Vantage: Journal of Thematic Analysis **ISSN: 2582-7391**
A Multidisciplinary Publication of Centre for Research,
Maitreyi College, University of Delhi
April 2022, Volume 3 Issue 1

Book Review

Arts & Science of Organic Farming

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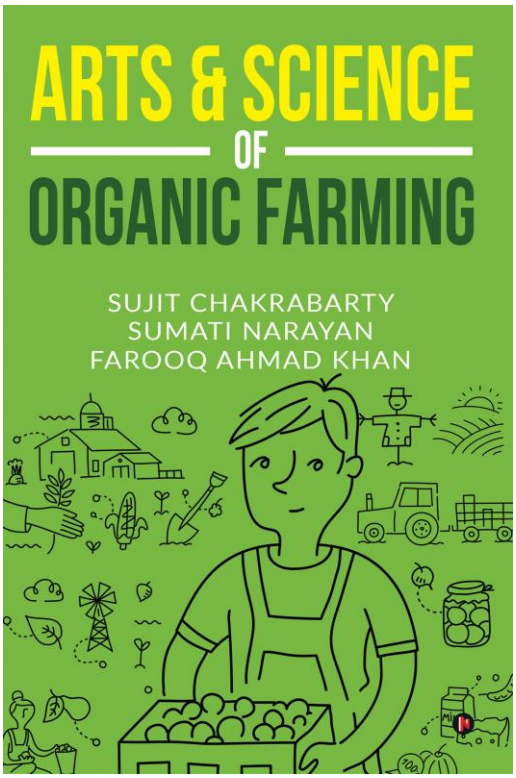

Sujit Chakrabarty, Sumati Narayan, Farooq Ahmad Khan (2019). Arts and Science of Organic Farming. Notion Press, Chennai, India

What does it truly mean when we say something is organic? Why is organic farming the new hype in the 21st century? The world of organic farming is a simple, yet intriguing one- it combines the wisdom of our ancestors and the vision of our new technologists. A book that gives us a peek into the journey behind generating the "organic" product label we see in the shelves of our grocery stores every day, *The Arts and Science of*

Organic Farming, enumerates an array of ways one can seek and incorporate the guidance of mother nature to make their agricultural practices greener.

The general public is no stranger to the fact that food is the fuel on which a country and, subsequently the world runs. As our number and hunger grow, so does the global need for agricultural practices that can meet the rising requirements steadily without essentially jeopardizing any other resources. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 include important targets for overall human welfare such as Zero Hunger, Responsible Consumption and Production and Climate Action- and Sustainable Agriculture research lies at the very crossroads of the three.

One of the most popular and in-focus areas in current times is organic farming, which involves the usage of natural, biodegradable materials such as manure, rotenone, and bone meal to meet the growing demands of crops.

A remarkably lucid and simple to understand book with many pictorial and visual aids, *Arts & Science of Organic Farming* elaborates on a wide range of aspects to consider when pondering upon organic practices, ranging from the significant factors like preparation of the soils, to neatly tying up several tangents like the role of animals and socio-economic concerns to the Indian Organic scenario in just a little over 200 pages. It is like a manual and can be read by children, young adults as well as those with a green thumb or passion for learning many new facets of organic farming in a concise and to-the-point manner.

The book begins by elucidating how modern-day chemical pollution through fertilizers and pesticides affects our health in visible and invisible ways. The direct and indirect consumption of large amounts of unnatural, toxic substances contribute heavily to the advent of diseases such as respiratory disorders, skin irritation and cancers seen today, but the book also mentions how we are not yet past the point of ‘no return’, and aims to drive readers towards understanding the friendlier alternatives that can significantly make our practices beneficial for both ourselves as well as free the environment that we live from the perils of toxic chemical exposure.

The book focuses on the fact that organic farming has both qualitative and quantitative benefits on plants and how it reduces the detrimental environmental impact of the chemicals we had built a reliance on. Thus, the book shifts our view towards

understanding the nuances of organic farming to unlock the full potential of our natural resources and understand the true power of simple, age-old practices like crop rotation, mulching, predictions of rain and companion planting, if implemented correctly.

As the title suggests, there is an art to making the most out of seemingly simple agricultural aids. One key factor the book focuses on is using the climate and abiotic factors smartly for our benefit. It emphasizes the need to intricately study sunlight, life cycles, seasonal shifts and water availability, and ways to use that information to devise adaptable means to enhance our agro practices. The book also elaborates on plant diseases and symptoms to look out for and simple ways to alleviate them. In addition, the book also has tabulated statistics, information and pictures to familiarize readers with the most common friends and enemies of sustainable agriculture- be it beneficial birds and insects like honeybees, warblers and cardinals to dangers such as aphids, weevils and crows.

Arts & Science of Organic Farming ends with extra tips for seed selection, land cultivation, compost preparation etc., to increase the hardiness of plants, ensure minimal wastage and boost the health of our soil and our crops for long-term benefits. Written by well-established agricultural scientists and plant physiologists, the book is an excellent medium to get acquainted with the world of organic farming and learn various terminologies, techniques and factors to explore further. The book makes the science of farming more accessible to the public, and it serves as a crisp, elegant nugget jam-packed with the wisdom of the days gone by and tomorrow's innovation to give readers a starter to build their foundation in organic agronomics. The farther we go away from natural ways, the more problems seem to arise because, at the end of the day, we are part of nature ourselves. Books like this one help us reconnect with the natural side of things and view our environment differently-thus, I would recommend this book to anyone who is new to the field of organic farming and is looking to gain extra information about things that lie in plain sight but hold a unique transformative potential to make human lives better.

How to cite this article: Prashansa (2022). Arts & Science of Organic Farming. *Vantage: Journal of Thematic Analysis, 3*(1), 139-141
DOI: https://doi.org/10.52253/vjta.2022.v03i01.09