

Consumers Awareness of Organic Food Products in Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The global market for organic products is expanding as more people become aware of the benefits of eating organic food. The majority of organic products are food items, or agricultural byproducts that are grown without the use of artificial or hazardous agricultural enhancers like as pesticides, fertilizers, or insecticides. Modern consumers are picky about the goods they eat, which is how the idea of an organic food product emerged. This idea is becoming more popular in society, particularly in light of the rise in personal health issues. The purpose of the study is to ascertain how aware consumers are about organic food items.

Examining the respondents' biological cognizance and level of consciousness is one of the goals. The 107 responders were chosen on purpose. The Chi-Square Test and percentage analysis were the study's instruments.

Keywords: Organic food, Consumer awareness, Consumer behavior

I.INTRODUCTION

The cultivation and processing methods used to produce agricultural goods are referred to as "organic." Organic food is renowned for more than simply its flavor and nutritional value. The term "organic" refers to anything that is "naturally" cultivated in living, organic soil without the use of chemicals or pesticides—this is how God intended for you to have a robust immune system and all the essential vitamins and minerals for overall well-being. Since the pandemic, promoting health and immunity has gained more attention. As a result, there are now hygienic, organic food stores in every neighborhood. Although it is now a niche sector, organic food sales in India are anticipated to grow over the next several years. The increased number of food adulteration incidents is expected to drive the demand for organic food in the coming years.

Through financial support to farmers implementing organic farming under various government schemes, the Indian government promotes organic farming. This is anticipated to be a major trend driving the expansion of the organic food industry in India. In 2020, the Indian organic food market was estimated to be worth USD 849.5 million. The market is anticipated to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of roughly 20.5% between 2021 and 2026, when it is projected to reach a valuation of roughly USD 2601 million.

Literature Review

Dr. U. Homiga, Dr. C. Kala, and K. Monish Kumar (2024), the study explores consumer awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards organic products in Chennai. With 91 participants, the research highlights a strong awareness of organic products, with health benefits being a key motivator for purchasing. However, challenges such as limited availability, quality concerns, and higher costs were identified. The study also found a significant gender-based difference in knowledge, suggesting the need for targeted marketing and education. Recommendations include educational campaigns, better product availability, improved quality control, and optimized pricing strategies to overcome these barriers and capitalize on market opportunities.

WitoldKozirok, et al., (2023), made an attempt to investigate and determine the attitudes towards organic foods and the types and significance of the desired factors determining the satisfaction of customers who purchased organic foods products. The sample size contained 150 consumers. The statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean and chi-square test were applied for analysis of the collected data. From the study, it was found that the consumers of organic foods presented positive attitudes with a tendency towards neutral attitudes. The most

significant qualities of food that determined the satisfaction of consumers was a short shelf-life, health properties, the belief in a low content of pollutants in the organic foods and taste. From the results, it was found that the specialized shops, supermarkets and discount shops and organic foods producers were the main purchase locations. The factors that were least significant for the respondents included promotional qualities.

NenadPeric, et al., (2022), made an attempt to find the attitude of the people in Croatia and Serbia about Organic farming potentials. The aim of this research was to investigate the association between socio-demographic variables and attitudes of respondents from Serbia and Croatia towards organic food. This study used the quantitative methods of research. For data analysis, this research used a descriptive analysis like percentages, arithmetic mean, the chi-square test, t-test, ANOVA, multiple linear regression and Pearson correlation coefficient. Also, consumers had shown a high degree of self-awareness in making decisions about the purchase of organic products, which made brand communication at the point of sale very important.

WahyudiDavid., and Ardjansyah. (2021), this study investigates the young consumers' perception towards organic food in Indonesia. Data collected from 253 respondents were ranging the age between 17 to 23 years. The results revealed that organic food products are healthier, higher in quality, tasting better and safer than compared to conventional food believed by the consumers. The preferable place for buying the product in supermarkets. These findings benefit the sellers and retailers and also assist in developing marketing strategies to gain the potential consumers.

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They concluded that the biggest difference between consumers in Serbia and Croatia was in the level of trust in the media and organic food advertisements. The financial factor was especially significant for the markets of Serbia and Croatia. Also, consumers had shown a high degree of self-awareness in making decisions about the purchase of organic products, which made brand communication at the point of sale very important.

According to **Nayana Sharma and Dr. RituSinghvi (2020)**, their study also revealed the availability of the market can influence consumer's preferences and choices for purchasing organic food products. This paper thus provides vital information that there will be more demand of the organically grown food products in coming future, so it's high time for producer, traders, consumer and government itself to focus over the niche market of organic. Singh et al. studied organic cotton farming which helped in garment manufacture in Madhya Pradesh. According to his reports, 80% farmers shifted to organic farming due land quality improvement and at least 36% due to assured market. Sharma explained the factors determining consumer's acceptance and preference for food in general. Many factors combine and interact to make buying a complex process. Price was identified as an important factor; however it had some limitations on the consumer's choice. Factors like sensory attributes regional preference, age, sex, interest, motivation, discrimination and income also influenced food consumption. Shukla et al. conducted a survey to know the consumer response to green market opportunities. It was found that the customers were appraising the organic products on safety to nature and human health and that their brand awareness was generally low.

Chiciudean (2019) studied 568 consumers from North-West Development Region of Romania to identify the main barriers in consumption and; factors influenced the increase in demand for organic food products. They found that price of product was main barrier in consumption followed by perishability and availability. Other influencing factors were mistrust, and lack of proper promotion for organic food

Significance of the Study

The health benefits, lack of chemicals or preservatives, and all-natural nature of organic products have made India one of the world's largest potential markets for organic food consumption. There are no artificial additives or genetically engineered substances in the product. Eating organic food encourages harmony between humans, other living things, and the environment. Additionally, it supports the avoidance of artificial preservatives and works to preserve food originality. This ensures health by preventing the overuse of dangerous chemicals. The purpose of this study was to learn more about customer awareness of organic food items.

Statement of the Problem

Awareness about organic products is growing day-by-day. The adoption and cultivation based on chemical fertilizers are gradually and marginally declining because of the level of awareness among consumers that enhanced the cultivating habits among farmers which itself is a good sign for the growth of the organic food products in the era of chemical revolution. Information about consumers' awareness is an essential element for farmers and marketing agencies to successfully plan production that can capture a greater market share. Awareness about negative externalities generated by conventional farming is gaining momentum with consumers around the world, opting for alternatively, namely organically, and produced food products. Awareness of organic food is growing due to people have started to accepting the fact that today non-organic items carries contamination of chemicals. 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.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain consumer awareness towards organic food products in Trichy district
2. To determine other factors associated with the awareness level.
3. To offer suggestions based on the finding of the study.

Framework of Hypothesis

- There is no significant relationship between category of the users and their level of awareness about facts of organic food products.

Scope of the Study

Ideas for ecological products are developing globally as a result of the disruptions brought about by pollution. This has a significant impact on the health problems of those who have illnesses that negatively impact their natural systems. Thus, encouraging organic food contributes to both environmental and public health protection. In order to better understand Tiruchirappalli District consumers' opinions about organic products, the current study looks at consumer awareness of organic products.

Research Methodology

Nature of Study

The researcher used descriptive type of research. This research design deals with describing the characteristics of particular individual or groups of organic food consumers. Descriptive research describes the state of affairs as it exit at present. In this study the research is analyzing the consumer's awareness towards organic food products in Tiruchirappalli district.

Source of data and Sampling Design

Primary data had been collected from different locations of Tiruchirappalli district by means of structured questionnaire. In addition, the secondary data were collected from various books , Journals and relevant websites have also been used.The sample size is 107 convenient sampling has been conducted.

Analysis of Data

Demographics of the Respondents

S. No.	Demographics	Respondents (107 Nos.)	Percentage (100%)
01.	Age		
	Less than 20 years	1	.93
	21 to 30 years	50	46.72
	31 to 40 years	28	26.16
	41 to 50 years	18	16.82
	Above 51 years	10	9.35
02.	Gender		
	Male	77	71.96
	Female	30	28.04
03.	Marital Status		
	Married	66	61.68
	Unmarried	41	38.32
04.	Educational Qualification		
	No education	1	.93
	Schooling	1	.93
	Diploma	2	1.87
	Under graduate	12	11.21
	Post Graduate	65	60.75
	Professional	23	21.50
	Others	3	2.80
05.	Occupation		

	Employee	47	43.92
	Professional	21	19.63
	Business	23	21.50
	House wife	4	3.74
	Others	12	11.21
06.	Family Size		
	1 to 4 members	37	34.58
	5 to 7 members	66	61.68
	Above 7 members	4	3.74
07.	Economic Status		
	Below Rs.5000	6	5.61
	Rs.5001 to 10000	28	26.17
	Rs.10001 to 20000	21	19.63
	Rs.20001 to 30000	12	11.21
	Rs.30001 to Rs.40000	10	9.35
	Above Rs.40000	30	28.03
08.	Decision Maker		
	Self	47	43.93
	Spouse	27	25.23
	Parents	33	30.84
09.	Place of Living		
	Urban	65	60.75
	Semi-urban	30	28.04
	Rural	12	11.21

It is observed from the table that majority (46.72%) of the respondents belong to the age between 20 and 30 years. It is clear that majority (71.96%) of the respondents is male and 28.04% of the respondents are female. It's evident that most (61.68%) of the respondents are married and 38.32% of the respondents are unmarried. It is understood that most (60.75%) of the respondents are qualified with post-graduation. It is understood that maximum (43.92%) of the respondents are employed in public / private companies. It is understood that most (61.68%) of the respondents indicated that the size of their family is between 5 and 7members. It is clear from the above table that maximum (28.03%) of the respondents are having income above Rs.40000 per month. It is clear that majority (25.23%) of the respondents said self-decision maker in their family. It is understood from the

table that (60.75%) of the respondents are living in urban areas.

Opinion about Level of Awareness about the Impact of other food products

Level of Awareness	Highly Known	Moderately Known	Not Known
Other Products	36 (33.64)	65 (60.75)	6 (5.61)
non-natural	43 (40.19)	56 (52.33)	8 (7.48)
Pesticides	56(52.34)	44 (41.12)	7 (6.54)
Medicament	37 (31.78)	58 (54.21)	12 (11.21)
Harmonic imbalance	30(28.04)	57 (53.27)	20 (18.69)
Infertility	30 (28.04)	50 (46.73)	27 (25.23)
Disease prone	41 (38.32)	45 (42.05)	21 (19.63)

From the above table shows that most (60.75%) of the respondents are moderately known about the impact of non- organic nature of the other food products.It is observed that more than half (52.33%) of the respondents are moderately known about the artificial ingredients available in the non-organic food products.It is clear from, the above table that more than half (52.34%) of the respondents are highly known about the pesticides present in the non-organic food products.It is found that (54.67%) of the respondents are known about the Medicament nature in the non-organic food products that is injurious to health.53.27% of the respondents are known about the non-organic food products will create an impact in hormonalim balance. Maximum (46.73%) of the respondents are known that the non- organic food products will create infertility in the human beings.

Maximum (42.05%) of the respondents are known that the impact of non-organic food products are disease prone in nature. Category of the users and Awareness about the Facts of Organic Food Products

H0: There is no significant relationship between category of the users and their level of awareness about facts of organic food products.

Organic Food Products and level of Awareness about the Facts of Organic Food Products

Opinion	Awareness	Category in organic food products			Results
		User	Non-User	Total	
Awareness about its advantaged	Highly aware	36	10	46	$\chi^2 : 21.530$
	Aware	30	14	44	
	Somewhat aware	4	9	13	
	Not Aware	1	3	4	
Type of organic food production	Highly aware	15	4	19	$\chi^2 : 6.835$
	Aware	25	10	35	
	Somewhat aware	18	12	30	
	Not Aware	11	8	19	
	Highly Not aware	2	2	4	
Organic standards food	Highly aware	15	4	19	$\chi^2 : 17.273$
	Aware	25	6	31	
	Somewhat aware	14	14	28	
	Not Aware	14	10	24	
	Highly Not aware	3	2	5	
Organic Certificate from agencies certifying	Highly aware	15	3	18	$\chi^2 : 8.566$
	Aware	20	10	30	
	Somewhat aware	15	11	26	
	Not Aware	14	11	25	
	Highly Not aware	5	3	8	

- The chi-square value is found to be greater than the table value at 5% level and hence, it is concluded that the “Category of the users and their level of awareness about its advantage” are significantly associated and holds good. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.
- The chi-square value is found to be less (6.835) than the table value (9.488) at 5% level and hence, it is concluded that the “Type of the users and their level of awareness towards organic food production methods” are not significantly associated and does not hold good. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

- The chi-square value is found to be more (17.273) than the table value (9.488) at 5% level and hence, it is concluded that the “Category of the users and their level of awareness towards organic food standards” are significantly associated and holds good. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.
- The chi-square value is found to be less (8.566) than the table value (9.488) at 5% level and hence, it is concluded that the “Category of the users and their level of awareness towards Organic Certificate from certifying agencies” are not significantly associated and does not hold good. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Findings

The influence of the non-organic nature of the food goods is something that the respondents are only somewhat aware of. It is known that the majority of respondents felt it was challenging to identify organic food goods on the market. The majority of people have intermediate levels of awareness of the effects of various food products. "User category and level of awareness of its advantage" are positively correlated and reliable. The statement "type of users and their level of awareness towards organic food production methods" is not supported and is not significantly correlated. "User category and awareness level regarding organic certificate from certifying agencies."

Suggestions

- Improved in-store sales in general stores can be attributed to promoting the product through word-of-mouth, which will encourage more customers to purchase organic food items. It contributes to increasing the sales of organic food items.
- A vital instrument for promoting any kind of goods is publicity. The public should be informed of the producers' daily innovations in their products through product value addition, which will give organic food items greater credibility.
- Since more people choose organized organic stores, appropriate setups, displays, and other marketing initiatives will undoubtedly influence customers to choose organic food items.

II.CONCLUSION

The demographic variables of the consumers are analyzed, factors were considered towards purchase of organic food products, the awareness of the consumers are measured based on their level of preference for the organic food products has been predict and the source of influence to bring out the product among consumers is analyzed in the study. The consumer awareness towards preferring organic food products has been studied and their level of preference was measured based on their opinion which concludes that the consumers highly prefer to use organic food products in Tirchirappalli District. The products should be made more available to people both easily and economically. If people compare and find that price of non-organic products than organic ones, automatically they will have developed tendency to move towards non-organic even knowing its bad effects. This is the place where government can play an effective role by reducing the price of organic food. Government can take various measures to promote production, consumption and advertisement of organic products.

Scope For Further Research

To comprehend the adoption of organic food items in a given district or state in light of other locations' experiences, a comparison research can be conducted. Analyzing the political, social, and most importantly, economic barriers that prevent producers, marketers, and consumers in a given state from introducing and embracing organic food goods is another avenue for research inquiry.

To get insight into consumer behavior patterns, as well as the diffusion rate and penetration share of these two product categories in the Indian context, a comparative analysis of organic and conventional food goods can be carried out.

III.REFERENCES

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