

The Role Of Organic Scheme On Entrepreneurship Development Among Farmers In Mizoram

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Abstract

This study examines the development of entrepreneurship within the context of organic farming in Mizoram, India. It explores the impact of government initiatives, such as the Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM), on agricultural entrepreneurship. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including field surveys and interviews, the study highlights key factors influencing entrepreneurship, such as individual motivation, technical skills, and market strategies. The findings suggest that while organic farming offers a sustainable alternative to conventional practices, the entrepreneurial development among farmers is primarily driven by personal skills and intent rather than external subsidies and schemes. These insights are vital for policymakers aiming to enhance agricultural entrepreneurship and promote sustainable farming practices.

Keyword: Entrepreneurship, Agri-entrepreneurship, Organic farming, Organic scheme

Introduction

Organic farming emphasizes natural agricultural processes, such as using organic manure, biological pest control, and maintaining ecological balance, to promote sustainability and reduce environmental impact (Soni et al., 2022). In India, organic farming has deep historical roots, relying on traditional practices that align with local ecological conditions (Verma, 2019). However, the Green Revolution in the 1960s shifted agricultural practices towards high-yielding varieties and chemical fertilizers, leading to increased productivity but also causing ecological degradation and a decline in soil health (Patel & Kumar, 2020).

The adverse effects of the Green Revolution prompted a renewed interest in organic farming in the 1990s and early 2000s, aiming to restore ecological balance and sustainability in agriculture (Rao & Reddy, 2018). The National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) was established in 2000 to promote organic farming across India, providing a framework for certification and support (Kaur & Singh, 2020). In regions like Mizoram, where traditional farming practices remain prevalent, the transition to organic methods has been facilitated by government initiatives that offer subsidies and training to enhance farmers' entrepreneurial skills (Chakraborty, 2019).

This study examines the relationship between organic farming and entrepreneurship in Mizoram, focusing on the impact of government schemes on the development of entrepreneurial skills among farmers.

Literature Review

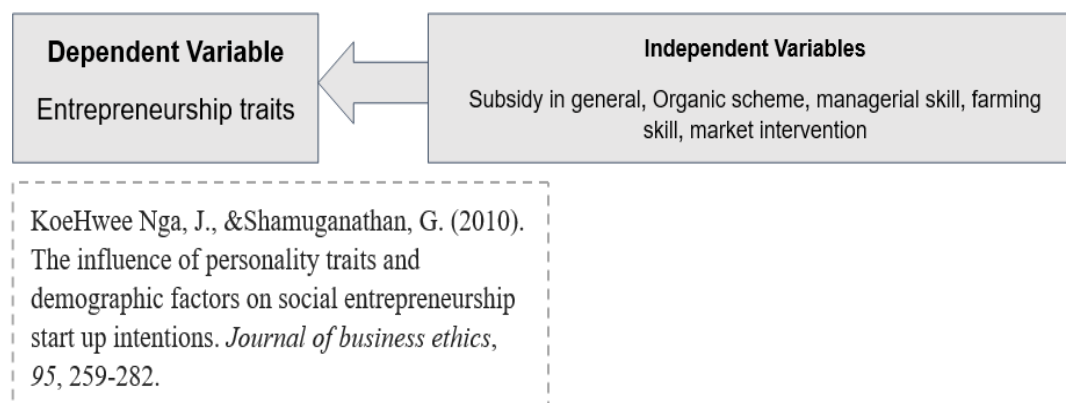
The intersection of organic farming and entrepreneurship is an emerging area of research that emphasizes the dual challenges of achieving economic viability and ecological sustainability in agriculture. This research field highlights the relationship between the two in the context of Mizoram. Scholars have explored various dimensions of entrepreneurship, ranging from traditional definitions that focus on innovation, risk-taking, and market competition to more contemporary understandings that consider the unique context of agriculture, often referred to as "agri-entrepreneurship" (Parker, 2018). Danhof (1949) provides a foundational categorization of entrepreneurs into three types: innovators, who introduce new products or processes; imitators, who adopt existing innovations and adapt them to different contexts; and cautious individuals, who prioritize maintaining stability over pursuing aggressive growth. These classifications help explain the diverse ways in which entrepreneurs drive economic growth and development across different sectors, including agriculture.

Boumol (1968) underscores the importance of entrepreneurship in fostering economic development, advocating for policies that support entrepreneurial endeavours by providing access to resources, favorable regulatory environments, and educational opportunities. These elements are essential for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset that can identify and capitalize on new market opportunities. In the context of organic farming, this entrepreneurial mindset is critical as farmers navigate complex and often volatile market dynamics while addressing ecological sustainability (Gartner & Bellamy, 2020). Drucker (1985) and Dees (1998) further expand on the importance of opportunity recognition and creative problem-solving, highlighting these as vital components of successful entrepreneurship. Organic farmers, in particular, need to innovate continually to overcome challenges related to pest management, soil fertility, and fluctuating consumer demand, which requires a proactive and adaptive approach (Lans et al., 2014; Schumpeter, 2017).

Several studies have highlighted the economic and ecological benefits of organic farming practices, despite the initial barriers to adoption. Oelhaf (1978) and Lokerreiz et al. (1978) discuss the long-term sustainability of organic farming, noting that although transitioning from conventional to organic practices can involve substantial initial costs and risks, the long-term advantages include enhanced soil health, reduced reliance on chemical inputs, and access to premium markets that value organic certification. Recent research by Koesling et al. (2008) indicates that the entrepreneurial mindset among organic farmers is significantly influenced by educational background, access to information, and regional support systems, which can shape their willingness and ability to adopt innovative practices. Additionally, studies by Vanclay et al. (2011) and Padel (2001) suggest that social networks and community support play a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to organic farming and entrepreneurship. The convergence of these themes in the literature underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of entrepreneurship within the organic farming sector, particularly in regions like Mizoram, where traditional farming practices and natural farming methods still prevail. This context-specific understanding is crucial for developing targeted policies and support mechanisms that effectively promote sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship in diverse settings (Pretty & Bharucha, 2015; Altieri, 2018).

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigate the challenges and opportunities faced by agricultural entrepreneurs in Mizoram. Data collection involved both qualitative and quantitative methods, including field surveys and telephonic interviews with farmers and key stakeholders under the Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM) initiative. Secondary data were sourced from government reports, economic surveys, and relevant academic literature. The sample size was determined using standard statistical techniques for finite populations, resulting in a sample of 221 participants. Regression analysis was employed to examine the influence of various factors, such as management skills, subsidies, and organic schemes, on the entrepreneurial intent of organic farmers.



Results

The regression analysis indicates a moderate relationship between the predictors (management skills, organic schemes, and subsidies) and entrepreneurship development among farmers in Mizoram. The model explains approximately 17.9% of the variance in entrepreneurial intent, suggesting that while these factors play a role, other unexamined variables may also be influential. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirms the statistical significance of the model, with an F-value of 4.863 ($p = .004$), indicating that at least one of the predictors significantly affects entrepreneurial attitudes.

Further analysis reveals that management skills are a critical driver of entrepreneurship, whereas organic schemes and subsidies have a less significant impact. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.142 reflects a modest explanatory power of the model, highlighting the complexity of entrepreneurship development in the context of organic farming.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the development of entrepreneurship in the organic farming sector in Mizoram is influenced more by individual skills and intent than by external support mechanisms like subsidies and organic schemes. While government initiatives such as the Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM) provide crucial support for the adoption of organic farming practices, their direct impact on fostering entrepreneurship appears limited. Instead, factors such as technical skills, market strategies, and personal motivation play more substantial roles in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes.

These results have significant implications for policymakers and stakeholders aiming to promote sustainable agricultural practices and entrepreneurial development. By focusing on enhancing farmers' skills and fostering a supportive environment for innovation and market engagement, it is possible to drive more robust and sustainable entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the growth of organic farming in Mizoram presents both opportunities and challenges for entrepreneurship development. While external support mechanisms such as subsidies and organic schemes are important, the most critical factors influencing entrepreneurship are individual skills, personal motivation, and effective market strategies. Policymakers should prioritize initiatives that enhance these skills and foster an entrepreneurial mindset among farmers to promote sustainable development in the agricultural sector.

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