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## **A STUDY ON THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS ORGANIC PRODUCTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IDUKKI DISTRICT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study is grounded in the need to better understand the specific attitudes, preferences, and behavioural patterns of consumers in Idukki district. It explores the socio-economic, psychological, and cultural factors influencing their purchase decisions. Moreover, it aims to identify the primary motivators and barriers to the adoption of organic products. Understanding these factors is crucial not only for producers and marketers but also for policymakers seeking to promote sustainable agricultural practices and public health initiatives. To achieve this, the study employs both descriptive and analytical methodologies. Surveys, interviews, and statistical analysis provide a holistic view of the consumer landscape. By investigating different demographic segments, this study can determine the relative importance of variables such as education, age, income, occupation, and cultural beliefs in shaping organic food preferences. This level of analysis is essential to move beyond surface-level insights and uncover deeper trends in consumer behaviour. The study found that consumers in Idukki district have a positive attitude towards organic products, with high awareness and belief in their health benefits. However, despite growing interest, actual consumption is limited by factors such as high prices, limited availability, and lack of trust in certification. Young, educated individuals are more inclined to buy organic products, especially fruits and vegetables, and most purchases are motivated by health concerns. Social and cultural influences like family and tradition also play a key role in shaping consumer choices. To increase adoption, efforts must focus on making organic products more affordable, easily available, and trustworthy. Strengthening awareness and supporting local farmers can also boost the organic product market in the region.

**KEYWORDS:** Buying Behaviour, Organic Products, Factors influencing purchase decisions

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

India, with its agrarian roots and a significant portion of the population engaged in agriculture, has substantial potential for organic farming. The country is endowed with favourable climatic conditions, traditional farming knowledge, and a growing domestic market. Focusing on Kerala, one of India's most literate and environmentally conscious states, provides a fertile ground for studying organic food

consumption. Kerala has a strong history of agricultural sustainability and community-level participation in health and welfare programs. Among its districts, Idukki holds a unique position. Located in the Western Ghats, Idukki is characterized by lush green hills, forest cover, and rich biodiversity. The region's topography and soil composition make it conducive for organic farming. It is also home to a large population of farmers who have traditionally relied on eco-friendly cultivation methods. The socio-cultural landscape of Idukki is deeply intertwined with agricultural practices. Generations of families have lived off the land, and the community exhibits a deep respect for nature. Given this context, one might expect organic products to have widespread appeal. Nevertheless, local consumers are still influenced by various factors such as price sensitivity, perceived benefits, access to reliable products, and trust in certifications. These complex variables make Idukki an ideal setting for a micro-level study of consumer behaviour towards organic food.

This study is grounded in the need to better understand the specific attitudes, preferences, and behavioural patterns of consumers in Idukki district. It explores the socio-economic, psychological, and cultural factors influencing their purchase decisions. Moreover, it aims to identify the primary motivators and barriers to the adoption of organic products. Understanding these factors is crucial not only for producers and marketers but also for policymakers seeking to promote sustainable agricultural practices and public health initiatives. To achieve this, the study employs both descriptive and analytical methodologies. Surveys, interviews, and statistical analysis provide a holistic view of the consumer landscape. By investigating different demographic segments, this study can determine the relative importance of variables such as education, age, income, occupation, and cultural beliefs in shaping organic food preferences. This level of analysis is essential to move beyond surface-level insights and uncover deeper trends in consumer behaviour.

The findings of this research can inform strategies to boost organic consumption in semi-rural and rural regions, enhance consumer trust through improved certification systems, and support local organic farmers through targeted interventions. In doing so, it aligns with broader goals of sustainable development, community health, and agricultural reform. Moreover, the study contributes to the ongoing academic discourse on green consumerism, sustainability, and food security. It builds on existing literature by providing empirical data from a geographically and culturally distinct region. As the global discourse increasingly favours sustainability, there is an urgent need to bridge the gap between awareness and action. By focusing on Idukki district, this study addresses a critical area of consumer behavior that intersects with agriculture, health, economy, and the environment. It provides an empirical foundation for driving policy and practice towards a more organic future in India.

## 1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significant importance for multiple stakeholders: **a) For policymakers**, the findings

can offer insights into consumer expectations and help design effective strategies to promote organic farming and consumption. **b) For producers and marketers**, understanding consumer behaviour will enable them to align their production, pricing, and distribution strategies with market demands. **c) For consumers**, the study can raise awareness about the benefits of organic products and the factors influencing purchasing decisions. **d) For researchers**, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on consumer behaviour, sustainable agriculture, and rural development, particularly in the context of Idukki district. By identifying the factors that drive or hinder the purchase of organic products, this study can contribute to promoting healthier consumption patterns, supporting local farmers, and fostering sustainable agricultural development in the region.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the increasing awareness of the health and environmental benefits of organic products, their consumption remains limited in many regions, including Idukki district. Various factors such as price sensitivity, limited availability, lack of consistent supply, and inadequate consumer education may act as barriers to widespread adoption. Furthermore, socio-economic and cultural factors often play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and purchase behaviour. This study seeks to explore and analyze the complex interplay of these factors to understand the challenges and opportunities in promoting organic products in Idukki.

### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- ✓ To assess the awareness, attitudes, and preferences of consumers towards organic products.
- ✓ To analyse the key factors influencing the purchase decisions of organic products, including price, availability, and perceived benefits
- ✓ To study the role of socio-economic and cultural factors in shaping the demand for organic products in Idukki district.

### **1.5 HYPOTHESES**

1.  $H_0$  (Null Hypothesis):

There is no association between consumers' awareness of organic products and frequency of their purchase.

2.  $H_1$  (Alternative Hypothesis):

Consumers who are more aware of organic products tend to purchase them more frequently.

3.  $H_0$  (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant difference in the proportion of salary spent on organic products across income groups.

4.  $H_1$  (Alternative Hypothesis):

There are significant differences, and higher-income consumers spend a larger proportion of their salary on organic products.

**5.H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):**

There is no association between places that buy organic products and their trust in organic certifications.

**6.H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):**

Consumers who buy directly from farmers have greater trust in organic certifications than those purchasing from supermarkets, local markets, or online stores.

**1.6 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH**

The scope of this research defines the boundaries within which the study will be conducted:

**Geographical Scope:** The study is specifically focused on the consumers in Idukki district, Kerala. It takes into account the unique agricultural practices, cultural aspects, and consumer behaviours prevalent in this region.

**Population Scope:** The target population includes consumers who are either purchasing or are potential purchasers of organic products in Idukki. This includes various demographic segments such as different income groups, educational levels, occupations, age groups, and genders.

**Product Scope:** The research will focus on organic food products, including but not limited to organic fruits, vegetables, dairy products, grains, and spices, which are commonly available and consumed in Idukki.

**Time Scope:** The data collection will reflect current consumer behaviour at the time of study (2025), capturing the most recent trends and patterns.

**Conceptual Scope:** The study will examine various factors influencing purchase behaviour, such as: Consumer awareness and attitudes, Price sensitivity, Availability and accessibility, Perceived health and environmental benefits, Socio-economic and cultural factors.

**Practical Scope:** The results of this study may help: Policymakers design better organic promotion policies, Marketers develop effective pricing, distribution, and promotional strategies, Farmers and producers adapt to market needs and Consumers make informed choices.

**1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**1.7.1 Research Design**

The study is analytical in nature. It uses analytical tools such as Chi-square and ANOVA to test hypotheses and examine relationships between key variables like awareness, income, and purchasing patterns.

**1.7.2 Sources of data**

Sources of data are generally classified into primary data and secondary data.

#### **1.7.2.1 Primary data**

Primary data are collected by way of questionnaire using convenient random sampling of 50 respondents involved in saving and financial investment scheme.

#### **1.7.2.2 Secondary data**

Secondary data are collected from various websites relating to Savings and Financial Investment scheme.

#### **1.7.3 Population**

The population of the study consists of people who have saving and financial investment scheme all-around in Idukki District. The study is conducted among consumers of age above 18 years in Idukki district.

#### **1.7.4 Sampling Method:**

Probability sampling is the sampling technique by which the researcher chooses samples from a larger population.

#### **1.7.5 Sample Size:**

Sample size is a group of respondents selected from the whole respondents. Sample size selected for the study is 50.

#### **1.7.6 Tools used for Data Analysis**

The collected data have been analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools like Percentage, chi-square. and ANOVA and the presentation tools of table is also used. It has been analysed with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science).

### **1.8 CHAPTERISATION**

Chaptalization is the process of creating chapter point and chapter metadata from a broadcast period. The study contains 3 chapters.

#### **CHAPTER I: Introduction**

The introduction chapter deals with introduction, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, scope of the study, research methodology, limitations of the study, chapterisation and research gap identification.

## **CHAPTER II: Data analysis and interpretation**

This chapter focuses on data analysis and interpretation. The data collected through the questionnaire are analysed using various statistical tools.

## **CHAPTER III: Findings, suggestions and conclusion**

This chapter deals with the research findings, suggestions, and conclusion.

### **1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- The study conducted in Idukki District only.
- Selected sample size is limited to 50.
- The respondents provide data from their memory, so the collected data may be biased.

### **1.10 RESEARCH GAP IDENTIFICATION**

Over the past two decades, numerous studies have been conducted globally and nationally to understand consumer behaviour towards organic products product consumption, substantial gaps remain in terms of localized analysis, cultural integration, behavioural segmentation, trust mechanisms, and actionable outcomes. This research addresses these deficiencies by offering an in-depth, empirically grounded examination of consumer behaviour toward organic products in Idukki district, thereby contributing meaningfully to the field of sustainable consumption and rural market development.

## **2. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, informing conclusion, and supporting decision making. This chapter presents the analysis of data which was collected through structured questionnaire.

**TABLE 2.1 AWARENESS ABOUT ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>80.0</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Some what</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.1 indicates the awareness of the consumers about organic products and found that a large majority (80%) of the respondents are aware of organic products. This reflects a strong level of awareness among consumers in the surveyed region (Idukki district). A smaller portion of the respondents, (10%), reported that they are not aware of organic products, while another 10 percent indicated that they are only somewhat aware.

**TABLE 2.2 SOURCE OF AWARENESS**

Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Social media	25	50
Friends and family	20	40
Advertisements	4	8
Local market	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.2 showed that social media (50%) is the leading source of awareness about organic products, followed by Friends and Family (40%) distantly followed by Advertisements (8%) and the Local Market (2%). This indicates that digital platforms and personal networks play a major role in spreading awareness, while traditional methods have limited impact.

**TABLE 2.3 BELIEF ON ORGANIC PRODUCTS HEALTH BENEFITS**

Agreement level	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	28	56
Agree	12	24
Neutral	6	12
Disagree	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.3 showed that most respondents (56%strongly agree and 24 % agree) believe organic products are healthier than conventional products. A smaller portion remains neutral (12%) or disagrees (8%). This indicates a strong positive perception about the health benefits of organic products among the users.

**TABLE 2.4 FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Regularly	20	40
Occasionally	21	42
Rarely	6	12
Never	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.4 showed that most of the respondents purchase organic products either regularly (40%) or occasionally (42%). Only a few buy them rarely (12%) or never (6%). This indicates high interest in purchasing organic products among consumers.

**TABLE 2.5 PREFERRED ORGANIC PRODUCT**

<b>Products</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Fruits and Vegetables	32	64.0
Dairy products	7	14.0
Grains and pulses	7	14.0
Spices and herbs	4	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.5 explained that majority of respondents (64%) prefer fruits and vegetables, making them the most popular organic product. Dairy products and grains & pulses are equally preferred at (14%) each, while spices and herbs are the least preferred at (8%.) This suggests that fresh produce is the key driver of organic product interest.

**TABLE 2.6 TRUSTED IN CERTIFICATION AND LABELING**

<b>TRUST</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	34	68
No	14	28
Not Sure	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.6 showed that most of the respondents (68%) trusted in certification and labeling of organic products. However, (28%) do not trust them, and (4 %) are unsure. This indicates that while a majority

have confidence in certification, a notable portion remain skeptical or uncertain.

**TABLE 2.7 PRIMARY REASON FOR PURCHASE**

<b>REASON</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Health Benefits	31	62
Environmental Cocerns	8	16
Better Taste	7	14
Support For Local Farmers	4	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.7 showed the various reason for purchase of organic products and found that more than three-fifth (62%) of respondents purchase organic products mainly for health benefits, distantly followed by (16%) environmental concerns, while (14%) are motivated by better taste, and (8%) aim to support local farmers. This indicates health is the strongest driver for buying organic products

**TABLE 2.8 IMPORTANCE OF PRICING**

<b>PRICING IMPORTANCE</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very Important	25	50
Important	20	40
Neutral	3	6
Not Important	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.8 shows that (50%) half of the respondents consider pricing very important when purchasing organic products, while (40%) rate it as important. Only a small portion, (6%) are neutral, and (4%) feel it is not important. This indicates that price plays a significant role in consumers' buying decisions for organic products.

**TABLE 2.9  
AFFORDABILITY**

<b>AFFORDABILITY</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	25	50
No	10	20
Sometimes	15	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.9 showed that half of the respondents (50%) consider that the organic products are affordable in all respects, and 30 percent consider it affordable at sometimes, but 20 percent of the respondents can't afford it at any way.

**TABLE 2.10  
AVAILABILITY AFFECT PURCHASE DECISIONS**

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Influences	28	56
Moderately Influences	17	34
Does Not Influence	5	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.10 displayed that majority (56%) of the respondents supported that availability influences their purchase of organic products, while (34%) have moderately influences them. Only 10 percent feel it does not influence their decision. This indicates that availability is a key factor affecting most consumers' buying behavior in the Idukki district.

**TABLE 2.11 PROCUREMENT OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Supermarkets	15	30
Local Markets	15	30
Direct From Farmers	17	34
Online Stores	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.11 shows that majority (34%) of consumers buy organic products directly from farmers, making it the most preferred source. Supermarkets and local markets follow equally (30%) each. Only (6 %) purchase from online stores, indicating that traditional and direct methods are more popular for organic product procurement in Idukki district.

**TABLE 2.12  
MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR**

<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Quality	29	58
Price	10	20
Brand Reputation	7	14
Certification	4	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.12 shows that quality is the most important factor for consumers when purchasing organic products, with 58 percent prioritization. Price (20%) and Brand reputation (14%) follow, while only 8 percent consider certification as important. This indicates that consumers in Idukki mainly value the quality of organic products over all other factors.

**TABLE 2.13  
WHETHER BUY MORE IF AFFORDABLE**

<b>BUY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Yes	36	72
No	11	22
Maybe	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.13 reveals that nearly three-fourth (72%) of the respondents would buy more organic products if they were affordable, indicating price as a major barrier, 22 percent said they would not, while 6 percent were uncertain. This suggests that improving affordability could significantly boost organic product consumption in Idukki

**TABLE 2.14  
WORTH THE HIGHER PRICE**

<b>WORTH</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Yes	26	52
No	16	32
Sometimes	8	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.14 showed that majority (52%) of the respondents believe organic products are worth the higher price, while (32%) think they are not. Another (16%) feels it depends or say "sometimes." This indicates that while many consumers value the benefits of organic products, price remains a concern for a significant portion in Idukki.

**TABLE 2.15**  
**IMPORTANCE OF PACKAGING**

<b>IMPORTANCE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Very Important	28	56
Important	15	30
Neutral	5	10
Not Important	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.15 showed that 56 percent of the respondents consider packaging very important, and 30 percent see it important too. Only a small portion are neutral (10%) or feel it's not important (4%). This indicates that packaging plays a major role in consumer decisions regarding organic products.

**TABLE 2.16**  
**DISCOURAGING FACTOR**

<b>DISCOURAGING FACTOR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
High Price	16	32
Limited Availability	21	42
Lack of Trust	10	20
No Noticeable Difference	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.16 shows that main discouraging factor is limited availability (42 %), followed by high price (32 %) and lack of trust (20%). A small percentage (6%) see no noticeable difference. This indicates that improving product availability, affordability, and trust could encourage more organic product purchases.

**TABLE 2.17**  
**AGE GROUP**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
18-25	19	38
25-35	24	48
35-45	5	10
Above 45	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.17 showed that majority of respondents are aged between 25 and 35 (48%), followed by 18–25 (38%). Only 10% are aged between 35 and 45, and (4%) are above 45, indicating that younger individuals form the largest portion of the sample.

**TABLE 2.18 MONTHLY INCOME**

INCOME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Below 20000	15	30
20000-40000	20	40
40000-60000	11	22
Above 60000	4	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.18 showed that most of the respondents earn between ₹20,000 and ₹40,000 (40%), followed by those earning below ₹20,000 (30%). Around (22%) fall in the ₹40,000–₹60,000 range, while only (8%) earn above ₹60,000. This indicates that the majority belong to the lower to middle-income groups.

**TABLE 2.19 HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION**

EDUCATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
High School	5	10
Graduate	20	40
P.G.	23	46
Professional Degree	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.19 showed that majority of respondents are post graduates (46%), followed by graduates (40%). A smaller portion holds professional degrees (4%), and only 10 percent have education up to high school. This suggests that most participants have attained higher education qualifications.

**TABLE 2.20 WHETHER FAMILY INFLUENCE ON BUYING**

INFLUENCES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	34	68
No	13	26
Sometimes	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

More than two-third of the respondents (68%) reported that their family influences their buying decisions. 26 percent said that family have no influence, while 6 percent opined that family influence sometimes. This shows that family plays a crucial role in consumers' purchasing behavior.

**TABLE 2.21 WHETHER TRADITIONAL PRACTICE INFLUENCE ON PURCHASE**

<b>INFLUENCES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Yes	29	58
No	16	32
Somewhat	5	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Table 2.21 showed that 58 percent of the respondents believe traditional practices influence on their purchase decisions, while 32 percent are not influenced, balance 10 percent feel that they are somewhat influenced. This indicates that traditional customs still play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior.

**TABLE 2.22 SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMERS**

<b>SUPPORT</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Very Important	27	54
Important	14	28
Neutral	7	14
Not Important	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

Majority of the respondents (54%) believe that supporting local farmers is very important, while (28 %) consider it important. A smaller group is neutral (14%), and only 4 percent find it as not important. This indicates strong public support for local farming, reflecting a socially responsible and community-focused attitude among consumers.

## **2.23 HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

### **2.23.1. AWARENESS VS. PURCHASE FREQUENCY (CHI-SQUARE TEST)**

**H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** There is no association between consumers' awareness of organic products and their purchase frequency.

**H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** Consumers who are more aware of organic products tend to purchase them more frequently.

### Chi-Square test of independence

	VALUE	Df	Chi- Square Value(2-SIDED)
PEARSON CHI-SQUARE	7.292 <sup>a</sup>	6	.295
LIKELIHOOD RATIO	6.906	6	.330
LINEAR-BY-LINEAR ASSOCIATION	3.616	1	.057
<b>N</b>	<b>50</b>		

Since  $p = 0.295$  is greater than 0.05 (commonly used significance level), we fail to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). This means that there is no statistically significant association between the awareness and purchase frequency.

### 2.23.2. INCOME LEVEL VS. SPENDING (ANOVA)

**$H_0$  (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in the proportion of salary spent on organic products across income groups.

**$H_1$  (Alternative Hypothesis):** Higher-income consumers spend a larger proportion of their salary on organic products.

#### One-Way ANOVA

	SUM OF SQUARES	Df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.
BETWEEN GROUPS	2.808	3	.936	1.065	.373
WITHIN GROUPS	42.173	47	.879		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44.981</b>	<b>50</b>			

Since the p-value (0.373) is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no statistically significant difference in spending behaviour on organic products among consumers across different income groups. The level of income does not appear to significantly influence how much consumers spend on organic products (based on purchase behaviour in this study).

### 2.23.3. STORE TYPE VS. TRUST IN LABELS (CHI-SQUARE TEST)

**$H_0$  (Null Hypothesis):** There is no association between place of buy the organic products and their

trust in organic certifications.

**H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** Consumers who buy directly from farmers have greater trust in organic certifications than those purchasing from supermarkets, local markets, or online stores.

**Chi square test**

	VALUE	Df	Chi-Square Value (2-SIDED)
PEARSON CHI-SQUARE	11.089 <sup>a</sup>	6	.086
LIKELIHOOD RATIO	12.385	6	.054
LINEAR-BY-LINEAR ASSOCIATION	5.973	1	.015
N	50		

There is **no strong statistically significant association** between store type and trust in certification labels at the conventional 5% significance level ( $p = 0.086$ ) from Pearson Chi-Square.

**3. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

Major findings of the study are concise below;

- Social media and word of mouth are the main sources of awareness about the organic products.
- Consumers believe organic products are healthier than conventional ones, so they purchase them regularly or occasionally.
- Fruits and vegetables are the most preferred organic items as health benefits are the main reason why people buy organic products.
- Majority of consumers trust certification and labeling of organic products, but some are still doubtful.
- Price is an important factor influencing the purchase decisions and many consumers find organic products are unaffordable.
- Availability of organic products significantly affects the buying decisions and Quality is considered the most important factor when choosing organic products.
- Consumers mostly buy organic products from farmers as there is strong support for local farmers among consumers.
- Many consumers would buy more organic products if they were cheaper.

- Most believe organic products are worth the higher price and packaging plays an important role in consumers buying decisions.
- Limited availability, high prices, and lack of trust discourage people from buying organic products.
- Most consumers are young and belong to middle-income groups.
- Higher education levels are common among organic product buyers.
- Family and traditional practices influence purchasing decisions.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The following suggestions were derived from the study;

- **Improve Availability:** Establish more organic product outlets and supply chains across Idukki.
- **Make Pricing Competitive:** Government subsidies or cooperative pricing models can make organic products more affordable.
- **Strengthen Trust:** Promote transparency in certification and labeling through strict regulation and awareness campaigns.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Leverage social media, schools, and local events to educate consumers on health and environmental benefits of organic products.
- **Encourage Direct Purchase:** Support farmers' markets or direct-to-consumer sales platforms for better farmer income and consumer trust.
- **Target Youth and Educated Groups:** Tailor marketing towards younger, educated consumers who are more likely to be early adopters.
- **Support Local Farming:** Policies and incentives should encourage local organic farming, which consumers are already inclined to support.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study found that consumers in Idukki district have a positive attitude towards organic products, with high awareness and belief in their health benefits. However, despite growing interest, actual consumption is limited by factors such as high prices, limited availability, and lack of trust in certification. Young, educated individuals are more inclined to buy organic products, especially fruits and vegetables, and most purchases are motivated by health concerns. Social and cultural influences

like family and tradition also play a key role in shaping consumer choices. To increase adoption, efforts must focus on making organic products more affordable, easily available, and trustworthy. Strengthening awareness and supporting local farmers can also boost the organic product market in the region though the respondents believe organic farming is better and would recommend organic products to others.

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