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Constraints faced by farmers in organic farming in Parbhani and Hingoli districts of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

Despite policy support, adoption and expansion of organic farming are held back by a number of problems. This study identified the constraints faced by 120 organic farmers in twelve villages of Parbhani and Hingoli districts of Maharashtra. An ex-post facto design was used and data were collected by personal interview on 17 listed constraints (yes or no), with additional constraints invited. Frequency, percentage and rank were used for analysis.

Lack of marketing facilities for organic produce was reported by all respondents (100.00 per cent), followed by low premium price (89.17 per cent), lack of coordination among government agencies, certification bodies and farmers (83.33 per cent), lack of technical guidance (79.17 per cent), low productivity (72.50 per cent), non-availability of standard guidelines (62.50 per cent) and non-availability of labour (56.67 per cent). Constraints such as irrigation (3.33 per cent), storage and transport (10.83 per cent each) and fragmented land (12.50 per cent), were reported by few. The most serious problems thus lie outside the farm gate, in markets, prices and institutions. Market linkages, price support, technical guidance and better coordination among agencies are the main areas for action.

Keywords: Organic farming, Constraints, Marketing, Premium price, Institutional coordination, Marathwada

1. Introduction

Farmers who shift to organic farming face a transition in which yields may fall, input supply is uncertain and the premium price may not appear. (Reddy *et al.*) [1] reported 12–18 per cent lower yields among organic farmers across 576 clusters in India, and (Kumar *et al.*) [2] pointed to lower yields, higher costs in the initial period and limited market access as limits on the economic benefit. Whether farmers continue with organic farming and others follow depends on how well such constraints are understood and addressed.

The constraints reported in the literature vary with place and crop. In Tamil Nadu, certified organic farmers mainly reported untimely availability of organic inputs (68.89 per cent), scarcity of irrigation water and lack of quality training (Sivaraj *et al.*, 2017) [3]. In Chhattisgarh, all respondents (100 per cent) reported lack of minimum support price for organic produce, and 93.63 per cent reported inadequate marketing facilities (Yadaw *et al.*, 2018) [4]. Inadequate marketing facilities were the major constraint for 81.67 per cent of farmers studied by (Dharmanand *et al.*) [5] and 89.16 per cent of vegetable growers studied by (Bhendarkar) [6]. (Londhe) [7] in Marathwada found non-availability of package of practices (92.77 per cent) and organic inputs (91.66 per cent) to be most serious, and (Vinayak) [8] reported lack of training (90.83 per cent) from Karnataka. Recent Garrett ranking studies reported low prices and absence of specialised marketing agencies as top constraints in Rajasthan (Dadheech *et al.*, 2025) [9], low production in southern Rajasthan (Jain *et al.*, 2026) [10] and prolonged waiting for certification in Sri Ganganagar (Bansal *et al.*, 2026) [11]. Since these results differ across regions, local evidence is needed for local planning. The present study identified the constraints faced by organic farmers in Parbhani and Hingoli districts of Maharashtra.

2. Materials and methods

The study was conducted in Parbhani and Hingoli districts of the Marathwada region of Maharashtra. Two talukas from each district (Manwath and Pathri; Vasmata and Sengaoon) and three villages from each taluka were purposively selected on the basis of the number of organic farmers, and ten farmers from each village were randomly selected, giving 120 respondents. An ex-post facto research design was used. Constraints were defined as the problems or difficulties encountered by respondents. Respondents were asked to respond "yes" or "no" to 17 listed difficulties and were also asked to mention any other constraint. The frequency and percentage of each constraint were worked out and the constraints were ranked in descending order of percentage.

3. Results and discussion

The constraints, with frequency, percentage and rank, are given in Table 1. Lack of marketing facilities was the most serious constraint, reported by every respondent, and low premium price was second (89.17 per cent). Lack of coordination among government agencies, certification bodies and farmers (83.33 per cent) and lack of technical guidance (79.17 per cent) came third and fourth. The importance of marketing agrees with (Yadaw *et al.*) [4], (Dharmanand *et al.*) [5], (Bhendarkar) [6], (Dadheech and Manmeet) [9] and (Swetha *et al.*) [12], and the values are higher than the 60.00 per cent for marketing facilities and 57.22 per cent for premium price reported from the same region by (Londhe) [7].

(Saini and Meena) [13] similarly linked marketing challenges to inadequate storage, transport and consumer awareness. Without an assured market and a premium, the lower cost of organic farming is the only economic advantage, and the lower yield erodes even that. It is interesting that 79.17 per cent wanted more technical guidance although only 31.67 per cent named lack of training as a problem; it seems that what farmers miss is continuing, practice-specific advice from field agencies, not only formal training courses. (Vinayak) [8] found lack of training to be the major constraint (90.83 per cent) in *Karnataka*, and (Londhe) [7] reported lack of package of practices (92.77 per cent) in *Marathwada*, which shows that the need for standardised, locally tested guidelines persists. Low productivity was the fifth constraint (72.50 per cent), non-availability of standard guidelines the sixth (62.50 per cent) and non-availability of labour the seventh (56.67 per cent), followed by high risk and uncertainty of returns (38.33 per cent), low demand because of the high price of organic produce (35.00 per cent) and lack of training (31.67 per cent).

Organic farming is labour-intensive for compost preparation, weeding and manuring, which explains the labour problem, and low yield under organic farming is consistent with (Reddy *et al.*) [1], (Dharmanand *et al.*) [5] and (Jain *et al.*) [10]. Complex certification (29.17 per cent), non-availability of organic inputs (20.83 per cent), small and fragmented holdings (12.50 per cent), lack of storage and transportation facilities (10.83 per cent each), requirement of a large quantity of inputs (7.50 per cent) and lack of irrigation (3.33 per cent) were reported by few farmers. Certification was a more serious problem in the studies of (Bansal and Choudhary) [11] and (Dadheech and Manmeet) [9]. Input problems were reported by much fewer farmers than in earlier work in *Maharashtra* and elsewhere (Sivaraj *et al.*,

2017; Londhe, 2022; Korde, 2017) [3, 7, 14], which suggests that on-farm and local sources of inputs are working reasonably well in the study area. Because most farmers sell through the APMC and keep produce on the farm for some time, their immediate infrastructure needs appear modest, though they may rise if farmers move to higher-value or distant markets. The overall picture is of constraints that are largely external to the farm: the four most serious ones relate to marketing, price, institutional coordination and technical guidance, while production-side and infrastructure problems were reported by fewer farmers.

4. Conclusion

The most serious constraints of organic farmers in *Parbhani* and *Hingoli* districts were lack of marketing facilities (100.00 per cent), low premium price (89.17 per cent), lack of coordination among agencies (83.33 per cent), lack of technical guidance (79.17 per cent), low productivity (72.50 per cent), non-availability of standard guidelines (62.50 per cent) and non-availability of labour (56.67 per cent). Constraints such as irrigation, storage, transport and fragmented holdings were reported by few farmers.

On this basis the following actions are suggested: (i) develop market linkages and organic-specific marketing platforms, with group and direct marketing through Farmer Producer Organisations; (ii) examine price support or assured premium mechanisms for certified and PGS-certified organic produce; (iii) improve coordination among government departments, certification bodies and farmers through a single point of support at the district level; (iv) provide continuing technical guidance and locally tested, standard package of practices; (v) address low productivity through research and demonstration on organic nutrient and pest management; and (vi) support labour-saving implements for compost and bio-input preparation. The study is limited to 120 farmers in two districts, and a Garrett ranking or similar approach on a larger sample would help to rank the constraints with more precision.

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Table 1. Constraints faced by organic farmers ($n = 120$)

Constraint	Frequency	Per cent	Rank
Lack of marketing facilities for organic produce	120	100.00	I
Low premium price for organic produce	107	89.17	II
Lack of coordination among government agencies, certification bodies and organic farmers	100	83.33	III
Lack of technical guidance on organic farming	95	79.17	IV
Low productivity under organic farming	87	72.50	V
Non-availability of standard guidelines on organic farming practices	75	62.50	VI
Non-availability of labour for organic farming practices	68	56.67	VII
High risk and uncertainty regarding returns	46	38.33	VIII
Low demand for organic products due to high price	42	35.00	IX
Lack of training on organic farming	38	31.67	X
Complex organic certification process	35	29.17	XI
Non-availability of organic inputs	25	20.83	XII
Small and fragmented land holdings	15	12.50	XIII
Lack of storage facilities	13	10.83	XIV
Lack of transportation facilities	13	10.83	XIV
Organic farming requires a large quantity of inputs	9	7.50	XV
Lack of irrigation facilities	4	3.33	XVI

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