

ADOPTION OF ORGANIC FARMING PRACTICES IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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Although organic farming (OF) is an ecologically and economically sustainable form of agriculture, its adoption rate is still very low among farmers in Sri Lanka. This study was conducted in Batticaloa district, Sri Lanka to determine the present situation of adoption and to identify the factors affecting OF practices. Both non-organic and organic farmers (50 from each) were selected via simple random sampling method and interviewed using pre-tested questionnaires. A binary logistic regression model and a SWOT analysis for the adoption of organic farming were used for data analysis. According to the results, majority of the organic respondents were women (60%) and 44% had acquired at least primary education. Majority of the organic respondents had adopted climate smart organic farming. Organic manure usage (98%), application of compost (84%), maintaining buffer zone for the farm (78%) and integration of crop and livestock (66%) were recognized as mostly adopted climate smart agricultural practices by the organic respondents. According to the SWOT analysis, availability of land and knowledge on preparation of natural pesticide and fertilizers were identified as strengths and lack of credit, limitation in finding raw material were identified as weaknesses. Having a growing market for organic products and availability of effective extension services were the opportunities identified while climate change and poor infrastructure facilities were the potential threats for adopting OF. Study revealed that environmental concern (OR=13.46), farming experience (OR=1.12), average monthly income (OR=0.99), age (OR=0.92) and access to market (OR=0.07) as factors significantly ($P<0.05$) affecting adoption on OF while educational level (OR=0.22) is significantly affecting at $P<0.1$ when compared to non-organic farmers. There are adequate strengths and opportunities to expand organic agricultural practices in Batticaloa district. Therefore it is recommended to have well-planned awareness programs and develop agriculture infrastructure of the district to improve the adoption rate of organic farming.

Keywords: Batticaloa, Climate smart agriculture, Organic farming, SWOT analysis