

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bio-fertilizers have been introduced in the country since more than two decades. However, biofertilizers account for only small percentage of overall chemical fertilizers production and the market. It is estimated that the total production of our fertilizer in the country is approximately 12000 to 15000 TPA. The market is largely organized with the presence of various established players such as IFFCO, Deepak Fertilizers, Nagarjuna Fertilizers and Coromandel International, Kan Biosis Pvt. Ltd, Hindustan Antibiotics, Nirmal seeds and several other players such as Aries Agro, are also seeking to establish their footprint in the market and capitalize on growth opportunities available in the country. The progressiveness of farmers has become the key concern for the overall development of farm business. Now a day's farmers give relatively more importance to scientific farm information and knowledge over physical inputs/resources and innovation over land and capital possession.

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To assess the knowledge level and farmers Perception towards Bio Fertilizers.
- To analyse the factors influence the buying behaviour of farmers towards the use of Bio Fertilizers.
- To document practices of progressive farmers to understand their adoption behaviour towards the usage of biofertilizers.
- To suggest appropriate long term and short term practices and technologies based on the issues/constraints faced by the farmers towards the usage of bio fertilizers.

There is a great need to promote biofertilizers, from the point of view of both sales and usage. The channel members, i.e. dealer/distributors, need to be motivated by offering tangible benefits/incentives linking sales targets, such as "free family tour, gifts etc." Similarly, the consumer also needs to be attracted by offers of coupons, premiums, contests, buying allowances etc. based on customer characteristics/buying behaviour. The progressive farmer village leaders, besides dealers, may also be identified for

The present research is therefore, aimed to determine the ***"A study on Market potential and farmer's behaviour towards biofertilizers in Western Maharashtra"***. The analytical scope covers the fulfilment of the objectives set out for the study. Along with this, the researchers will also study the constraints faced by the farmers in adoption of biofertilizers and behaviour and satisfaction level of the farmers towards biofertilizers.

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data was collected with the help of structured interview questionnaires through field visits and Focus Group discussion. Secondary data related to market of biofertilizer was collected from the relevant sources e.g. The Fertilizers Association of India, the publications of Department of Agriculture Maharashtra, some data was collected from the Annual Reports and other publications, published, Articles, annual reports of the company, internet and websites.

The analysis conducted with farmers throws some light into the progress and usage of biofertilizers. As the use of bio-fertilizer, till so far, is grossly inadequate in India, more emphasis on its production, consumption and also proper distribution need to be taken into consideration. However, most farmers are not aware of it; therefore, to popularize this technology training should be provided to the farmers and this can be done through demonstration trials on the cultivator's fields. In this case, extension workers would play an important role. Progressive farmers have advantages over government extension agents. Progressive farmers can act as an agricultural technical advocate, community mobilizers in the development of farmer organizations, reformers by introducing new commodities and businesses, as well as business people. Progressive farmers have the ability to regenerate farmers in the agricultural field. Progressive farmers can be good examples and motivators for young people to work in agriculture. Many Agri input companies including cooperatives have implemented area-specific agricultural development projects to extend the benefit of technology to the farmers through a demonstration approach and to bring about overall development in the area. This approach of working with farmers in a concentrated manner by organizing promotional and educational programmes helped to increase of productivity of crops by the adoption of better farming practices which ultimately helpful for farmer's progress. Moreover, more researches are needed to identify crop and location specific microbial strains with higher efficacy. It can be suggested that The government should introduce strict law and policy against the quality of biofertilizers so that farmers can get benefits of this technology. Open sales in the market may be encouraged to improve the capability of the units in marketing products. Any attempt to fix a minimum price for the sake of quality or other consideration will only go against the spirit of competition and harm the interests of the industry and the farmers. The present study finds some but not conclusive role of the price factor but scientific studies may be conducted on the farmers' 'willingness to pay for the new input to determine the need and extent of subsidies.