

A STUDY ON CONSUMERS PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS IN SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PALAYAMKOTTAI

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ABSTRACT

With rising concern of health issues and food safety, many consumers have turned their site attention towards organic products. The increased consumers' interest in organic food has been attributed among others to the growing demand for food free from pesticides and chemical residues. Organic food promotes a balance among the humans, other living organisms and the nature. It also does not promote any artificial preservatives and they maintain the originality of food. This prevents excess use of harmful ingredients and thereby ensures health. This study is attempted to gain knowledge about consumer perception towards organic products consumption and to see whether there is any potential which might change their behaviour. The rationale for carrying out this study is that consideration for the environment could come only from well informed citizens who are aware of, and fully committed to their rights to a quality health and environment. Nevertheless, before any behaviour can be changed, it is necessary to evaluate the current state of consumers' awareness and knowledge. Therefore consumer perception towards organic products, willingness to pay for organic products and intention to purchase organic products will be the main agenda of this study.

KEY WORDS: Organic foods, Consumer, Nature, Problems and prospects ,Quality

INTRODUCTION

Today's Indian consumers are living in a dynamic world. They are continuously coming across new things in the world of food. They are becoming more and more conscious about their health; the Indian market in offering increasing potential for health friendly food segments such as that of organic food but the market for organic food is extremely nascent stage in India at present. Organic products serves as a promising alternative for the population concerned about the consequences of high amounts of chemical infusions in food items – both in terms of self - consumption as well as the ill impact on the environment. The affinity of an individual towards consumption of organic food items is highly dependent on the knowledge levels, expending capacity and accessibility available to the individual.

Organic food' is food which is grown without use of chemical from planting seed to harvesting. Recent trend has inclined towards organic food. Nature is potential enough to grow life in it, from many years mankind is changing definition of ecosystem. Due to human

interference today new species is developed by unnatural selection. Over the past decade consumption patterns of consumer will be change especially in food consumption because all consumer to eat organic food because of the he/she perception is to eat the organic food is good for health and it's grows with use of organic manual and use natural resource, so consumer behaviour will be shift to organic food item, and quality and safety in food attract consumer interest in organic food that is free from pesticides and chemical residues.

Vegetable and fruit market depends supply from nearby villages in general at this circumstances it is better to study the consumer perception towards organic product is considered as worth and this area is not touched by any researchers so far is an added advantage. The present empirical study is an attempt to examine the consumer perception towards organic products in Palayamkottai.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The potential buyers using products which are harmful to the consumers have got awareness on organic products and have started buying and utilizing for their regular consumption. The researcher shows interest on the optimistic impact of organic food on the society and thus this particular study has been carried out. Hence, the present study is conducted to know the awareness on organic products and factors that influence the consumers to buy organic products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To study the socio economic background of consumers of organic products in palayamkottai.
- ✓ To study the level of satisfaction of consumer towards organic products.
- ✓ To study problems and prospects for organic products in palayamkottai.

METHODOLOGY

The research was undertaken on the basis of data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data has been collected directly from the consumer of organic products in Palayamkottai. Primary data has been collected through questionnaire by adopting stratified random sampling method.

Secondary data has been collected from published books, Journals and online journals & databases like Infilbnet and Delnet. The analysis was carried out by using statistical tools like ANOVA, T test, Chi- square test, and percentage analysis to evaluate the objectives of the study. The results were presented in the form of tables and charts.

SAMPLING

A sample of 50 respondents was selected for the study by using stratified random sampling method. The sample respondents for the study was stratified into 10 respondents each from five organic products store namely Annai organic products store, Annam organic products store and Guru Kiruba.

Organic products store, thalavalai organic products store and sathguru nature organic shop in Palayamkottai. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. Structured questionnaire were framed from various researches to suit this specific study. Self- administered questionnaires were distributed to the respondents for the study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

T. Mohanasoundari and A. Kalaivani (2016)¹ in their study titled, “A Study on Consumers Preference towards Organic Products- in Tirupur District”, Organic is the one of the fastest growing agricultural markets due to consumer’s increased concern about their own health, the environment, and the reported crises and emergencies worldwide on food safety and environmental issues in recent decades. It has now become an alternative for an increasing number of consumers that are worried about the presence of chemicals residues and the negatives consequences on the environmental caused by chemical intensive production methods. To explore the potential market for customers, it is important to know how consumers relate issues of food quality and food system. The aim of this project is to educate in depth the behavioral process of customers with respect to organic food.

Sathyendra Kumar AD and H. M. Chandrashekar (2015)² in their study titled, “A Study on Consumers Behavior towards Organic Food Products in Mysore City”, Availability of organic input and output is critical for improve of organic forming in the country. Development of efficient marketing system is the need of the hour for strengthening the organic production in India. This paper made a humble attempt to understanding the consumer perception about organic product and marketing in Mysore city. The results concluded that most of the consumer especially in urban people prefer organic food product. Marketing of organic product is so poor in study area so the demand for organic product is increases but supply is very low. The major reasons are organic producer are low, adequate market facility is not there, few number of shops, lack of awareness, and so on. Therefore if farmer as well as government give interest to organic farming easily enhancing good marketing system in Karnataka.

Level of awareness towards organic products Vs Size of the family of Consumers

In order to test whether there is any relationship between size of the family of the consumers and their level of awareness towards organic products, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H₀ : There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness towards organic products and the size of the family of the consumers.

The results of the Chi-square test are applied on the level of awareness towards organic products and the size of the family of the consumers are presented

Level of awareness towards organic products Vs Size of the family of consumers

Sl.No	Particulars	Chi-square Value	P Value	Inference

¹ T. Mohanasoundari and A. Kalaivani, “A Study on Consumers Preference Towards Organic Products- in Tirupur District”, JSR - International Journal of Scientific Research, Vol.5, No.3, 2016, pp.628-630.

² Sathyendra Kumar AD et.al., “A Study on Consumers Behavior towards Organic Food Products in Mysore City”, International Journal of Management Research & Review, Vol.5, Issue.11, 2015, pp.1082-1091.

1.	Organic farming is good for the environment	56.781	0.000	Significant
2.	Economical	17.916	0.001	Significant
3.	Advertising	14.614	0.006	Significant
4.	Offer and discounts	22.817	0.000	Significant
5.	Suppliers	10.480	0.033	Significant
6.	Queries and complaints	17.236	0.002	Significant
7.	Differencing and identifying organic products	5.006	0.287	Not Significant

Source: Computed Data

The above table shows the following results.

Since the 'p' value is less than 0.05 in case of the size of the family of the consumers and the level of awareness towards organic products "Organic farming is good for the environment, advertising, economical, offer and discounts, suppliers and queries and complaints", the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between size of the family of the consumers and level of awareness towards organic products "Organic farming is good for the environment, advertising, economical, offer and discounts, suppliers and queries and complaints".

Level of satisfaction towards organic products among different monthly income of consumers

Consumers of different monthly income have different level of satisfaction towards organic products. In order to find out the significant difference in level of satisfaction towards organic products among different monthly income of consumers in Palayamkottai, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, "There is no significant difference in level of satisfaction towards organic products among different monthly income of consumers in Palayamkottai". The result of ANOVA is presented.

Level of satisfaction towards organic products among different monthly income of consumers

Particulars	Monthly Income (Mean Score)				F Statistics
	Below Rs.15000	Rs.15001-20000	Rs.20001-30000	Above Rs.30000	
Quality	5.0000	5.0000	4.9306	4.7778	4.187*
Quantity	4.0000	4.0000	3.9028	3.7556	4.023*
Price	3.0000	3.2667	3.3889	3.5111	0.658

Availability of products	4.0000	2.6667	3.2639	3.4222	4.273*
Taste	4.8000	4.8333	4.5000	4.4222	5.769*
Health fitness	4.9000	4.4333	4.4722	4.4000	1.432

Source: Computed data

*-Significant at five per cent level

The mean score of satisfaction towards organic products among different monthly income of consumers along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important satisfaction towards organic products among the consumers who are earning monthly income of below Rs.15000 are quality and health fitness and their respective mean scores are 5.0000 and 4.9000 among the consumers who are earning monthly income between Rs.15001-20000, quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 5.0000 and 4.8333. The important satisfaction towards organic products among the consumers who belong to the monthly income between Rs.20001-30000 are quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.9306 and 4.5000, among the consumers who belong to the monthly income of above Rs.30000, quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.7778 and 4.4222.

Regarding the level of satisfaction towards organic products, the significant difference among the different monthly income of consumers, is identified in the case of quality, quantity, availability of products and taste, since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ranking of major problems faced in buying organic products

Sl. No	Major problems faced in buying organic products	Total Score	Average	Rank
1.	Only consumers with higher income can buy organic food	6194	41.29	V
2.	Organic food is too expensive	9432	62.88	I
3.	There is no consumption awareness about organic products	7253	48.35	IV
4.	Organic food is only available in limited stores/ markets	7781	51.87	III
5.	Buying organic food is highly inconvenient	8919	59.46	II

6.	Organic food does not possess much of difference with non organic foods	5165	34.43	VI
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Source: Computed Data

It is observed that 'Organic food is too expensive' has been ranked as the first major problem faced in buying organic products, 'buying organic food is highly inconvenient' has been ranked as second, organic food is only 'available in limited stores/markets' has been placed in third position, there is 'no consumption awareness about organic products' is ranked as fourth followed by only consumers with higher income can buy organic food has been ranked as fifth position and organic food does not possess much of difference with non-organic foods Ranked as last position.

Ranking of future prospects of organic products

Sl. No	Future prospects of organic products	Total Score	Average	Rank
1.	Improve the marketing channels for organic products	7791	51.94	V
2.	Ensure regular supply of organic products	7831	52.20	IV
3.	Ensure food safety	8659	57.72	I
4.	Educate people about the benefits of organic products	7688	51.25	VI
5.	Improve health of consumers	8034	53.56	III
6.	Ensure good quality	8388	55.92	II
7.	Good opportunities to ensure food security and nutrition	6940	46.26	VII
8.	Ensure food availability	6039	40.26	VIII
9.	Ensure the sustainable marketing of organic food products	5676	37.84	IX

Source: Primary Data

It is observed from the that 'Ensure food safety' has been ranked as the first future prospects of organic products,' ensure good quality' as second, improve health of consumers

placed in third position, 'ensure regular supply' of organic products as fourth followed by 'improve the marketing channels' for organic products as fifth position, 'educate people about the benefits' of organic products as sixth position, 'good opportunities to ensure food security and nutrition' as seventh position, 'ensure food availability' as eighth position and ensure the sustainable marketing of organic food products as last position

Findings of ranking of major problems faced in buying organic products

It is found that the idea "Organic food is too expensive" has been ranked as the first major problem faced in buying organic products; 'buying organic food is highly inconvenient' has been ranked as second; and 'organic food is only available in limited stores/markets' placed in third position and 'organic food does not possess much of difference with non organic foods' is ranked as the last position.

Findings of Level of Satisfaction towards Organic Products

- The important satisfaction towards organic products among the male consumers are quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.8947 and 4.6316 and among the female consumers, quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.9032 and 4.5054.
- The important satisfaction towards organic products among the consumers are in the age group of below 25 years are quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.5000 and 4.2500 and consumers in the age group of above 55 years are quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.7500 and 4.5455.
- The important satisfaction towards organic products among the married consumers are quality and taste and their respective mean scores are 4.8828 and 4.4922 and among the unmarried consumers, taste and quality and their respective mean scores are 4.9091 and 4.7500.

SUGGESTIONS

- Price and availability are perceived to be the major barriers to the consumption of organic products. At present, the organic products are available at a premium price. Efforts should be made to bring down the cost of organic products so that its price may be able to come within the reach of common man.
- At the same time, measures for the improvement in the accessibility of organic products in the market should be taken and more varieties of organic products need to be introduced in the market.
- There is a need to create more trust in the production and certification process of agriculture products. Thus, informative packaging, giving appropriate information about organic product and its contents and nutritional value, and proper labelling should be there to make people aware about organic products, which, in turn, will increase the demand.

Presently, the sale of organic products is dominated by supermarkets/shopping malls. The supermarkets should display the organic products more offensively and there should be separate counters for organic products. There is also a requirement to promote exclusive organic shops and availability of organic products at general departmental stores to augment the sales.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the important perception towards organic products among the married consumers are organic products are more expensive than conventional products and organic products are not easily found in grocery stores or in the hyper stores /markets and among the

unmarried consumers, price of organic products is a barrier to buy and I usually read the ingredients on the labels before purchasing. The important factors that influence to buy organic products among the male consumers are health advantage and environmental concern. The important factors that influence to buy organic products among the female consumers are incremental standard of living of farmer community and health advantage. Organic food is too expensive is the major problem faced by the consumer in buying organic products and buying organic food is highly inconvenient is the next major problem faced by the consumer in buying organic products.

Buying of organic products is increasing because of environmental and health issues associated with food production. The increase in consumers' interest in organic products has been attributed among other issues to the growing demand for food free from pesticides and chemical residues. With the present study an attempt is made to describe the consumer perception towards organic products. The main motives to purchase organic products are health and environmental benefits, plus support for local or small farmers. In addition, an important factor that was revealed as a barrier to the development of organic foods is consumer information. Increased consumer awareness of organic labeling and their trust in organic labels as well as increasing the availability and range of organic food products, may be the most effective way of increasing their market share.

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