

## **Human perception and barriers in mass organic farming: A case study in the dry-zone of Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

Agriculture is essential to human beings and societal expansion worldwide. Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It depends on ecological processes, biodiversity, and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of contributions with adverse effects. The general objective of the study was to identify the factors constraining mass application of organic farming practices and suggest appropriate strategies for controlling its barriers. The specific objectives were to identify the market potential for organic production, the importance of organic farming, and to establish social, economic, management, educational limitations for mass application of organic farming. The study was carried out with 80 household questionnaires using random sample method, key personal interviews and focus group discussions at Serugasyaya village. These data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods such as mean, mode, percentage etc. According to the perception of the people, 63% contributed to enhance the ecological services such as water and soil quality improvement etc. About 57% indicated that organic farming contributes for the improvement of the biodiversity and soil fertility while another 53% of the people perceived organic production as a supporting system in maintaining human health. The major barriers were identified as the application of organic farming and negligence of traditional knowledge due to popularization of modern agricultural technologies. The second barrier was the identified as the current pattern of fertilizer usage and the low market potential for organic agricultural products. The third barrier was that chemical fertilizers and agrochemicals bring short term gains and provide immediate effects. According to the results, the researchers suggest to disseminate the indigenous knowledge related to organic farming and provision of financial assistance by means of subsidies and funds to improve the organic farming activities in the area. Study revealed that, there is low awareness about importance of organic farming production and their beneficiaries among the present farmers. Finally an integrated approach is essential for successful implementation of organic farming programs.

**Keywords:** *Agriculture, Barriers, Ecological farming, Impact, Importance*

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