

Organic Food Products - A study on Consumers Perspective in Udgir Town of Maharashtra

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Abstract

In the recent decade we have observed a trend of emerging concern among human beings on the planet earth towards ecology and environment. The increasing concern among humans about environment has led to the increasing demand and requirement for Eco-friendly Organic Food products in the Indian market. As awareness of environmental issues and health concerns rises, consumers increasingly seek sustainable food options that align with their values. This study examines key factors influencing consumer choices, including perceived health benefits, environmental impact, and the importance of ethical sourcing. Through survey, insights are gathered on consumer knowledge of organic certifications, pricing concerns, and the role of marketing in shaping perceptions. Considering the environmental concerns this article states that today the consumers are optimistic and have a positive attitude towards Organic Food products and consumers do prefer to buy such products even if they have to pay a premium for the same which is usually influenced by certain variables that include their perceptions about the benefits that Eco-friendly Organic Food organic food products provide, along with the societal norms and personal values moreover including their understanding towards environmental concerns. The study is concluded with certain suggestions that emphasizes on various methods to increase the consumer awareness towards Eco-friendly Organic Food products and based on sustainability encourage the Eco-friendly Food consumption pattern. The findings reveal a growing trend towards prioritizing eco-friendly products, suggesting a shift in market dynamics that could influence future agricultural practices and food production. Understanding these consumer attitudes is essential for producers and retailers aiming to meet the demand for sustainable food options and to promote a healthier planet.

Keywords: Eco-friendly, Organic Food products, Environmental Concerns, Sustainability, Consumer Awareness

Introduction

In the past few years the world has experienced an increasing concern for the environment and adoption of sustainable practices across various aspects of life. The increasing popularity of Eco-friendly Organic Food products has given rise to this moment. These products offer wide range of benefits to the consumers and our planet earth. These products cause minimum damage or no damage to the environment. There are wide range of Eco-friendly products available in the market today consisting of categories that include household items, personal care products, technology based products and even in clothing industry the Eco-friendly products have been gaining popularity. These products are manufactured by use of green or sustainable raw materials and processes ensuring minimum wastage by prioritizing use of renewable resources, energy and efficiency. Consumers may contribute significantly towards environmental protection by opting for Eco-friendly products.

The Eco-friendly products are manufactured in such a way that they are energy efficient and reduce the amount of energy required for production and usage. By opting for Eco-friendly Organic Food products consumers can help in combating the climate change and address environmental concerns. The examples of such products that reduce greenhouse emission include electric vehicles, energy saving or energy efficient appliances, use of solar cells, use of bio degradable products etc. It is also observed that Eco-friendly products available on offer are of higher quality than traditional products. The Companies today are investing largely on Research and Development with an intention of creating products that are durable and last long. In the long run they are found to be economical for the consumers as the need for frequent replacement is reduced. Most of the companies today are promoting the message of Reduce, Recycle and Re-use. Thus for an Eco-friendly Environment Eco-friendly Organic Food products have been major contributors.

Review of Literature

(Kumar and Chandrashekar) conducted a study focusing on consumer behavior towards organic products, aiming to assess the consumption patterns and market potential of organic food products. The research highlighted several critical findings: despite a growing demand for organic products among consumers, the marketing efforts for these products were found to be lacking. Consumers expressed a clear preference for organic food due to perceived health benefits and environmental sustainability. However, the study identified various challenges hindering the growth of the organic market, including inadequate production levels, insufficient market infrastructure, low consumer awareness, and limited availability in retail outlets. The authors emphasized the importance of concerted efforts from farmers and government agencies to improve organic production practices, enhance product quality, implement effective packaging solutions, and strengthen market distribution systems. They argued that these initiatives not only support a better standard of living for farmers but also contribute to environmental health and sustainability, aligning with broader socio-economic goals of improving

agricultural practices and promoting healthier food choices in society.

(Vignesh et al.) In recent times, there is a growing concern among consumers regarding their health, leading to increased demand for high-quality, organic, and traditionally prepared food products. This trend has proven advantageous for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), which procure produce from farmers at reasonable prices compared to open markets. Consumers prioritize health considerations and often seek specific health benefits and medicinal qualities, particularly when purchasing products like tea. Many consumers opt to purchase organic tea monthly, indicating a positive attitude towards health-conscious choices. In metropolitan areas, consumers demonstrate a strong purchasing power and are willing to pay premium prices for organic food products that promote a healthy lifestyle. While FPOs are known for producing high-quality food items through their own retail outlets, there remains a lack of awareness among the general public about these outlets. It is crucial for FPOs to focus on promoting their products effectively and expanding their retail presence to attract more consumers and boost sales.

(Carfora et al.) reported a growing trend among consumers towards increasing their consumption of organic products, primarily driven by health considerations. The study highlights that as awareness of the health benefits associated with organic products rises, more individuals are choosing these options over conventional ones. This shift in consumer behavior reflects a broader movement towards prioritizing personal well-being and natural ingredients, which are perceived to be safer and healthier. Carfora et al.'s findings suggest that health-conscious consumers are a significant driving force behind the expanding market for organic products, indicating that marketing strategies emphasizing the health advantages of organic foods can effectively resonate with and attract this demographic. This trend also underscores the potential for continued growth in the organic sector as consumers increasingly seek out products that align with their health and wellness goals.

(Park et al.) delve into the dynamics of consumer behavior towards organic food, specifically

examining the influences of psychological barriers and psychological distance on purchasing intention and usage behavior. Their study, published in the *Journal of Marketing Studies*, investigates how factors such as perceived psychological barriers (e.g., concerns about price or unfamiliarity with organic products) and psychological distance (perceived proximity or relevance of organic food to consumers' daily lives) shape consumer decisions. By employing a comprehensive approach that integrates both theoretical frameworks and empirical analysis, the research provides insights into the complexities of consumer attitudes towards organic food. Park et al. highlight the importance of addressing psychological barriers and reducing psychological distance to foster greater consumer acceptance and adoption of organic food products. Their findings contribute valuable implications for marketers seeking to promote organic food consumption by understanding and addressing these psychological factors effectively.

(Prabusankar) highlighted a significant shift in consumer priorities, noting that there is an increasing concern about food safety and the adoption of health-conscious habits. The study found that many consumers are willing to pay a premium for Eco-friendly Organic products, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of sustainable and health-promoting options. This willingness to invest more in Eco-friendly Organic Food products underscores a broader trend towards valuing quality and safety over cost savings. Prabusankar's findings suggest that the market for Eco-friendly Organic products is likely to expand as consumers become more educated about the benefits of sustainable consumption and more committed to making choices that support their health and the environment. This trend presents an opportunity for businesses to innovate and market their products in ways that highlight their environmental and health benefits, catering to the evolving preferences of a more discerning and environmentally conscious consumer base.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the factors that influence consumer buyer behavior towards Eco-friendly Organic

Food products and their awareness towards Eco-friendly Organic Food products.

- To understand the level of satisfaction which a consumer derives post purchase and usage of Eco-friendly Organic Food products
- To understand the respondents economic and social backgrounds of Udgir town.

About Udgir Town

Udgir is a Taluka located in the Latur district of Maharashtra. It is one of the 10 Talukas of Latur District. There are 98 villages and 2 towns in Udgir Taluka. As per the population census of 2011, Udgir Taluka has 56,806 households, and a population of 311,066 of which 161,568 are males and 149,498 are females. The population of children between the ages of 0-6 is 41,456 which is 13.33% of the total population. The sex-ratio of Udgir Taluka is around 925 compared to 929 which is around the average of Maharashtra. The literacy rate of Udgir Taluka is 68.71% out of which 74.37% males and 62.6% females are literate. The total area of Udgir is 736.26 km² with a population density of 422 per km². Out of its total population, 64.06% of the population lives in an urban area and 35.94% lives in a rural area. Marathi is the official language. Hindi & Urdu are also spoken. The main source of income in Udgir Taluka comes from agriculture, shops and small scale industries. The town is popular for its inventory in food grains which is the result of high grain crop production in nearby villages.

Agriculture in Udgir

The main occupation of the people of Udgir is agriculture. Udgir has farmers that make up the rural setting in most of the surrounding areas. The soil as a part of the Deccan plateau is black basalt soil, rich in hummus. The main crops cultivated here are whole grains, including jawar, bajra, and wheat. Crops like sorghum, mung, toor dal, urad gram, soybean, sugarcane, onions, and other green leafy vegetables are also cultivated.

A dairy was established in the early 1980s. It emerged as a major employment resource for rural Udgirkars. Due to gradually-lowered production, the dairy is at a standstill. It came under the state government-run project called Aarey which was

institutionalized during the Operation Flood days. Agriculture-based businesses like pulses (dal) industry, warehouses, cold storage, sugarcane factories also run here. Udgir has around 80 dal (mills) processing units.

Statement of Problem

Today the market of Eco-friendly Organic Food products is not growing as rapidly as it should have been due to the fact that many consumers in the markets today are still unaware of the benefits of Eco-friendly Organic Food products and its environmental impact. Limited promotional programmes and advertisement campaigns from the manufacturers has hindered the growth prospects of the market for Eco-friendly Organic Food products restricting the understanding of the benefits and their impact on the environment amongst the consumers. Certain consumers find the Eco-friendly Organic Food products to be overpriced and non-economical compared to the traditional products and hence avoid purchasing the same. The reasons for the Eco-friendly Organic Food products to be expensive is the limited volume of productivity and use of sustainable or environmentally friendly resources. Few of the consumers are resistant to change their pattern of consumption and do not prioritize environmental concerns while making purchase decisions. Udgir is specifically chosen so as to understand the perception and awareness of consumers in semi urban areas of Latur district.

Scope of the Study

The study will focus on consumer awareness levels and attitude towards Eco-friendly Organic Food products in Udgir town. The study also analyses the factors that influence the decision making of the consumers to choose Eco-friendly Organic Food products that include environmental concerns, pricing and brand awareness. The study will analyze the present market trend for Eco-friendly Organic Food products and areas of opportunity and growth for Eco-friendly Organic Food business. The study will analyze a few socio-economic aspects such as Gender, Age, Income, Education and consciousness about the environment will be examined in understanding the consumer awareness

and behavior. The need of this study is to understand how social and cultural aspects affect the consumer decision making and how the consumers act towards Eco-friendly Organic Food products.

Data Collection

The study is based both on Primary data and Secondary data.

Primary Data: The relevant data was collected through a questionnaire filled by 50 respondents of Udgir town through Google Form.

Secondary Data: Relevant data was collected from Google scholar, Journals magazines, Newspapers, unpublished data and few websites.

Sample size: Data was collected through Google form in the form of a questionnaire from 50 respondents of Udgir town regarding consumer awareness towards eco-friendly organic Food food products.

Limitation of the Study

- The Scope of the study is restricted as it considers only Eco-friendly Organic Food products and ignores other major categories of Eco-friendly products.
- The study is based on biased sample as it considers a sample from limited population and the results may not be applicable to the larger population in general. For instance, the data is only collected from those consumers who have environmental consciousness
- The results are based on individual perceptions which may be perceived in different way by different consumers and hence may be difficult to arrive at general agreements on the implications of the study.

Data Interpretation

The study represents the analysis and interpretation of selected 50 respondents of Udgir town in Maharashtra on the Title 'Organic food Products - A study on Consumers Perspective in Udgir town of Maharashtra'. The data pertaining to the study was collected from 50 respondents in the form of a questionnaire shared through Google form which consists of questions pertaining to personal and learning factors. The collected data has been

classified and tabulated according to the objectives of research with the below mentioned statistical tools.

Percentage Analysis

Percentage analysis is done to identify and determine the percentage of respondents that fall under each category. Percentage analysis helps to analyze and standardize the views of respondents on various aspects. The analysis covers all the questions framed in the questionnaire.

Table 1 Percentage Analysis

Demographic structure	Age Particulars	No. of respondents	%
Age	16-24	36	72
	25-33	8	16
	34-42	6	12
	42 and Above	0	0
	Total	50	100
Sex	Male	21	42
	Female	29	58
	Others	0	0
	Total	50	100
Marital Status	Married	13	26
	Unmarried	37	74
	Total	50	100
Educational qualification	SSLC	4	8
	Intermediate	9	18
	Graduation	25	50
	Post Graduation	7	14
	Diploma Holder	5	10
	Total	50	100
Occupation	Self-Employed	10	20
	Govt. Job	2	4
	Private Job	5	10
	Other Professionals	3	6
	House Wife	30	60
	Total	50	100
Income per month	0-10000	25	50
	10000 to 20000	13	26
	20000 to 30000	7	14
	30000 and above	5	10
	Total	50	100

Interpretation

1. From the above table it is evident that out of the total responses, 72% of the responses are from the age category of 16-24, 16% of the responses are from the age group of 25-33, 12% of the responses are from the age group of 34-42, and no responses are received from the age group of above 42.
2. Out of the total responses received 42% are male and 58% are female respondents.
3. Out of the total responses received 26% are married and 74% are unmarried respondents.
4. Out of the total responses received 8% responses are from SSLC, 18% FROM Intermediate, 50% are graduates, 14% from Post-graduates, 10% percent from diploma respondents.
5. Out of the total responses received 20% responses are from self-employed, 4% from Govt. employees, 10% from private employees, 6% from professionals, and 60% respondents are house wives.
6. Out of the total responses received 50% respondents have a monthly income of 0-10000, 26% have monthly income of 10000-20000, 14% have monthly income of 20000-30000, 10% have monthly income of above 30000.

Findings of the Study

1. 72 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 16-24.
2. 58 percent of the respondents are female
3. 74 percent respondents are bachelors/unmarried.
4. 50 percent respondents are Graduates
5. 60 percent respondents selected housewife as occupation
6. 50 percent respondents fall under monthly income of 0-10000

Here are Some Key Findings from Recent Studies on Organic Eco-Friendly Food Products

Consumer Motivations

The study identified three groups of organic food consumers: enthusiasts, reluctant consumers, and skeptical. Enthusiasts prioritize health, safety, and taste, while skeptical are deterred by price and certification issues. Reluctant consumers face barriers like accessibility and knowledge.

Environmental Benefits

Research finds that diets high in fruits and vegetables are better for the environment compared to those high in animal products. Organic foods provide additional climate benefits, particularly for plant-based diets, but not for those with moderate plant contributions.

Dietary Quality

Young adults showed that those with positive attitudes toward organic and sustainable foods consumed more fruits and vegetables and had lower intakes of added sugars and fats. They also tended to eat breakfast more frequently and consumed fast food less often.

Attitudes and Behaviors

A survey of university students found that positive attitudes toward organic foods significantly predicted their consumption behaviors. Factors like taste and price influenced their purchasing decisions.

Sustainability Debate

While organic farming is often viewed as more sustainable, some studies suggest it may require more land and have higher greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional farming. Thus, the environmental impacts of organic versus conventional farming remain a topic of ongoing debate.

These findings highlight the complex interplay between consumer attitudes, dietary choices, and environmental impacts related to organic food products.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The Eco-friendly Organic Food products industry has showing significant growth in last few years. Consumer awareness regarding the Eco-friendly Organic Food products is increasing significantly and the consumers are becoming aware on how to protect the environment from exploitation. The Eco-friendly industry consists of large range of products that include automobiles, electrical goods, household items, beauty products and Organic food products which are mostly designed to prevent environmental exploitation.

More and more promotional programmes and effective awareness campaigns must be organized

to increase consumer awareness regarding the availability and benefits of Eco-friendly Organic Food products and how the use of such sustainable products can reduce the pressure on environment and ecology.

Effective and innovative marketing programmes especially by using the social media platforms can be undertaken to promote the awareness and sales of Eco-friendly Organic Food products by highlighting the benefits that they offer. An effective feedback mechanism is essential to identify the weaknesses in the Eco-friendly Organic Food products industry.

Detailed information on how the Eco-friendly Organic Food products are beneficial i.e how it protects the environment including its impact on climate change, reduction of wastage and conserving the natural resources.

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