



## Significance of Promotion and Awareness Creation of Organic Certification Procedure by Agricultural Colleges in Meghalaya State

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The Meghalaya state one among north eastern Hilly state with 56000 ha area under organic farming [1] and a state with least use of agrochemicals. The traditional practices, local varieties, indigenous knowledge and proximity to nature have significant influence on agricultural activity. The factors such as large availability of organic matter through forest litter and seasonal vegetation, high rainfall with least scope for agrochemical based agriculture, subsistence farming, soil constraints (soil acidity, topography and relief), diversified enterprises with prominent place for animal component, availability of organic inputs and promotion of organic farming play a major role in maintaining crop cultivation organic in nature. Even with all these organic practices, the produce was mostly sold in local market or in block level market with normal prices. This lack in premier prices to produce are arises due to difficulty in claiming the produce as organic due to non-monitored production system and consideration of farmers them self as organic by default and not by choice. The awareness about power and status of certified products in market and following the process of certification (which is easy for the farmers as they are already following organic production system) will give the farmer legal right and confidence to sale their produce as organic at premium prices. The identity of organic product in international market is Logo of India organic as well as logo of certification agency who certified the product.

The certification is procedure by which a third party (Certified accreditation agency by NPOP) gives written assurance that, product, process or services are in conformity with certain standards. The certification has three basic requirements as given by NPOP [2] viz., 1) The methods and materials used in production

must meet organic standards 2) There must be clear and ongoing documentation of these methods and materials and 3) There must be a paper trail tracing a product back to its production site, in order to verify the methods and materials used in production. The successful completion of certification give right to use logo of organic India making the crop produce eligible to sale as organic across the India (Figure 1). The National Programme on Organic Production (NPOP) is apex body in India dealing with all sort of activities related to certification and accreditation. Accreditation is process of by which authority (NPOP in case of India) will give a formal recognition that, a agency or company of group (Farmer producer organization) is competent to carry out process of certification and issue a certificate for organic produce. The farmers has to registered to any certification agency (Table 1) and follow the procedure which start with filling of application to provide all sort of information about the agricultural activities done in past and expected crops and details of resource availability for ongoing season. The gestation period is duration required to convert the field from presently followed agricultural practices to organic and after this process, farmers will be recognize as organic farmer and allow growing and sale the crop produce as organic. Considering this status of crop production practices and potential of certified organic farming, it will be worthy to discuss the scope, initial preparations required and impact of such activity at college level for which article in meant.

Scope for certification

- Large array of crops agronomic crops grown in state (Table 2) and farmers/stake holders willingness for organic farming



**Figure 1:** National organic logo “India Organic” developed by National Programme on Organic Production (NPOP).

- Ease in certification process due non-involvement of any farm around with inorganic agrochemicals use
- Less or even in some case no gestation period as fields were histories of organic management
- Superior quality of crop produces with local varieties such as black rice, traditional varieties leading to best and premier prices.
- The lower yield due to soil and climatic constraints can be compensated by following organic farming.

S. No.	Certification agency	S. No.	Certification agency
1.	Indian Organic Certification Agency (INDOCERT)	11.	Vedic Organic Certification Agency
2.	ECOCERT India private limited	12.	Food Cert India private limited
3.	Indian Society for Certification of Organic products (ISCOP)	13.	Biocert India Private Limited
4.	Fair Cert Certification Services Private limited (FAIR CERT)	14.	Natural Organic Certification Agro Private Limited (NOCA)
5.	Intertek India Private limited (Intertek)	15.	Aditi Organic Certification Private Limited (ADITI)
6.	Bureau Veritas Certification India (BVCI) private limited	16.	Lacon Quality Certification private limited (Lacon QUALITY)
7.	Uttar Pradesh State organic Certification Agency (UPSOCA)	17.	Gujarat Organic Products Certification Agency (GOPCA)
8.	Odisha State organic Certification Agency (OSOPCA)	18.	Uttarakhand State Organic Certification Agency (USOCA)
9.	Madhya Pradesh State Organic Certification Agency (MPSOCA)	19.	Chhattisgarh Certification Society, India (CGCERT)
10.	Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department (TNOCD)	20.	Rajasthan Organic Certification Agency (ROCA)

**Table 1:** Certification agencies for organic farming in India.

- Rabi season cole crops after rice will be best crop for certification due to higher demand for organic vegetables.
  - Potential to introduce new crops with demand in domestic markets of adjoining state.
  - Possibility of organic product market creation as state visited by tourists across the nation and round the year
  - Strong institutional support of technical guidance through Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Research Complex for North East Region, Umiam, Agriculture Technology Application Research Institute, Zone-VI, Umiam and Central Agricultural University colleges.
- Initial preparations
- Arranging awareness programme with active involvement of certification agency for local peoples/farmers.
  - Awareness about the market potential of organic product and facilitation of institutional support for establishing contact/chain with region/national buyers and processors (if any).
  - Development of certified organic field (at least for crop of regional importance such as rice, pea, etc.) in college for realistic cost-benefit analysis.
  - Development of expertises for certification process in college to assist the stake holders.

Sl. No.	Name of crop	Area (ha)	Production (metric tonnes)	Productivity (kg/ha or t/ha)
1.	Rice	111141	304548	2740
2.	Maize	18152	41624	2293
3.	Wheat	460	887	1928
4.	Red gram (Arhar)	1178	1525	1295
5.	Jute	6673	68465	1847
6.	Mesta	4470	26353	1061
7.	cotton	7255	8791	206
8.	Sugarcane	121	361	2983
9.	Potato	18913	187047	9890
10.	Soybean	1857	3524	1898
11.	Linseed	93	55	591
12.	Mustard and rapeseed	9869	9226	935
13.	Sesame	2373	2208	930
14.	Castor	72	65	903
15.	Small millets	2924	2780	951
16.	Grain Pulses	1858	1981	1066
17.	Pigeon pea	1178	1525	1295
18.	Tapioca	5408	35528	6570
19.	Tobacco	799	792	991
20.	Arecanut	18209	23985	1317
21.	Cashewnut	10461	14815	1416
22.	Strawberry	101	863	8545
23.	Pineapple	12183	138463	11365
24.	Banana	7264	94603	13024
25.	Papaya	846	6757	7987
26.	Total Citrus Fruit	12498	55210	4418
27.	Black paper	1025	770	751
28.	Ginger	9944	66195	6657
29.	Turmeric	2649	16497	6228
30.	Chilli	2320	2346	1011
31.	Sweet potato	4712	15751	3343
32.	Rubber	5228	1520	291
33.	Coffee	324	325	1003
34.	Beetroot	584	9465	16.21 (t/ha)
35.	Cabbage	1943	42677	21.96 (t/ha)
36.	Cauliflower	1255	21095	16.81 (t/ha)
37.	Redish	1563	30166	19.3 (t/ha)
38.	Tomato	2172	34749	15.99 (t/ha)
39.	Carrot	1274	23744	18.64 (t/ha)
40.	Cucumber	604	5020	8.31 (t/ha)

41.	Capsicum	620	5041	8.31 (t/ha)
42.	Coriander	481	1878	3.90 (t/ha)
43.	Beans	992	7168	7.23 (t/ha)
44.	Brinjal	1071	14959	13.967 (t/ha)
45.	Okra	504	3862	7.66 (t/ha)
46.	Turnip	686	8519	12.42 (t/ha)
47.	Bottle guard	749	9231	12.324 (t/ha)
48.	Knol-Khol	384	6031	15.71 (t/ha)
49.	Lettuce	427	2183	5112 (kg/ha)
50.	Pumpkin	1397	18537	13.27 (t/ha)
51.	Mustard leaves	470	2796	5949 (kg/ha)
52.	Onion	551	4939	8964 (kg/ha)
53.	Better Guard	624	6127	9819 (kg/ha)
54.	Teasle Guard	513	5170	10.078 (t/ha)
55.	Ridge Guard	740	9015	12.182 (t/ha)
56.	Broccoli	220	2178	9.9 (t/ha)

**Table 2:** Major crops and their spread across the state of Meghalaya [3].

- Visit and interaction with farmers/stake holders with successful organic farming activities as well as visit to certification agency office.
  - Seeking information for any governmental funding and farmer assistance for such interventions.
  - Act for protecting the farmers right on knowledge/technology and help in avoid malpractices and/or over exploitation from external influence for short term.
  - Promotion of NGOs and local governing bodies for guiding the farmers and protecting their interest/rights.
  - Development of college farm in such programme will have research, extension and academic significance as well. The programme is needed for new college to develop college Instructional/research farm.
  - Human resource up gradation and through training for creating expertise for guiding the farmer
  - Increase footprint of college and in turn university at regional and global level.
- Impact on farmers
- This will be best opportunity to connect to global network of agriculture activities thereby creating bright chances for regional development.
  - Utilization of traditional knowledge and techniques for generating higher returns without many changes
  - Gain knowledge about the new methodologies and materials as well as testing their potential in real field condition
- Impact on college
- Generating the income in the form of certification (profit sharing as well if any)
  - Enhance social acceptance of for college and its activities which helps in establishing the best farmers - scientist inter-linking. This will help in increasing efficiency of all extension and research activities conducted by college.

- Development of relation with experts form institutions and marketing system which will be most essential to harvest higher returns in case of organic farming
- This type of programme will give identity as well as footprint at national level.

Moreover putting pen on paper and running drill in soil is long journal in such projects with several social aspects and economic ties which are effort demanding. Understanding social beliefs and values as well as generating confidence among the rural stakeholder and college itself to take such society involving projects. The support of University and local governing bodies will be a shield to institutional framework of college considering the hurdle in success. Economic feasibility on field needs to be insured beforehand with involvement of local stakeholders. Besides that, selection of innovative stake holders with risk bearing ability and determined marketing possibilities need to be insured while fitting such programme in farmers cropping/farming system.

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