

## Consumers' purchasing behaviour towards organic products in Karur district, Tamil Nadu

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### ABSTRACT

Organic food consumption has increased in the recent years. It not only improves the health of humans but also provides more nutritional benefits. Due to the increase in consumers' interest towards organic products there has been increasing demand for the organic products. Organic foods also aim at establishing ecological balance to prevent soil fertility and pest problems. An organic shop in Karur district of Tamil Nadu was purposively selected and thirty respondents were selected randomly using simple random sampling for the study. About half (53.33%) of the respondents were aware that organic products did not carry pesticides, 40.00 per cent preferred organic products to maintain good health and 70.00 per cent obtained information on organic food products from friends/family. Based on the mean score value consumers had favourable attitude that the organic products were of higher nutritional value (4.70), organic consumption helped in protecting the environment (4.26), not many organic products were available in the market (4.10), there were many selling locations for organic products (4.03) and it was difficult to identify real organic products (4.03). Most of the consumers were health conscious as they were from urban areas and purchased organic products in order to maintain good health.

**Keywords:** Consumer; purchasing behavior; organic products; nutritional benefits

### INTRODUCTION

Organic farming has been practiced in India since thousands of years. With rising concern of health issues and food safety, many consumers have turned their site to 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 foods promote balance among humans, other living organisms and the nature. It also promotes no artificial preservatives and best maintains the originality of food. This prevents excess use of harmful ingredients and thereby ensures health (Chandrashekhar 2014). The protection of environment through sustainable consumption is possible only through green products. The products which are non-toxic, made from recycled materials, minimally packaged and have less environmental

impacts are known as green products (Ottman 1998). According to Jain and Kaur (2004) it is good to see that people in India have started realizing the need of conserving the environment. The demand for organic products in India has been growing significantly for the past five years. Consumers are willing to pay more for organic goods. The increasing number of consumers who prefer and are willing to buy these products are subjected to the buying process. Consumers have different buying behaviour and the behaviour is constantly changing as a result of the availability of best alternatives to choose from. Products are chosen for numerous reasons. Overall the buying process is extremely fast-paced today (Padmathy and Saraswathy 2016). In this study consumers' purchase behaviour was studied for better understanding of their awareness and perception towards organic products. The consumers' opinion about price of the products was also studied.

## METHODOLOGY

An organic shop in Karur district of Tamil Nadu was purposively selected and 30 respondents were selected randomly using simple random sampling for the study. Eight independent variables were selected for getting response of respondents. These were awareness about benefits of organic products, reason for preference of organic products, information seeking behaviour on organic food products, attitude towards organic products, quantity of purchasing of organic products, frequency of purchasing of organic products, opinion about price of organic products and satisfaction about quality of organic products. Simple percentage analysis and mean score methods were applied for the study.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The distribution of respondents according to purchasing behaviour is given in Table 1.

The data reveal that consumers had awareness due to higher education level and information seeking behavior that organic products did not carry pesticides (53.33%), 40.00 per cent of the consumers preferred organic products to maintain good health as they were more health conscious and 70.00 per cent obtained information on organic food products from friends/family as most of them were from urban areas. They got access to information from their neighbors and different websites. Around 40.00 per cent of the consumers purchased more than three products. They

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to purchasing behavior

Parameter	Respondents	
	Number	Percentage
Awareness on benefits of organic products		
Do not carry pesticides	16	53.33
Food without chemical fertilizers	7	23.33
Decrease risk of cancer	2	6.67
Safer than conventional	5	16.67
Reasons for preference for organic products		
Maintain good health	12	40.00
Prefer taste/feelings	5	16.67
Quality of food	9	30.00
Low price	4	13.33
Information seeking behaviour on organic food products		
By friends/family	21	70.00
Websites	4	13.33
Print media	2	6.67
TV advertisements	3	10.00
Quantity of purchasing of organic products		
Only one product	3	10.00
Two products	9	30.00
Three products	6	20.00
More than three products	12	40.00
Frequency of purchasing of organic products		
Daily	3	10.00
Weekly	17	56.66
Monthly	8	26.67
Occasionally	2	6.67
Opinion towards price of organic products		
Expensive	16	53.33
Moderate	12	40.00
Too low	2	6.67
Satisfaction about quality of organic products		
Satisfied	30	100.00
Dissatisfied	0	0.0

purchased organic products on an average of Rs 2000 month. More than half (56.66%) of the consumers purchased organic products weekly. More than half (53.33%) of the consumers had an opinion that most of the organic products were expensive as compared to inorganic products. Cent per cent of the consumers were satisfied about the quality of organic products.

### Attitude towards organic products

The attitude of the consumers towards organic products was calculated using mean score method. The distribution of respondents according to their attitude towards organic products is given in Table 2.

The consumers had attitude that the organic products were of higher nutrition value (4.70), organics consumption helped in protecting the environment (4.26), many organic products were not available in the market (4.10), there were a lot of selling locations for organic products (4.03), it was difficult to identify real organic products (4.03), there was a small variety of organic products (3.96), the packaging of organic products looked less pleasing to the eyes (3.93), organic products were promoted properly (3.86), the organic products labels in the market were confusing (3.63) and consumption of organic products represented higher social status (3.43). This could be due to the reason

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their attitude towards organic products

Statement	Mean score
Organic products are of higher nutritional value	4.70
The packaging of organic products is less pleasing to the eyes	3.93
Consumption of organic products represents higher social status	3.43
Not many organic products are available in the market	4.10
There are limited varieties of organic products	3.96
There are many selling locations for organic products	4.03
It is difficult to identify real organic products	4.03
The labels on the organic products in the market are confusing	3.63
Organic products' consumption helps protecting the environment	4.26
Organic products are promoted properly	3.86
Overall mean score	3.99

that the consumers had high level of educational status and their information seeking behaviour towards organic products was also high.

### CONCLUSION

Consumers' behaviour towards organic products is a study which reveals the attitude of people about organic food products. There has also been an increasing demand for organic food products but the availability of them is limited. The consumers were more health conscious and they purchased organic products in order to maintain good health because most of the consumers were from urban areas and had high level of educational status. Government intervention in the marketing of organic products would be helpful for easy marketing by organic farmers and increase in purchasing behaviour of the consumers. The increase in promotion of organic products through

advertisements would increase the organic products buying behaviour of the consumers.

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