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A STUDY ON THE PROBLEM OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Dr. M. Mahesh Kumar¹ and S. Shriram²

¹Associate Professor & Head, Department of Commerce with Computer Applications, Sri Krishna Adithya College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore.

²B.Com CA, Sri Krishna Adithya College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore

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ABSTRACT

Organic food products have become significant in recent years as consumers are becoming more conscious about health and wellness, environmental protection, and food security. But despite their growing popularity, there are various issues affecting their uptake. The current study seeks to examine the issues related with organic food products from the consumers' view. Primary data has been gathered through a questionnaire from a sample of 130 people in Coimbatore city. The study used a descriptive research design. The study reveals price, lack of awareness, availability and certification issues are the major problems. This study finds that while consumers have a favourable attitude towards organic food, their buying intentions are limited by economic and availability issues. The research ends with recommendations to enhance awareness, purchase convenience and price of organic food products.

KEYWORDS: Organic food, Consumer perception, Price sensitivity, Awareness, Availability, Certification

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organic food products have gained significant attention across the world due to increasing consumer awareness about health, environmental sustainability, and food safety. Organic foods are produced using natural farming practices that avoid the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and artificial additives. These products are considered healthier and environmentally friendly compared to conventionally produced food. As a result, the demand for organic food products has been growing steadily in both developed and developing countries.

Despite the rising demand, the organic food sector faces several challenges that hinder its growth and accessibility. The production, certification, marketing, pricing, and distribution of organic food products present complex problems for farmers, traders, and consumers. Small and marginal farmers,



in particular, face difficulties such as high certification costs, lack of technical knowledge, limited access to organic inputs, and lower initial yields during the transition period from conventional to organic farming. These issues often discourage farmers from adopting organic farming practices.

From the consumer perspective, organic food products are often perceived as expensive and less accessible than conventional foods. Limited availability, inadequate market infrastructure, lack of proper labeling, and low consumer awareness about certification standards create confusion and reduce trust in organic products. Moreover, the presence of fake or uncertified organic products in the market further complicates the situation and affects genuine producers.

Marketing and distribution problems also play a major role in restricting the expansion of organic food products. Inefficient supply chains, inadequate storage facilities, lack of organized markets, and the dominance of middlemen reduce farmers' share of the final price. In rural and semi-urban areas, organic producers often struggle to reach wider markets due to poor transportation and limited linkages with retailers and consumers.

Therefore, analyzing the problems of organic food products is essential to understand the constraints faced at various stages from production to consumption. Such an analysis helps policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders identify gaps in the existing system and develop effective strategies to promote organic farming, ensure fair prices for farmers, improve consumer confidence, and support sustainable agricultural development. This study aims to examine the key challenges associated with organic food products and suggest measures to strengthen the organic food sector for long-term growth.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Organic food products are increasingly recognized for their health benefits, environmental sustainability, and contribution to safe food consumption. In recent years, the demand for organic food products has grown due to rising awareness among consumers regarding the harmful effects of chemical-based agriculture. Governments and environmental organizations are also promoting organic farming as a sustainable alternative to conventional farming practices. However, despite these positive developments, the organic food sector continues to face several critical problems that limit its growth and effectiveness.

One of the major problems lies in the production of organic food products. Farmers face challenges such as high input costs, lack of availability of organic seeds and bio-inputs, insufficient technical knowledge, and reduced yields during the initial transition period from conventional to organic farming. In addition, the process of organic certification is complex, time-consuming, and costly, particularly for small and marginal farmers. These constraints discourage many farmers from adopting organic farming practices.



Marketing and distribution of organic food products also pose serious problems. The absence of organized markets, inadequate storage and transportation facilities, and inefficient supply chains restrict farmers' access to profitable markets. The dominance of middlemen further reduces the share of producers in the final consumer price. As a result, organic farmers often fail to receive fair and remunerative prices for their products.

From the consumer side, organic food products are often perceived as expensive and less accessible. Limited availability, lack of awareness about certification standards, improper labeling, and the presence of counterfeit organic products create confusion and mistrust among consumers. These factors reduce consumer confidence and negatively impact demand for genuine organic products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the concept and importance of organic food products.
- To examine the present status of organic food production and marketing.
- To identify the major problems faced by farmers in the production of organic food products.
- To analyze the difficulties involved in organic certification and quality assurance.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study focuses on understanding the various problems and challenges associated with organic food products across production, marketing, and consumption stages. The study aims to cover the entire organic food supply chain, highlighting the issues faced by farmers, intermediaries, retailers, and consumers.

- **Geographical Scope:** The study is primarily focused on rural and semi-urban areas, where organic farming is practiced, and the marketing infrastructure is limited. It may include case studies of selected regions known for organic production.
- **Product Scope:** The research considers a variety of organic food products, including fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses, dairy products, and processed organic foods available in the local markets.
- **Producer Scope:** The study examines the problems faced by small, marginal, and medium-scale farmers involved in organic farming, including issues related to production, certification, and income.
- **Market Scope:** The study explores the marketing and distribution challenges of organic food products, including the role of intermediaries, retail pricing, storage, transportation, and supply chain inefficiencies.
- **Consumer Scope:** The study investigates consumer awareness, perception, and buying behavior regarding organic food products, including factors affecting trust, accessibility, and affordability.



- **Policy Scope:** The research may highlight government initiatives, policies, and support programs promoting organic farming and marketing, as well as areas where policy interventions are needed.
- **Time Scope:** The study focuses on the current trends, challenges, and market dynamics of organic food products over recent years, providing a contemporary understanding of the sector.
- By analyzing these aspects, the study seeks to provide comprehensive insights into the problems of organic food products and suggest strategies to improve production, marketing, and consumption practices, contributing to sustainable agricultural development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the problems faced by consumers and sellers of organic food products. The research focuses on identifying issues such as high prices, lack of awareness, availability, and trust in certification.

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used to collect and interpret data systematically.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design adopted for the study titled “Analyzing the Problems of Organic Food Products” is a descriptive research design. This design is suitable as the study aims to describe and analyze the problems faced by consumers while purchasing organic food products, such as high prices, lack of awareness, limited availability, and issues related to trust and certification. The study is conducted in Chennai city, as it represents an urban market with increasing awareness and demand for organic food products, making it an appropriate area for data collection. The descriptive approach helps in without manipulating any variables. The study is mainly based on survey methods, where data is collected through a structured questionnaire from selected respondents. This design enables systematic analysis and clear interpretation of data, making it easier to draw meaningful conclusions and provide practical suggestions.

AREA OF STUDY

The area of study is limited to Coimbatore city. The research focuses on consumers who purchase or are aware of organic food products from supermarkets, organic stores, and online platforms within the city. Coimbatore is selected as it represents an urban market where awareness and consumption of organic products are gradually increasing.

SOURCES OF DATA

The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

- **PRIMARY DATA**

Primary data is collected directly from respondents using a structured questionnaire, which helps in

gathering first-hand information about their preferences and problems.

- **SECONDARY DATA**

Secondary data is collected from books, research articles, journals, websites, and government publications related to organic food products, which supports the study with existing knowledge.

SAMPLING METHOD

The sampling method adopted for the study titled “Analyzing the Problems of Organic Food Products” is the convenience sampling method. Under this method, respondents are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the survey. The study is conducted in Chennai city, and consumers who are easily accessible, such as those visiting supermarkets, organic stores, or using online platforms, are chosen as respondents. This method is simple, time-saving, and cost-effective, making it suitable for the study, especially within limited time and resources. However, it may not represent the entire population accurately, as it depends on easily available respondents.

- **SAMPLE SIZE**

A sample of 130 respondents is selected for the study.

- **TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION**

A structured questionnaire is used as the main tool for collecting primary data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No. 1

Showing the Sources of Organic Products

S No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	TV /Radio	35	26.9
2.	News paper	3	2.3
3.	Internet Awareness program	45	34.6
4.	Friends & Colleagues	47	36.2
	Total	130	100

Source: Primary data.

Interpretation

The above Table shows that 26.9 Percent of the respondent TV/Radio. 2.3 percentage of the

respondents where News Paper 34.6 percent of the respondents were Internet Awareness program. 36.2 percent of the respondents were Friends and Colleagues.

Most (36.2%) of the respondents were Friends and Colleagues

Table No.2

Showing the money spend on organic products monthly

S No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Less than Rs.2,000	102	78.5
2.	Rs.2,000 to 5000	20	15.4
3.	Rs. 5,000 and above	8	6.1
	Total	130	100

Source: Primary data.

Interpretation

The above Table shows that 78.5 Percent of the respondents were Less than 2000. 15.4 percentage of the respondents were 2000 to<5000. 6.1 percent of the respondents were 5000 and above.

Majority (78.5%) of the respondents were Less than.

Table No.3

Showing the frequency of purchase organic products

S. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Daily	12	9.2
2.	Weekly	36	27.7
3.	Monthly	55	42.3
4.	Yearly	27	20.8
	Total	130	100

Source: Primary data.

Interpretation

The above Table shows that 9.2 Percent of the respondents were Daily. 27.7 percentage of the

respondents were Weekly. 42.3 percent of the respondents were Monthly. 20.8 percentage of the respondents were Yearly.

Most (42.3%) of the respondents were Monthly.

Table No.4
Showing Compared to conventional products, Organic products are expensive

S No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Strongly Agree	45	34.6
2.	Agree	49	37.7
3.	Neutral	30	23.1
4.	Disagree	4	3.1
5.	Strongly Disagree	2	1.5
	Total	130	100

Source: Primary data.

Interpretation

The above Table shows that 34.6 Percent of the respondents were Strongly Agree. 37.7 percentage of the respondents were Agree. 23.1 percent of the respondents were Neutral. 3.1 percentage of the respondent were Disagree. 1.5 percentage of the respondent were Strongly disagree.

Most (37.7%) of the respondents were Agree.

FINDINGS

- ✓ Majority (61.5%) of the respondents are Male.
- ✓ Majority (86.9%) of the respondents fall in the age category of 21 - 30 years
- ✓ Most (40%) of the respondents have No Income
- ✓ Majority (90.8%) of the respondents are Unmarried

- ✓ Most (36.2%) of the respondents are known through Friends and colleagues
- ✓ Majority (78.5%) of the respondents are spend <2 thousand
- ✓ Most (42.3%) of the respondents are purchases monthly.
- ✓ Majority (50.07%) of the respondents are Strongly Agree that Organic products are



- healthier than the conventional products.
- ✓ Most (44.6%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products helps to increase immune system due to high level of antioxidants.
 - ✓ Most (43.07%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products are antibiotic resistance.
 - ✓ Most (47.69%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products are not genetically modified.
 - ✓ Most (43.07%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products has less chances of food borne illness.
 - ✓ Most (46.9%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products contains low level of toxic metals.
 - ✓ Most (42.3%) of the respondents are Agree that All organic products are biodegradable in nature.
 - ✓ Most (41.5%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products does not contain preservatives.
 - ✓ Most (41.5%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products are safe for consumption than conventional products.
 - ✓ Most (38.46%) of the respondents are Agree that Compared to conventional products organic products gives the better taste.
 - ✓ Most (44.6%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products are generally rich in natural nutrients.
 - ✓ Most (35.38%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products seal is guaranteed and monitored by the government.
 - ✓ Most (43.07%) of the respondents are Agree that the availability of organic products is increasing day by day in retail outlets.
 - ✓ Most (43.8%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products have limited varieties.
 - ✓ Most (40%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products are available through Online platform.
 - ✓ Most (49.2%) of the respondents are Agree that Demand for the organic products is increasing day by day among the consumers.
 - ✓ Most (33.8%) of the respondents are Agree that Organic products are available in good packaging to attract customers.
 - ✓ Most (37.69%) of the respondents are Agree that Compared to conventional products, Organic products are expensive.



SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ Since the consumers have identified a remarkable difference between organic and conventional food products and have a robust positive perception towards the organic food products.
- ✓ The govt, NGOs and private organic food marketers can widely promote this aspect and may contribute to further expansion of
- ✓ organic market which in turn is highly beneficial to farmers, consumers, society and the environment at large.
- ✓ As it is observed from the study that taste is more influential attribute in the purchase decision of consumers.
- ✓ organic food can be largely advertised as both tasty and healthy food option among the different segments of consumers like children, youngsters and old age people.

CONCLUSIONS

The consumer 's concerns on food safety, quality and nutrition are increasingly becoming important across the planet, which has provided growing opportunities for organic foods within the recent years. The demand for organic food is steadily increasing within the developed countries, while developing countries like India still got to go an extended way. The untapped potential markets for organic foods within the countries like India got to be realized with organized markets for organic foods within the countries like India got to realize with organized interventions various fronts, which require a far better understanding of the consumers 'preference on food. Therefore, an analysis of Consumer 's perception towards Organic products in Coimbatore may be considered as important ground to build the markets for organic products in the initial phase of market development

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