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Organic Farming in Jammu and Kashmir: Policy Evolution, Spatial Distribution and a Case Study of Bangidar Village in Anantnag

Fezala Akhter [1*], Dr. Sudheesh B [2]
[1] Research Scholar, Rabindranath Tagore University, Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, India
[2] Associate Professor of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Liberal Arts, Rabindranath Tagore University, Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, India

* Corresponding Author: **Fezala Akhter**

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Abstract
Organic farming has gained increasing importance as an approach to sustainable agricultural development, with emphasis on ecological production, reduced dependence on synthetic inputs, farmer collectivization, certification and market development. This study examines the evolution and policy framework of organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir, analyses its spatial distribution with particular reference to Anantnag district, and investigates the development of organic farming at the village level through a case study of Bangidar in Anantnag. The study adopts a descriptive and case-study-based research design, combining secondary information from government and institutional sources with primary data collected from 29 farmers selected through simple random sampling from a cluster of 172 organic farmers in Bangidar. The findings indicate that organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir has evolved progressively from early departmental initiatives towards a more structured institutional framework involving certification systems, cluster-based programmes, farmer organizations and recent interventions under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme. The reported organic-farming area was 8,332.90 hectares in 2023–24, with Anantnag accounting for 400 hectares, which increased to 417.12 hectares in 2024–25. At the village level, Bangidar's organic farming cluster covers 14.72 hectares and involves 172 farmers. Among the surveyed farmers, crop rotation was universally practiced, while composting, neem-based disease management and manual weed control were widely adopted. Farmers reported an average income of ₹192,931 from organic produce and an average reported farming cost of ₹46,690. All respondents perceived organic farming as better than conventional farming, while 100% reported the availability of market opportunities. However, high costs of organic inputs (89.7%), pest problems (72.4%), fluctuating market prices (58.6%) and low crop yield during conversion (44.8%) emerged as major constraints. The study concludes that sustained development of organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir requires greater emphasis on affordable organic inputs, technical support, simplified certification, collective marketing and stronger farmer institutions alongside continued expansion of organic-farming area.

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1. Introduction

Organic farming has gained importance as an approach to sustainable agricultural development, emphasizing ecological processes, biological inputs and locally available resources while reducing dependence on synthetic agricultural inputs. Its development also involves soil health, environmental sustainability, farmer organization, certification and market access. In India, government initiatives such as the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), introduced in 2015–16, have supported organic farming through farmer clusters, training, certification and marketing assistance [1, 2].

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), with its diverse agro-climatic conditions and agricultural biodiversity, offers considerable scope for organic and sustainable farming systems. The Agriculture Policy for Jammu and Kashmir State, 2013 provided a broader framework for agricultural development, including environmental sustainability, productivity, value addition and rural livelihoods [3]. Subsequently, national initiatives and the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) strengthened institutional support for organic agriculture. Under HADP, Project 16, Alternate System of Agriculture for Sustainability, focuses on organic cultivation, organic-input production, entrepreneurship, capacity building and certification [4, 5].

The reported distribution of organic farming indicates its presence across both divisions of J&K. According to the *Digest of Statistics 2023–24*, the Union Territory had 8,332.90 hectares under reported organic farming, comprising 4,300 hectares in Kashmir Division and 4,032.90 hectares in Jammu Division. Anantnag district accounted for 400 hectares [6]. These figures demonstrate the geographical spread of organic farming while highlighting the importance of examining district-level variation and local institutional arrangements.

Anantnag district provides a relevant setting for investigating organic farming at the village level. In Bangidar village, organized vegetable production is associated with farmer collectivization and institutional support. Government of India records identifies The Kashmir Valley Vegetables Producer Cooperative Limited, Bangidar, under Anantnag, with the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) as the implementing agency and Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Kashmir (SKUAST-K) as the promoting agency. The cooperative was registered on 14 February 2023 under registration number RCS/J&K/2023/02/00669 [7]. This institutional arrangement provides a basis for examining the relationship between farmer organization, production practices and support services.

Despite increasing policy attention to organic agriculture in J&K, village-level evidence on production practices, institutional support, certification, marketing and farmers' perceived constraints remains important. The present study addresses this need by combining secondary information on policy development and the spatial distribution of organic farming with primary data collected from farmers in Bangidar village. This approach connects the broader policy framework with farm-level experiences and the institutional organization of organic farming.

Accordingly, the study aims to examine the evolution and policy framework of organic farming in J&K, analyze its spatial distribution with particular reference to Anantnag district, and investigate organic-farming practices and experiences in Bangidar village. It also examines farmer organization, institutional support, certification, marketing, economic aspects and perceived constraints affecting village-level organic farming.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design and Study Area

The study adopted a descriptive case-study design to examine the development of organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), with particular reference to Anantnag district and Bangidar village. Secondary data were used to analyze policy development and the spatial distribution of organic farming, while primary data provided village-level evidence on production practices, institutional support, certification, farmer organization and marketing.

Bangidar village was selected because of its association with organized organic farming and collective farmer activity. According to the Assistant Agriculture Officer (AEO), Bangidar, the organic farming cluster comprises 172 farmers. The village therefore provides a setting for examining the local implementation of organic farming initiatives and the role of institutional support.

2.2. Sources of Secondary Data

Secondary data were obtained from official government publications, departmental records and institutional documents. Publications of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, were used to examine the reported area under organic farming at the Union Territory and district levels. Government policy documents and programme guidelines relating to the National Project on Organic Farming, National Programme for Organic Production, PGS-India, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region were consulted to examine the evolution of organic-farming initiatives. Documents from Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir were used to examine HADP Project 16, while government records on Farmer Producer Organizations were consulted for information about the Bangidar cooperative. Departmental information concerning the village cluster was obtained from the AEO, Bangidar.

2.3. Sampling and Primary Data Collection

The sampling frame comprised 172 farmers associated with the Bangidar organic farming cluster, based on a list obtained from the Agriculture Department through the AEO, Bangidar. Using simple random sampling, 29 farmers were selected, representing approximately 16.9% of the reported cluster membership. The cluster size and sampling-frame information were communicated by the AEO and were not independently verified against a published departmental report.

Primary data were collected on respondents' socio-economic characteristics, landholdings, crops cultivated, organic-farming practices, input sources, certification, institutional support, farmer organization, marketing, perceived benefits and constraints. The survey provides case-study-level evidence from Bangidar and is not intended to statistically represent all organic farmers in Anantnag district.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were organized, tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Frequencies and percentages were used for categorical variables, while means, standard deviations, minimum values and maximum values were calculated for quantitative variables, where appropriate. The primary findings were interpreted alongside secondary information on the policy framework and spatial distribution of organic farming in J&K, particularly Anantnag district.

3. Results and Findings

3.1. Evolution of Organic Farming in Jammu and Kashmir

The development of organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has progressed from early departmental initiatives to a

more organized system supported by government programmes, certification mechanisms and farmer institutions. Directorate of Agriculture, Kashmir records indicate that 248 hectares had been brought under organic farming up to 2007–08. The department also reported training 331 farmers and organizing exposure visits for 115 farmers, highlighting the importance of capacity building in the initial stages of development [8].

The Agriculture Policy for Jammu and Kashmir State, 2013 subsequently provided a broader policy framework for agricultural development, emphasizing environmental sustainability, productivity, value addition and rural livelihoods [3]. At the national level, the introduction of the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) in 2015–16 strengthened organized organic farming through farmer clusters, training, organic inputs, certification and marketing support [1, 2].

More recently, the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), particularly Project 16, Alternate System of Agriculture for Sustainability, has expanded institutional support for organic and regenerative agriculture. Its objectives include organic-input production, farmer training, entrepreneurship, technology demonstrations and certification facilitation [4, 5]. Overall, these developments reflect a gradual transition from departmental promotion towards a more integrated framework for organic production and market development.

3.2. Policy and Institutional Framework for Organic Farming

The institutional framework for organic farming in J&K comprises national programmes, certification systems and region-specific agricultural initiatives. The National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), introduced in October 2004, supported technical training, organic-input production, quality control and market development [10]. Subsequently, the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) established standards and procedures for organic certification, while Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India) introduced a group-based assurance mechanism particularly relevant to domestic markets [11, 12].

At the regional level, the Agriculture Policy for Jammu and Kashmir State, 2013 incorporated organic farming within the broader framework of sustainable agricultural development [3]. The Jammu Kashmir Arogya Gram Yojana, launched by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in October 2014, also supported agricultural diversification through the proposed cultivation of aromatic plants in selected villages, although it was not specifically an organic-farming programme [13].

PKVY, introduced in 2015–16, represented a significant step towards cluster-based organic production and collective certification. Government of India data reported allocations of ₹898 lakh for 2023–24 and ₹671.30 lakh for 2024–25 for J&K under the programme [1, 2]. The Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER), although part of the broader national framework, is specifically targeted at the North-Eastern Region and is not treated as a direct programme for J&K [14].

An organic-farming policy document was reportedly prepared for J&K in 2020, according to contemporary reporting on SKUAST-Jammu. However, because the primary government notification or final policy document was not available for this study, the development is treated as a policy-formulation milestone rather than confirmation of a formally enacted standalone policy.

The most recent implementation-oriented initiative is HADP Project 16, which supports organic-input production, technology demonstrations, capacity building, entrepreneurship and certification-related activities [4, 5]. Institutional training and research activities under the programme connect policy objectives with practical agricultural interventions. Digital platforms such as the Jaivik Kheti Portal further support market access by connecting organic farmers and other stakeholders.

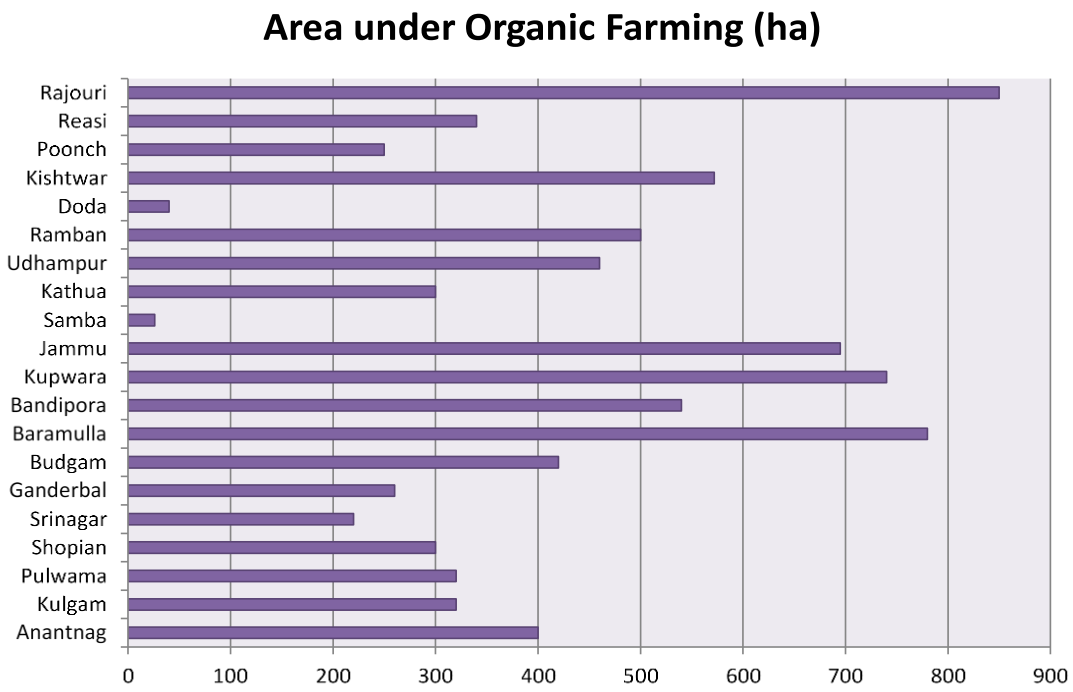
Taken together, the policy framework has expanded from technical support and certification towards a more integrated approach encompassing production, institutional development and marketing. These initiatives provide the broader context for examining the distribution of organic farming and the village-level experience of Bangidar.

3.3. Spatial Distribution of Organic Farming in Jammu and Kashmir

According to the Digest of Statistics 2023–24, Jammu and Kashmir had 8,332.90 hectares under reported organic farming, comprising 4,300 hectares in Kashmir Division and 4,032.90 hectares in Jammu Division [6]. The distribution across districts indicates that organic farming was present in both divisions, although the reported area varied considerably.

In Kashmir Division, Baramulla recorded the largest reported area at 780 hectares, followed by Kupwara (740 hectares) and Bandipora (540 hectares). Anantnag accounted for 400 hectares, while Srinagar recorded the lowest area at 220 hectares. In Jammu Division, Rajouri recorded 850 hectares, followed by Jammu (694.90 hectares) and Kishtwar (572 hectares). Samba and Doda reported comparatively smaller areas of 26 and 40 hectares, respectively [6].

Anantnag accounted for approximately 4.8% of the Union Territory's reported organic-farming area and 9.3% of Kashmir Division's area in 2023–24. The distribution demonstrates that organic farming was not confined to a single geographical region, although substantial differences existed between districts. These variations provide the geographical context for examining organic farming in Anantnag and the village-level initiatives undertaken in Bangidar.



Source: Author's Compilation Based on the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Digest of Statistics 2023–24

Fig 1: District-wise Area under Organic Farming in Jammu and Kashmir, 2023–24

3.4. Organic Farming in Anantnag District

Anantnag is an important agricultural district in southern Kashmir, where vegetable cultivation and horticulture contribute to rural livelihoods. According to the *Digest of Statistics 2023–24*, the district had 400 hectares under reported organic farming, increasing to 417.12 hectares in 2024–25. During the same period, the reported organic-farming area in J&K increased from 8,332.90 to 8,864.49 hectares [6, 17]. Thus, Anantnag recorded an increase of 17.12 hectares, approximately 4.3%, over the period.

These figures indicate an expansion in reported organic-farming area but do not establish corresponding changes in productivity, profitability or certification coverage. Institutional interventions under HADP and district-level agricultural initiatives have also emphasized capacity building, entrepreneurship, sustainable production and market linkages [4, 5].

Organized organic vegetable production in Bangidar provides a more localized example of these developments. A district-level agricultural programme conducted in 2022 included interaction with organic vegetable producers and a visit to the Bangidar organic vegetable cluster. This indicates that the village had become a focus of organized agricultural activity and provides a basis for examining farmer organization and institutional support at the local level.

Although district statistics establish the geographical extent of organic farming, they do not explain farmers' production practices, certification arrangements, marketing experiences or perceived constraints. The Bangidar case study therefore complements the secondary data by examining these aspects through primary field-level evidence.

3.5. Case Study of Bangidar Village

Bangidar village, located in Achabal Block of Anantnag district, falls within Ashajipura Agricultural Zone and Dooru Agricultural Sub-Division. According to Agriculture Department information, organic-farming activities in the village began around 2020. The departmental records identify an organic-farming cluster comprising 172 farmers across 14.72 hectares.

The village's organic production is primarily associated with vegetable cultivation, including knol-khol, spinach, coriander and kale. An important institutional feature is The Kashmir Valley Vegetables Producer Cooperative Limited, Bangidar, which is listed in Government of India records under Anantnag district. The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) is identified as the implementing agency and Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Kashmir (SKUAST-K) as the promoting agency. The cooperative was registered on 14 February 2023 under registration number RCS/J&K/2023/02/00669 [7].

The cluster and cooperative provide an institutional setting for examining collective farmer activity, production practices and market coordination. However, the presence of these institutions alone does not establish their effectiveness in improving certification, productivity or farmer incomes.

For the primary survey, a list of 172 farmers associated with the cluster was obtained from the Agriculture Department through the Assistant Agriculture Officer (AEO), Bangidar. Using simple random sampling, 29 farmers were selected and surveyed during 2025 through a structured schedule. The survey collected information on farmers' socio-economic characteristics, farming practices, input use, certification, institutional support, marketing, perceived benefits and constraints.

The Bangidar case therefore links the wider policy and spatial development of organic farming in J&K with farmers' experiences at the village level. The findings from the 29 respondents are presented in the following sections.

Table 1: Selected socio-economic characteristics of sampled farmers in Bangidar

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Young (<35 years)	0	0
	Middle (35-60 years)	19	65.5
	Old (>60 years)	10	34.5
Sex	Male	26	89.7
	Female	3	10.3
Education	Illiterate	6	20.7
	Primary	11	37.9
	Secondary	7	24.1
	Graduate	5	17.2
Family Type	Joint	5	17.2
	Nuclear	24	82.8
Occupation	Government	5	17.2
	Private	1	3.4
	Farmer	7	24.1
	Business	8	27.6
	Other	6	20.7
	Laborer	2	6.9

Source: Primary Data

The findings indicate that 65.5% of the respondents were aged 35–60 years, while the remaining 34.5% were above 60 years. Male farmers constituted 89.7% of the sample, compared with 10.3% females. Regarding education, 37.9% had primary education, 24.1% had secondary education, 20.7% were illiterate, and 17.2% were graduates. Most respondents belonged to nuclear families (82.8%). Business was the most frequently reported occupation (27.6%), followed by farming (24.1%) and other occupations (20.7%). Overall, the findings indicate that the surveyed organic farmers were predominantly middle-aged or older men, with varied educational backgrounds and occupational profiles.

3.7. Organic Farming Profile and Practices of the Respondents

The surveyed farmers in Bangidar village reported a common crop pattern under organic cultivation. All 29 respondents (100.0%) reported cultivation of spinach, kale, knol-khol and coriander. Thus, the organic production system in the study area is characterized primarily by a combination of these four vegetable crops.

All respondents reported six years of experience in organic farming, indicating that organic cultivation had been established among the surveyed farmers for a considerable period. The area under organic cultivation varied across households, ranging from 2 to 15 kanal, with a mean of 4.00 ± 2.52 kanal. The variation indicates differences in the scale of organic cultivation among the surveyed farmers.

Table 2: Organic Crop Profile and Area under Organic Cultivation among Sample Farmers

S. No	Indicator	Result
1	Spinach	29 (100.0%)
2	Kale	29 (100.0%)
3	Knol-khol	29 (100.0%)
4	Coriander	29 (100.0%)
5	Duration of Organic Farming	6.00 years
6	Area under Organic Farming, Mean ± SD	4.00 ± 2.52 kanal
7	Minimum Area	2 kanal
8	Maximum Area	15 kanal

Source: Primary Data

All 29 respondents (100%) reported cultivating spinach, kale, knol-khol and coriander under organic farming. All respondents also reported six years of experience in organic farming. The average area under organic cultivation was 4.00 kanal, with a standard deviation of 2.52 kanal. The cultivated area ranged from 2 to 15 kanal, indicating variations in the scale of organic cultivation among households. Overall, the findings show a common vegetable-cropping pattern among the surveyed farmers, despite differences in the area cultivated.

Table 3: Major organic farming practices adopted by respondents

S. No	Practice/Method	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Organic Farming Practices		
	Composting	20	69.0
	Both Composting and Mulching	2	6.9
	Neither composting nor Mulching	7	24.1
2	Fertilizers & Soil Amendments		
	Compost	13	44.8
	Cow dung	10	34.5
	Livestock Manure	4	13.8
	Wood/Kangri Ash	2	6.9
3	Disease Management		
	Neem Oil/ Extract Spray	18	62.1
	Bio-pesticides	6	20.7
	Proper Spacing & Ventilation	5	17.2
4	Crop Rotation		
	Yes	29	100.0
	No	0	0.0
5	Cover Crops		
	Yes	0	0.0
	No	29	100.0
6	Weed Management		
	Manual weeding	12	41.4
	Rouging	8	27.6
	Other Methods	7	24.1
	Hoeing	2	6.9

Source: Primary Data

The findings indicate that farmers primarily rely on locally available resources and traditional organic farming practices. Composting was reported by 69.0% of respondents, while compost and cow dung were the most frequently reported soil amendments, accounting for 44.8% and 34.5%, respectively. Neem oil or neem extract spraying was the most commonly reported disease-management method (62.1%), followed by bio-pesticides (20.7%). Crop rotation was practiced by all respondents (100%), whereas none reported using cover crops. Manual weeding was the most frequently reported weed-management method (41.4%), followed by rouging (27.6%). These findings indicate widespread use of some established organic practices, while the absence of cover cropping and limited use of mulching suggest scope for further technical guidance.

3.8. Economic and Perceived Outcomes of Organic Farming

Table 4: Income from Organic Produce and Cost Incurred on Organic Farming

S. No	Variable	Mean (₹)	Minimum (₹)	Maximum (₹)	SD (₹)
1	Income from Organic Produce	192931	100000	450000	87419
2	Cost Incurred on Organic Farming	46690	25000	125000	26186

Source: Primary Data

The average reported income from organic produce was ₹192,931, ranging from ₹100,000 to ₹450,000. The standard deviation of ₹87,419 indicates considerable variation in reported income among the respondents. The average reported farming cost was ₹46,690, with values ranging from ₹25,000 to ₹125,000. These differences may reflect variation in farm size and production characteristics. However, the figures represent reported income and costs and should not be treated as a complete measure of farm profitability because all possible production and opportunity costs may not have been included.

Table 5: Quality, Safety Practices and Perception of Farmers.

S. No	Indicator	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Quality & Safety Practices		
	Use of non-GMO Seeds	9	31.0
	Hygienic Harvesting & Handling	10	34.5
	Removal of Diseased Leaves	10	34.5
2	Perception. Is Organic Farming better than Conventional		
	Yes	29	100.0
	No	0	0.0

Source: Primary Data

Hygienic harvesting and handling, and the removal of diseased leaves, were each reported by 34.5% of respondents. The use of non-GMO seeds was reported by 31.0% of farmers. These results indicate that the reported adoption of the listed quality and safety practices varied among respondents. All 29 farmers (100%) considered organic farming better than conventional farming, indicating a uniformly positive perception within the sample. However, this finding reflects farmers' opinions and does not independently establish that organic farming is more productive or profitable than conventional farming.

3.9. Perceived Benefits, Market Opportunities and Constraints

Table 6: Perceived Benefits of Organic Farming among Sample Farmers (n=29)

S. No	Perceived Benefits	Frequency	Percentage
1	Increased nutrient content in food	14	48.3
2	Improved Soil Fertility	10	34.5
3	Chemical Free Food	11	37.9
4	Improved Biodiversity	11	37.9
5	Reduced Pollution	12	41.4
6	Export Potential	0	0.0
7	Support to Local Economies	0	0.0

Source: Primary Data
Note: Multiple responses were permitted; therefore, percentages do not total 100%

The benefits most frequently identified by respondents were increased nutrient content in food (48.3%) and reduced pollution (41.4%). Chemical-free food and improved biodiversity were each reported by 37.9% of farmers, while 34.5% identified improved soil fertility. No respondent selected export potential or support to local economies as a perceived benefit. Overall, the responses indicate that farmers primarily associate organic farming with food-quality and environmental benefits. These findings represent respondents' perceptions rather than independently measured environmental or nutritional outcomes.

Table 7: Perceived Merits and Demerits of Organic Farming (n=29)

S. No	Category	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Merits	Premium Price for Organic Produce	10	34.5
		Improved long-term farmer livelihood	10	34.5
		Promotes Sustainable Farming System	9	31.0
		Better Market Demand	15	51.7
		Reduced Dependence on External Chemical Inputs	6	20.7
		Reduced Input Cost	8	27.6
2	Demerits	Lengthy certification process	16	55.2
		Longer crop production period	7	24.1
		Difficult pest/disease Management Organically	11	37.9
		Limited Nutrient Availability	0	0.0
		Time Consuming	0	0.0
		Productivity lower Compared to Conventional	4	13.8
		Limited choice of Off-Season Crops	8	27.6

Source: Primary Data
Note: Multiple responses were permitted separately for merits and demerits. The two zero-coded demerit responses were treated as no response/not selected rather than as a substantive demerit.

Better market demand was the most frequently reported merit of organic farming (51.7%), followed by premium prices and improved long-term farmer livelihoods (34.5% each). Promoting sustainable farming was identified by 31.0% of respondents. The main perceived disadvantage was the lengthy certification process, reported by 55.2% of farmers. Difficulties in organic pest and disease management were reported by 37.9%, while 27.6% identified limited choices of off-season crops. The findings highlight the perceived market potential of organic farming alongside concerns about certification and production management.

Table 8: Major Constraints in Organic Crop Production (n=29)

S. No	Constraint	Frequency	Percentage
1	Pests	21	72.4
2	High Labor Requirement	6	20.7
3	High Cost of Organic Inputs	26	89.7
4	Fluctuating Market Price	17	58.6
5	Low Crop Yield during Conversion	13	44.8
6	Shelf Life	4	13.8

Source: Primary Data
Note: Multiple responses were permitted; percentages are based on the number of respondents (n=29).

The major constraints reported by the respondents were the high cost of organic inputs and pest problems. The high cost of organic inputs was reported by 26 respondents (89.7%), followed by pests (21; 72.4%) and fluctuating market prices (17; 58.6%). Low crop yield during conversion was reported by 13 respondents (44.8%), while high labor requirements were reported by 6 respondents (20.7%). Shelf life was reported by 4 respondents (13.8%).

Table 9: Availability of Market Opportunities for Organic Produce (n=29)

S. No	Market Opportunities Available	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	29	100.0
2	No	0	0.0
Total		29	100.0

Source: Primary Data

All 29 respondents (100.0%) reported that market opportunities for organic produce were available. This finding, together with the high proportion identifying better market demand as a merit, indicates a generally favorable perception of the market potential of organic produce in Bangidar. However, the prominence of fluctuating market prices as a constraint suggests that the availability of a market does not necessarily imply stable or remunerative market conditions.

3.10. Employment Opportunities in Organic Farming

Table 10: Employment Opportunities Associated with Organic Farming among Sample Farmers in Bangidar

S. No	Type of Employment Opportunity	Frequency	Percentage
1	Family Labor Employment	13	44.8
2	Hired Labor Employment	6	20.7
3	Self-Employment	5	17.2
4	Seasonal-Employment	5	17.2
5	No Additional Employment	0	0.0
Total		29	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 11 shows that family labour employment was the most frequently reported category, accounting for 44.8% of the sampled farmers. Hired labour employment was reported by 20.7%, while self-employment and seasonal employment each accounted for 17.2%. No respondent selected the category of no additional employment. These findings indicate that organic farming is associated with household labour involvement as well as hired and seasonal work in Bangidar. However, the results represent respondents' reported employment categories and should not be interpreted as a direct measure of the number of jobs created or the total labour days generated.

4. Discussion

The development of organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir has been gradual and institutionally mediated. Initial departmental initiatives focusing on farmer training and awareness were followed by broader policy support for organic inputs, certification, cluster development and marketing. Recent interventions under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) indicate a more integrated approach encompassing input production, technical capacity building, entrepreneurship and certification [4, 5]. This progression reflects a shift from promotional activities towards a more organized institutional framework for organic agriculture.

The spatial distribution of reported organic-farming area demonstrates its presence across both Jammu and Kashmir Divisions, although substantial district-level variation persists. The reported area of 8,332.90 hectares in 2023–24 was distributed between Kashmir Division (4,300 hectares) and Jammu Division (4,032.90 hectares) [6]. Anantnag accounted for 400 hectares in 2023–24 and 417.12 hectares in 2024–25 [6, 18]. At the village level, Bangidar had a recorded cluster of 172 farmers covering 14.72 hectares. The involvement of farmer cooperative and agricultural institutions provides a potential platform for collective production, technical support and market coordination. However, reported area and institutional presence alone do not establish improvements in productivity, profitability or sustainability.

The primary survey indicates a relatively uniform production system among the sampled farmers, characterized by the cultivation of spinach, kale, knol-khol and coriander, crop rotation, composting and the use of organic manures and neem-based disease-management practices. The widespread use of locally available resources suggests substantial reliance on low-external-input methods. However, the absence of reported cover-crop adoption and limited use of mulching indicate opportunities to strengthen soil and moisture management through improved technical guidance. Farmers reported a mean income of ₹192,931 from organic produce and a mean farming cost of ₹46,690. These figures provide descriptive evidence of farm-level economic activity but should not be interpreted as a formal profitability estimate because the reported costs may exclude family labor, opportunity costs and other implicit expenses.

Farmers generally expressed favorable perceptions of organic farming, particularly regarding food quality, reduced chemical pollution, and biodiversity and soil fertility. However, these responses represent farmers' perceptions rather than independently measured environmental or nutritional outcomes. Similarly, although all respondents reported market opportunities, 58.6% identified fluctuating prices as a major constraint. This contrast highlights the distinction between market availability and stable, remunerative returns. Collective marketing, improved market

information, product aggregation and stronger linkages with organized buyers could help address this challenge.

Certification and production-related constraints also emerged as important barriers. Lengthy certification was identified as a disadvantage by 55.2% of respondents, while high organic-input costs, pest problems and low yields during conversion were reported by 89.7%, 72.4% and 44.8%, respectively. These findings indicate that the expansion of organic farming requires more than an increase in cultivated area. Affordable inputs, timely technical assistance, effective pest management and accessible certification support are necessary to improve farmers' production conditions. Farmer organizations, including the Bangidar cooperative, may facilitate these services, although their actual effectiveness requires further assessment.

The employment findings indicate that organic farming involves household, hired, self-employed and seasonal labor, with family labor representing the most frequently reported category (44.8%). These figures describe patterns of labor involvement rather than the number of jobs generated. Overall, the findings highlight the interaction between government support, farmer organization, production practices and market conditions. Future interventions should prioritize productivity improvement, input-cost reduction, technical and certification assistance, and stable market linkages. Such measures could strengthen the economic viability of organic farming while supporting its further development in Jammu and Kashmir.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the evolution and spatial distribution of organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir, with particular reference to Anantnag district and Bangidar village. The findings indicate that organic farming has developed through successive departmental initiatives, government programmes, certification mechanisms and institutional support. Recent interventions under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) reflect an increasing emphasis on organic inputs, technical capacity building, certification, entrepreneurship and market development.

Organic farming is reported across both Jammu and Kashmir Divisions, although its distribution varies among districts. In Anantnag, the reported area increased from 400 hectares in 2023–24 to 417.12 hectares in 2024–25. The Bangidar case further illustrates the village-level organization of organic farming through a cluster of 172 farmers covering 14.72 hectares. The survey of 29 farmers identified a vegetable-oriented production system characterized by crop rotation, composting and the use of organic manures and neem-based pest-management practices.

Despite generally favorable farmer perceptions and reported market opportunities, important constraints remain, particularly high organic-input costs, pest problems, fluctuating prices, lower yields during conversion and lengthy certification procedures. Farmers reported a mean income of ₹192,931 from organic produce and mean farming costs of ₹46,690; however, these figures do not constitute a comprehensive profitability assessment. The findings therefore highlight the need to complement area expansion with improvements in production efficiency, technical support, certification and market stability.

As a focused village-level case study, Bangidar cannot statistically represent all organic farmers in Jammu and Kashmir. Nevertheless, it provides useful evidence of the interaction between policy support, farmer organization, production practices and market conditions. Strengthening these linkages will be important for improving the viability and long-term development of organic farming in the Union Territory.

6. Policy Implications

The findings suggest seven priorities for strengthening organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir:

1. Improve organic-input availability and affordability: Support village- and cluster-level production and distribution of quality compost, bio-inputs and other permitted organic inputs, addressing the high costs reported by 89.7% of respondents.
2. Strengthen pest-management support: Provide regular extension services, field demonstrations and training in preventive monitoring and appropriate organic pest-management practices, given that 72.4% of respondents reported pest problems.
3. Facilitate certification: Assist farmer organizations with documentation, record keeping, inspection coordination and other certification requirements, particularly in view of the 55.2% of respondents who identified lengthy certification as a disadvantage.
4. Improve collective marketing: Strengthen aggregation, grading, packaging, branding, market information and collective negotiation to address fluctuating prices, reported by 58.6% of respondents.
5. Promote improved production practices: Demonstrate locally suitable soil- and moisture-management practices, including cover cropping and mulching where appropriate, through cluster-level extension programmes.
6. Strengthen farmer institutions: Support cooperatives and farmer groups in coordinating technical assistance, certification, production planning and marketing, while assessing their effectiveness through measurable outcomes.
7. Adopt value-chain-oriented monitoring: Evaluate organic-farming programmes using indicators such as productivity, input costs, certification coverage, farm-level returns, price stability, farmer participation and institutional performance, rather than relying solely on reported cultivated area.

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