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A study on organic produce consumption in Coimbatore City of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The growth of organic farming in India has helped consumers to choose healthier food products over non organic food products. The study was conducted in Coimbatore city of Tamil Nadu, India and investigated the consumers' buying behavior towards organic food products based on the data collected from 100 respondents. The results of the study indicated that the health concern and need of pesticide free food was the prior motivation to choose organic food. There are certain hurdles in organic produce consumption among the non consumers. The study has shown that organic products are more expensive and unaffordable. Creating awareness about organic farming, inducing more farmers towards the organic way and fixing minimum guaranteed price for farmers which is also consumer friendly will induce more consumers towards organic consumption.

Keywords: Organic products, consumer decision, health concern

Introduction

Health benefits associated with consumption of organic food and rise in the number of diseases due to excessive chemical contamination increase the preference for organic food. The emergence of organic food in the daily diet among the upper class population in India is an indicator for the opportunities available in India in this sector. According to industry estimates organic food market in India is projected to register a compound growth rate of over 25 per cent during 2015-20. The total volume of organic food produce produced in India during 2017-18 amounts to around 1.70 million MT of which 4.58 lakh MT has been exported. Despite increase in exports, the local consumption of organic produce is still at an infant stage with a market share of less than 1 per cent. (ASSOCHAM, 2018) ^[1]. Such a situation indicates the importance of study on consumers' attitude towards buying organic food. The study was conducted in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu with the objective of analyzing the factors responsible for organic produce consumption.

Methodology

In order to study the objectives, the data was collected from 50 organic food consumers and 50 non-organic food consumers totaling 100 respondents during 2018. The data for organic consumption was collected from conducting a survey with consumers at various retail organic stalls of Coimbatore city. Respondents of non organic consumption were those of consumers of farmers market in Coimbatore city.

Results and Discussion

The number of years of organic consumption is shown in the table 1.

Table 1: Number of years of organic consumption

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Less than two years	13	26
2	2-5 years	27	54
3	6- 8 years	6	12
4	9-10 years	2	4
5	More than 10 years	2	4
	Total	50	100

It could be seen from the Table 1 that of all the consumers, consumers who were buying organic produce for the last 2-5 years forms the majority followed by consumption not more than two years (26 per cent). It shows that even though some consumers were in the habit of organic consumption for more than 10 years, the awareness about organic produce has been in

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peak among consumers only for the last 2-5 years.

Table 2: Reasons for organic produce consumption

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Health awareness	28	56
2	Pesticide free food	17	34
3	Tastes better	5	10
	Total	50	100

It is evident from the Table 2 that of all the factors of organic consumption, health awareness among the consumers remains the most important reason (56%), followed by the need for pesticide free food (10 %). It is of the general opinion that, food especially vegetables nowadays were of not in good taste as compared to few decades back. In order to regain the taste of vegetables, about 10 per cent of the consumers bought organic vegetables.

Table 3: Awareness creation through

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Social media	13	26
2	Friends and relatives	15	30
3	TV News and Newspapers	12	24
4	Books and Magazines	10	20
5	Total	50	100

Any technology will have an impact creation, if it is properly taken back to the consumers. Consumers attention towards organic consumption was influenced by various factors and among those awareness created by friends and relatives shared 30 per cent followed by knowledge produced through social media (26 %), TV News and Newspaper (24 %) and Books and Magazines (20 %).

Table 4: Frequency of Purchase

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Once in a week	35	70
2	Twice a week	10	20
3	Whenever time permits	2	4
4	Fifteen days once	3	6
	Total	50	100

Nearness to the organic outlet decides the frequency of purchase. Consumers who once like the taste, freshness and credibility of the organic produce at a particular organic shop never mind about the distance travel. Hence these consumers had the habit of purchase once in fifteen days. It is observed from the table that majority of the consumers were in a frequency of purchase at once in a week (70 %), followed by twice a week (20 %) and once in fifteen days (6 %). The consumers who were very near to the retail outlet visit the shop frequently.

Table 5: Decision maker in organic consumption

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Male	19	38
2	Female	31	62
	Total	50	100

It is obvious from the Table 5 that in majority of the households, organic consumption decision in the family was taken by the female (62 %) compared to male (38 %). As a home maker, female in the households also take the decision of consumption of organic food.

Table 6: Occupation of the consumers

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Government Job	20	40
2	Private sector	16	32
3	Business	7	14
4	Doctors	2	4
5	Retired Government employees	5	10
	Total	50	100

Occupation of consumers played a major role in consumption. In the study, about 40 per cent of the consumers were working in Government jobs, followed by consumers in private sector (32 per cent), Business (14 %) and retired Government employees (10 %).

Table 7: Education details of decision maker in organic consumption

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Secondary	4	8
2	Higher secondary	6	12
3	Degree	12	24
4	Post graduation	14	28
5	Doctorate	2	4
6	Professional degree	12	24
	Total	50	100

Education leads to enlightenment. The education detail of decision maker in organic consumption is shown in Table 7. It is clear that majority of the household decision makers has attained post graduation level (28 per cent), followed by degree and professional degree holders (24 per cent each) and higher secondary holders (12 %).

Table 8: Nature of organic produce consumption

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Vegetables alone	17	34
2	Fruits and vegetables	10	20
3	Vegetables and groceries	15	30
4	Vegetables, Milk, egg	3	6
5	Vegetables and oil	2	4
6	All	3	6
	Total	50	100

It is observed from the Table 8 that majority of the consumers (34 %) bought vegetables alone. Vegetables along with groceries were purchased by 30 per cent of the consumers. Fruits and vegetables was the choice of 20 per cent of the consumers. Vegetables, milk and egg and vegetables and oil alone were purchased by 6 and 4 per cent of the consumers.

Table 9: Weekly expenditure towards organic produce (Rs)

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Upto 500	30	60
2	501 to 1000	12	24
3	1001-2000	6	12
4	Above 2000	2	4
	Total	50	100

A weekly average expenditure of Rs 500 was spent by majority of the consumers (60 %). It is followed by an expenditure of Rs 501 to 1000 (24 %) and 1001 to 2000 (12 %).

Table 10: Reasons for not consuming organic produce

S.No	Particulars	Number of Consumers	Percentage to the total
1	Price	29	58
2	Unawareness	5	10
3	No proximity	6	12
4	No credibility of being organic	10	20
	Total	50	100

Though organic produce were good for health, consumption doesn't reach all. There are certain hurdles in organic produce consumption. Among those, price was the major factor (58 %) obstructing the consumption. Some of the non consumers of organic (20 %) has indicated that though there were lot of organic shops mushrooming in the city, there was no credibility of being organic. Some consumers (10 %) were unaware of the health benefits of organic produces.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that the health concern and need of pesticide free food was the prior motivation to choose organic food. Also, consumers who were buying organic produce for the last 2-5 years forms the majority. The study showed that consumption decision of organic food products were made by female and majority of the household decision makers has attained post graduation level. Some of the consumers was of the opinion that organic food had better taste than highly pesticide prone general foods. Consumers attention towards organic consumption was influenced by various factors and among those awareness created by friends and relatives shared maximum. The consumers who were very near to the retail outlet visit the shop frequently. Regarding occupation, most of the consumers were working in Government jobs. Among the organic produce, majority of the consumers bought vegetables alone. A weekly average expenditure of Rs 500 was spent by majority of the consumers.

There are certain hurdles in organic produce consumption among the non consumers. The study has shown that organic products are more expensive and unaffordable. Price was the major constraint faced by the non consumers in making purchase decisions of organic produce. This factor acts as a hindrance in the promotion of organic farming. Creating awareness about organic farming, inducing more farmers towards the organic way and fixing minimum guaranteed price for farmers which is also consumer friendly will induce more consumers towards organic consumption. It has been concluded that given proper Government support, organic farming will become a boon to Indian farming in the coming decades.

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