

The Present Situation and Prospect of Organic Agriculture in the Tourist City of Nepal, Pokhara

Misa AOKI

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1. Problems and Objectives of this Study

In Pokhara, a tourist city of Nepal which is one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), there has been appearing some kinds of activities concerned with organic agriculture and organic products recently. As Nepal is assisted by many developed countries, foreign aid institutions or I/NGOs take such an action in many cases. However, in Pokhara, because of the tourist city, foreign tourists also have an influence on the activities. The main objectives of this study are by field study, to find out by whom, from when, how and for what these activities have been held, to examine the flow of organic products in a food channel, and to realize the present situation of organic agriculture and products in and around Pokhara. The findings of this study are expected to provide prospects and challenges of organic agriculture and products in the places.

2. Agriculture and Organic Agriculture in Nepal

In Nepal, agriculture sector is the most important because 30% of its GDP and more than 60% of its employed people are contributed by the section, so development policy has been promoted by putting emphasis on improving agriculture in order to reduce poverty. In 1960s, the use of chemical inputs was started in Nepal, which was expected to increase food production. However, poor farmers and farmers in hill or mountainous areas still now carry out traditional agriculture which is based on interconnected production sub-system consisting of crop, livestock and forest. Therefore, it is difficult to increase production by using chemicals. In addition, agriculture in Nepal should be suitable for world issues such as environmental, food and economic problems. In this situation, organic agriculture is focused on as one of the ways to achieve sustainable agriculture.

3. Activities Concerned with Organic Agriculture in Pokhara

There are two types of organic agriculture projects led by foreign aid institutions or I/NGOs in Pokhara, one of which is cash crop farming for export, the other is interconnected farming for better environment, health and economic situation. The main common purpose of the two is to improve income generation. In a tourist city, Pokhara, foreign tourists had already brought the word “organic” before the organizations started their projects. The concept of the word differs from who gave the information of organic. While if people receive it from organizations, the concept is based on that of the organizations, if from foreign tourists, it means agriculture and products without any chemicals and includes traditional and natural agriculture and products. Some people working in tourism section in the city try to begin the activities of organic products considering environment, health and linkage of city and rural areas. Local consumers are not interested in organic products, but foreigners’ demand for them is increasing now. What is more, there is ways to buy organic things directly from farmers, which brings reliance between farmers and consumers without any certifications.

4. The Prospects and Challenges of Organic Agriculture in Pokhara

The advantages of introducing organic agriculture in Pokhara are maintaining environment and health, possibilities to spread the system by selling its products to foreigners, making reliance between people through face to face trading and strengthening the linkage between city and rural areas by making good use of rural resources. Now the global economy is instability, it will be a key to success in sustainable agriculture to achieve organic agriculture by applying regional resources and make local people attract to the agriculture and products.