, promoting value addition and accelerating growth of agro business.

3. Secure a fair standard of living for the farmers and agricultural workers and their families for longer periods.

6.6 Area Approach and Crop Identification

For promotion of organic farming, identification of potential areas and crop is crucial. The government strategy is to promote organic farming for the crops having market potential like fruits, spices, oilseeds, pulses,
vegetables, wheat, cotton, basmati rice, etc. As far as potential areas are concerned, three priority zones have been identified.

**Category-I**

The top priority areas for promotion of organic farming are the rainfed areas where fertiliser and agro-chemical consumption is already very low.

**Category-II**

The Category II areas are primarily under rain fed farming with little irrigation support.

**Category-III**

The last priority areas are those with moderate to heavy use of fertilisers and pesticides, mostly multiple cropped areas.

**6.7 National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF)**

A separate administrative wing called National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF) with a director has been established under the Department of Agriculture and Co-Operation (DAC), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. The NCOF has six regional centers (RCOFs) at Bhubaneshwar, Bangalore, Imphal, Hisar, Nagpur and Jabalpur. The major objectives of operation are:

1. Conducting Training Programmes for Certification & Inspection agencies /Service Providers, Field functionaries /Extension officers
and farmers on organic farming and Production and Quality Control of Organic Inputs.

2. Quality Testing of Bio-fertilisers and Organic Inputs

3. Technical Assistance to Bio-fertiliser/ Organic Input Units.

4. Organising National /Regional Seminars for officials who are entrusted to promote organic farming and bio-fertilisers.

6.8 National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF)

The Department of Agriculture and Co-Operation (DAC), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India launched a new Central Sector Scheme in 2004 entitled National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) with an outlay of Rs.57.05 crore on pilot basis for production, promotion and market development of organic farming in the country during the 10th plan. This project was initiated by subsuming National Project on Development & Use of Bio-fertilisers with effect from October, 2004. The scheme is continuing as full fledged project in XIth Plan with a provisional allocation of Rs. 150 crores.

The National Project on Organic Farming has the following broad objectives of sustainable agriculture. The major trust areas of NPOF are listed below.
Chapter 6 Relevance and Need for a Sustainable Agricultural Policy in India

1. **Capacity Building through Service Providers**

   Financial assistance are being given to Government and Non-Government agencies which are capable of forming farmer groups and well versed with certification system and internal control system management for providing necessary technical support to farmers for achieving optimum productivity and facilitating organic certification process.

2. **Financial Support to Input Production Units**

   Financial support is being provided to the extent of 25% of total financial outlay for the establishment of (i) Fruits and Vegetable market waste compost, (ii) Bio-fertilisers and bio-pesticides and (iii) Vermi-culture hatcheries. Non-Government agencies, companies, entrepreneurs and individuals can avail themselves of the facility through credit linked back ended subsidy scheme. Loan can be availed for establishing these items from any scheduled bank and subsidy will be reimbursed by NABARD. Government and Semi-Government bodies (including municipalities) can avail themselves of the subsidy directly by application to the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation.
3. **Training**

Four different types of trainings, with different course contents are being arranged under NPOF through NCOF, RCOF and various government and Non-Government agencies. These are: (i) Training for Inspection and Certification agencies and Service providers, (ii) Training on production and Quality Control of organic inputs, (iii) Training for field functionaries and Extension officers on organic management and (iv) Training for farmers on organic farms.

4. **Demonstrations**

Field demonstrations-cum-farmer fairs on (i) organic inputs and (ii) enriched biogas slurry are being organized through NCOF, RCOFs and various Government and Non-Government agencies to prove the potential of organic management systems and different quality organic inputs.

5. **Model Organic Farms**

It is proposed to establish large number of model organic farms on Government and Government institutions’ farms for demonstration of organic packages, development of organic systems and production of organic seeds.
6. New Initiatives and Market Development

Under the NPOF funds are being provided to various Government and Non-Government agencies for development of packages, evaluation of organic practices, development of market linkages and marketing initiatives. Funds are also being provided for documentation of practices and technologies and publicity of proven technologies.

7. Awareness Creation

Funds are also being provided to NCOF, RCOFs and various Government and Non-Government agencies for organising international/ national seminars, conferences, workshops, exhibitions etc and publicity through print and electronic media for mass awareness creation

Under the NPOP, documents like National standards, accreditation criteria for accrediting inspection and certification agencies, Accreditation procedure, inspection and certification procedures have been prepared and approved by National Steering Committee (NSC).

6.9 FAO-DAC Project on Organic Farming

The Ministry of Agriculture has taken up the Technical Cooperation Programme in collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organisation,
since April 2005. The objective was to overcome the knowledge gap for promoting organic farming by quickly producing basic information suitable to various ecological zones of the country. The current state of knowledge on organic crop production packages, input production and utilisation and certification issues including legal and institutional aspects would be the basis of producing such information.

6.10 Task Force on Balanced Use of Fertiliser

The Department of Agriculture and Co-operation under the Ministry of Agriculture has constituted (2004) one Task Force on Balanced Use of Fertiliser for suggesting appropriate mechanisms for encouraging the use of organic manures and bio-fertiliser for balanced use of fertilisers.

6.11 Organic Expert Panel

In 2005, The Department of Agriculture and Co-operation constituted an Expert Panel for addressing the issues on crop productivity and input use under organic farming. The department reviews its approach towards sustainable agriculture based on the recommendations of this Expert Panel.

6.12 Organic Farming Approach by NASS

The National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) has a different view on organic farming. It issued a Policy Paper on Organic
Farming, which concludes that while synthetic pesticides can be avoided, complete exclusion of fertilisers may not be advisable under all situations. NAAS recommends that a "holistic approach involving Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), Integrated Pest Management (IPM), enhanced input use efficiency and adoption of region-specific promising cropping systems would be the best organic farming strategy for India" (Bhattacharya and Chakraborty 122).


The national policy for farmers -2007 emphasized the role of women initiatives in maintaining the traditional knowledge of farming in rural areas. The policy paper continues that the multi-disciplinary effort is necessary together with protecting soil health and avoiding spurious pesticides for promoting evergreen agriculture in the country. Table 6.1 contains some selected policy tips of national policy for farmers-2007.

6.14 Organic Certification in India

In India organic certification is done by various Indian companies in collaboration with Foreign Organic Certifying agencies. In 2005 there were 12 such agencies working in India, (Bhattacharyya and Chakraborty 119) For Example, the Indian Organic Certification Agency (INDOCERT), Aluva
with Swiz collaboration and LACON Quality Certification Private Limited, Thiruvalla, with German collaboration perform certification jobs in Kerala. These Certifying Agencies follow the basic standards set by International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), situated in Germany.

| Table 6.1 National Policy for Farmers -2007 |
| Selected Policy Tips for Sustainable Agriculture |
| 1. Strategy should be pro-nature, pro-small farmer and gender sensitive. Community managed seed villages and seed technology training centres are needed, with women playing the major role because of their traditional knowledge of seeds and seed management, especially in tribal communities. |
| 2. High level multidisciplinary effort will be made for enhancing scientific inputs in organic farming that meet the needs of farmers. |
| 3. Steps would be taken to ensure that each farmer is provided with a soil health passbook containing integrated information on the physics, chemistry and microbiology of farm soils with corresponding advisories. |
| 4. The sale of spurious and substandard pesticides would be prevented and bio-pesticides would be promoted. |
| 5. Special categories of farming such as organic farming, green agriculture and protected agriculture would be promoted. |

Each country and region can set standards in conformity with the basic standards prescribed by IFORM and incorporating the local and regional specificities and needs. Any product sold as organic must have been produced within and be certified by a national or regional certification programme in accordance with the IFOAM Basic Standards. All certification organisations, national or regional, must comply with existing legislation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Key Points of Organic Farming Outlined in the IFOAM Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Increase, or at least maintain soil fertility on a long-term basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exclusion of Chilean nitrate and all synthetic nitrogenous fertilisers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including urea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exclusion of synthetic pesticides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Definition by national and regional certifying bodies of maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total and outdoor stocking densities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Regulation of animal husbandry according to the physiological and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic ecological needs of the farm animals in question in order to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensure maximum animal welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Exclusion of synthetic feed additives, such as growth-promoters and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hormones.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.uni-hohenheim.de/~i410a/ofeurope/

The basic standards prescribed by IFOAM usually consist of three levels of regulations:
1. Minimum requirements or restrictions which exclude the use of certain substances or practices

2. General rules describing necessary practices in general, or demanding more detailed rules by certifying bodies which outline strategies of avoidance and preventive measures; and

3. Recommendations on how to achieve the objectives of these general rules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.3 Guidelines of IFOAM Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining or increasing fertility on a long-term basis is to be achieved by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. returning sufficient quantities of organic material to the soil;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. increasing or maintaining biological activity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. only introducing material which is specified for use in organic farming;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. providing restrictions by certification bodies for the use of inputs which contain relatively high contents of unwanted substances so as to maintain the natural conditions of the soil with respect to, for example, pH values and heavy metal contents;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. having requirements declared by certifying bodies for the rotation of non-perennial crops in a manner that maintains or increases soil, organic matter, fertility, microbial activity and;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. General soil health; and recommending that the certification programmes insist upon specific rotations, including legumes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The exclusion of Chilean nitrate and all synthetic nitrogenous fertilisers, including urea, calls for the following:

1. an avoidance of undesired inputs, i.e. by clear distinction between neighboring organic and conventional fields, and by respecting a conversion period;

2. only a supplementary use of mineral fertiliser (e.g. P, K, rock-powders for micro-nutrient supply) to organic fertilisation;
Table 6.3 (Cont…d)  
Guidelines of IFOAM Standards  

3. the use of species and varieties, which are adapted to the soil and climatic conditions to the maximum extent possible in order to limit the necessity of fertilisation;  
4. and an insistence on diverse crop rotations with an inclusion of legumes by certification programmes.

The ban of synthetic herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and other pesticides is to be supported by the following additional measures:  
1. maximum avoidance of undesired inputs from outside (i.e. contamination of equipment, conversion period, distinction of neighbouring fields, etc.);  
2. all measures to avoid losses from pests, diseases and weeds (crop rotations, manure programmes, etc.); and  
3. the use of the recommended physical and thermic measures of crop protection, i.e. pheromone traps or thermic weed control.

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6.15 Service Providers  

Service providers have a crucial role in conducting feasibility surveys, organizing farmers for imparting training, motivating farmers to adopt organic farming, gathering demand for farmers’ products and helping farmers to obtain organic certification. Service providers can be either governmental or non governmental organizations. Service providers have
direct link with National Council for Organic Farming and/or Regional Council for Organic Farming (NCOF and RCOFs). The National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) implements a major part of its programmes through the service providers. Organic certification of farmlands is subject to the fulfillment of standards set by the local certifying agency in collaboration with the IFOAM and the internal inspection is carried out by the service providers and counter external inspection is carried out by the certifying agency. Service providers and certifying agencies have their own inspectors to verify the organic quality of practices done by farmers. The structure of organic certification in India and the role of the government can be illustrated in a flow chart (fig.6.1). The National Council of Organic Farming (NCOF) is a separate national level official wing function for promoting organic farming under the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-Operation, Government of India. The NCOF has six regional centers called RCOFs through which it performs its functions in addition what is done through the service providers. The RCOFs work with farmers and service providers.

6.16 Current Status of Bio-Fertiliser Industry in India

As per the information gathered by NCOF /RCOF’s, In India, there are 164 bio-fertiliser units in the country with installed production capacity
of 67162.00 tones and actual production of 38932.689 tones in the year 2007-08. Of this, the share of Kerala is 5855 tones and 4557.839 tones respectively (Annual Report of NPOF 31-32 -2007-08). This estimate shows the total availability of bio-fertiliser produced with and without the initiative of NPOF.

Fig. 6.1
Organic Certification

[Diagram showing the organic certification process]
6.17 IFOAM Guidelines and Standards: Progress in the Idukki District

The progress of organic farming among pepper farmers in the Idukki district can be discussed under the following heads. The use and availability of organic fertilisers, government initiatives and the functioning of service providers were examined.

6.18 Availability and Use of Organic Fertilisers in the Idukki District

The major item of organic fertiliser applied in the district is the cow-dung and biogas slurry. Slurry is available to only those farmers who have a biogas plant. Farmers can utilize three sources for obtaining the required cow-dung for cultivation.

1. Rearing cattle
2. Purchase from other farmers in the local area.
3. Purchase from distant places.

For the sake of this study, local area is defined to include all places within a radius of 20 kilometers around the farmland. Data collected have been classified and presented as shown in table 6.4.

About 60 percent of the surveyed farmers use only own organic inputs. These farmers have adopted cattle rearing as an auxiliary source of income. The bi-product cow-dung is used for pepper cultivation. These
Table 6.4
Use and Availability of Organic Fertilisers in the Pepper Cultivation of Idukki District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Farmer Categories</th>
<th>Number of Farmers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Use Only Own Inputs (organic) 100%</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Organic Inputs purchased from Local Area 100%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Use Own Organic Inputs and Purchase from outside (from local area and distant places)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Use no Organic Inputs</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>360</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data collected from the Idukki district

Farmers never bother about the quantity to be applied; instead farmers divide the available quantity for all plants as they wish. Farmers who purchase organic inputs from local area constitute about 13 percent. These farmers do not own cattle and they apply cow-dung regularly in specific quantities required. A third category of 19 percent farmers makes use of own sources and purchase from outside. The details of this category are further explained in table 6.5. Lastly, 8 percent of farmers do not use any type of organic fertilisers. These categories are diagrammatically illustrated in Chart. 6.2.

The use of other type of manufactured organic fertilisers like different types of compost is very low. Farmers mostly depend on animal excreta and organic fertilisers like ‘Xtera meal’ available in fertiliser shops for organic
fertilisers. However, the latter said item is not free from chemicals. Table 6.5 gives details about the distribution of farmers who use own fertilisers as well as fertilisers purchased from other places.

**Chart. 6.2**
**Availability and use of Organic Inputs in the Pepper Cultivation of Idukki District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>1. Farmers use only own inputs</th>
<th>2. Farmers purchase organic inputs from local area</th>
<th>3. Use own as well as purchased organic inputs</th>
<th>4. Use no organic inputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: Table 6.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is very clear that only 4% of the total surveyed farmers purchase organic fertilisers such as cow-dung and chicken excreta from distant places. Another 15 percent buy such fertilisers from local area. This low percentage was not due to the fact that such inputs are abundant or produced sufficiently by the farmers in their farmlands. Really scarcity exists. However, farmers
do not dare to buy them from outside. Farmers behave in this way due to any one or more of the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Use</th>
<th>Use Own Inputs</th>
<th>% Purchase from local area</th>
<th>% Purchase from distant places</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% &lt; Use &lt; 50%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% &lt; Use &lt; 100%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data collected from the Idukki district

![Chart 6.3 Farmers who Use Own Organic Inputs](Image)

Source: Table 6.5
1. Lack of entrepreneurship
2. Miserly behaviour of farmers
3. Financial constraints.
4. Lack of awareness

Chart 6.4 Farmers Use Organic Inputs by Purchasing from Local Area

Source: Table 6.5, Frequency = Number of Farmers.

It is found that if organic fertilisers were easily available, farmers will not behave niggardly in applying them in their farmlands. Fig. 6.3 and 6.4 represent the distribution of farmers in the matter of the use of own organic fertilisers and organic inputs purchased from local area. Both are expressed on a percentage basis. We do not draw such a kind of a graph to represent
the farmers who purchase organic inputs from distant places as there are only 15 farmers who buy about 75% of total organic fertilisers from distant places.

6.19 Experience of Farmers in the Idukki District

Pepper farmers in the Idukki district complain that the central and state government’s assistance for improvement is nominal. Usually farmers get government assistance through the ‘Krishi Bhavans’ and spices board regional office, Pampadumpara. However, spices board regional office at Pampadumpara undertake minimum activities in respect of pepper as it is launched for providing technical and financial assistance to the cardamom growers. Farmers remember that they were getting nominal subsidies for growing pepper in the form of free fertilisers and pesticides, financial assistance for land terracing and treated pepper veins for planting. In distributing such subsidies, prime consideration was political; the activists of the ruling party manipulate the list of those who are eligible for subsidy in favour of their activists. Very often people who work in other fields than in agriculture and those who do not have even 25 cents of land are the real beneficiaries of these subsidies. The real farmer who owns one or two acres of land seldom get the subsidies of the government. One farmer commented
“we are fully engaged in our farms all through the year and we seldom come to know about disbursing subsidies”. We can strike two points.

1. The government assistance is insufficient to overcome the present scenario.

2. Even the nominal assistance is being appropriated by un-deserving persons.

The technical assistance they receive from the governmental and non-governmental agencies about sound agricultural practices are almost zero. The farmer himself experiments different alternatives with limited and incomplete knowledge for a way out from this crisis, but with no significant results.

6.20 Idukki: Towards Ever Green Agriculture

Attempts have been started towards an evergreen agriculture in the Idukki district. Mankulam Panchayath is declared to be a full fledged organic panchayath in which about 1500 farmlands were certified. Many farmers in the Erattayar and Chakkupallom Panchayaths are under certification process.
6.21 Service Providers in the Idukki District

Two service providers, The Kerala Agricultural Development Societies (KADS) and the Peermedu Development Society registered under Charitable Society Act, 1955 of Kerala, are actively engaged in motivating farmers, implementing organic farming practices and in helping organic certification process.

Kerala Agricultural Development Society (KADS)

KADS is a voluntary organization of farmers registered in 2001 having registered office at Thodupuzha for securing fair price to farm produces by avoiding middlemen, promotion of quality organic produce production, and assistance in sustainable management of natural resources through awareness campaign, promotion and practicing of eco-friendly agriculture. At present 1242 farmers have membership in the society. Organic pepper production is a major agenda of the society.

KADS facilitates marketing through ‘farmer’s open market’ and organic agriculture through assisting in organic certification in collaboration with INDOCERT, which is a certification agency. About 1000 farmers formed into 54 groups are: in C1, C2 and C3 stages of organic certification in about 1800 ha. Production and marketing are promoted on all spices
including condiments including pepper, and other crops. It promotes the use of inputs like vermin-compost and bio-pesticides. It also encourages women's participation in kitchen garden and marketing traditional dishes and popularizing cooking methods through 'Grameena Bhakshanashala' (village food stall). It also promotes capacity building of women SHGs in value addition and marketing.

'Farmers' Open Market' (FOM) sells farm produces directly to the customers realizing fair price for farmers. The FOM is essentially open only to those who are registered farmers. KADS officials claim that FOM facilitates to realise at least 15-20% higher price for crops than the selling price in alternate markets. In addition, the open market for organic pepper and other produce offers 30% extra price (price premium).

The 'Farmers’ Open Market'(FOM) has three sections.

1. The first is 'Oaily Sale Center' (OSC), where farmers sell perishable commodities directly to the customers. Distress sale of any perishable produce is prevented.
2. The second is 'Bulk Produce Auction Center' (BPAC), where farmers auction off their produce to traders in bulk on prices decided by farmers.

3. The third is 'Produce Exchange Center' (PEC), where farmers exchange farm produces and planting materials.

KADS renders training to farmers and organizes them through small farmer groups comprising 10-15 members in each group (SHGs). The KADS has a well functioning Internal Control System (ICS) for monitoring, controlling and checking the effective conversion of the system of farming in farmlands into organic lines.

**Peermade Development Society (PDS)**

Peermade Development Society (PDS) is a premier voluntary organization established in 1980, registered under the Travancore-Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Act of 1955 and working for the integrated and sustainable development of the rural poor irrespective of religion, caste or creed in the backward District of Idukki, in the state of Kerala, India. Over the last two decades, PDS has grown as a leading Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in India actively engaged in various
socio-economic development activities like Integrated Tribal Development, agriculture development, community health, community organization, environmental sanitation, promotion of indigenous medicines, ecological farming, production and export of organic spices, watershed management, human resource development, development of women and children etc.

The goal of Peermade Development Society is derived from this vision statement and that is “empowerment of village communities especially the tribals, women, children and the marginal farmers towards sustainable development by conserving and enhancing local resources in order to have fullness of life”. With more than two decades of dedicated service; successful implementation of a good number of developmental activities; increasing support and participation from the people have made the tri-letter PDS, a name synonymous with rural development and today it has become one of the largest voluntary organizations in India.

The society promotes organic pepper production by flourishing the advantages of using organic fertilisers such as cow-dung, granting financial assistance to buy cattle (for poor people only), imparting training to farmers to make vermin-compost and helping farmers to sell the organic pepper with a price premium.
It is encouraging that farmers in the district have begun to change their conventional attitudes towards modern systems of practices even though as a result of the crisis that they are confronting now. However the voluntary agencies which work in the Idukki district deliver minimum effort and their activities are growing very slowly due to financial constraints, and lack of sufficient government assistance.
Works Cited
