

Consumers Awareness And Perception Towards Organic Products With Special Reference To Coimbatore City

Author: Dr.M.Gopanasamy, *Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Chikkanna Govt. Arts College, Tirupur.*

Co-author: Mrs.N.Saranya, *Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Chikkanna Govt. Arts College, Tirupur.*

ABSTRACT:

Organic foods are foods produced by methods that comply with the standards of organic farming. Standards vary worldwide. However, organic farming in general, features practices that strive to foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Organizations regulating organic products may choose to restrict the use of certain pesticides and fertilizers in farming. In general, organic foods are also usually not processed using irradiation, industrial solvents or synthetic food additives.

Currently, organic food is food produced in a way that complies with organic standards set by national governments and international organizations. Although the produce of kitchen gardens may be organic, selling food with the organic label is regulated by governmental food safety authorities.

There is no sufficient evidence in medical literature to support claims that organic food is safer or healthier than conventionally grown food. While there may be some differences in the nutrient and anti-nutrient contents of organically and conventionally produced food, the variable nature of food production and handling makes it difficult to generalize results. Claims that organic food tastes better are generally not supported by evidence.

A broadly defined category of food which, in the purest form, is grown without chemical fertilisers or pesticides and sold to the consumer without adding preservatives and synthetic food enhancers; it is widely believed by advocates of alternative healthcare that organically grown foods are safer and more nutritious; however, there are no compelling data

that demonstrate clear superiority of organic over non-organic foods. Organic products may be certified by voluntary organisations or government bodies.

INTRODUCTION

The definition of organic agriculture is farming with the use of synthetic chemicals. After World War II, larger and increasingly automated farms, known as "factory farms," put the synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides developed in the 1920s into widespread use. They found that more crops could be produced mass produced. What they did not realize were the dangers of using these chemicals and the effects they would have on the environment and human health.

Farmers must abstain from the use of prohibited materials (pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and sewage sludge) for three years prior to being certified organic and then continue these practices throughout their organic license. They must employ positive soil burning, conservation, manure management and crop rotation. They must provide outdoor access and pastures for livestock and refrain from the use of antibiotics and hormones in their animals, while sustaining livestock on 100% organic feed. Farmers may not use genetically modified organisms or irradiation.

Organic products are grown in healthier soil and contain higher levels of nutrients and non-organics. Many organic may even taste better. Food irradiation is worse than the radiation from a television or microwave. The ionizing radiation processes used on food break up molecules and deplete food of essential vitamins and enzymes.

Many pesticides are linked to diseases. An example is glufosinate, which is commonly used on sugar beets and canola, has been shown to cause birth defects. Chemical companies influence the government to raise the acceptable levels of chemicals in foods so that they can make more money on their product without concern for the environment and the safety of people.

Importance of Organic Food

Many people believe that there is little nutritional difference between organic and conventional food but it is not about the nutritional value. It is a matter of what the

conventional foods contain. Even though organic food is hard to find and more expensive than conventional food, it is also much safer and healthier. If everyone transitions and commits to eating organically, we can override and overcome conventional farming and its negative effects.

Nearly forty percent of the world's agricultural land has degraded. The amount of arable land is decreasing nationally and worldwide because toxic pesticides and herbicides are polluting our air, soil and groundwater. Soil productivity has decreased because of wind and water erosion of the topsoil. This causes loss of organic matter in the soil, a decrease in water holding capacity and biological activity. Fossil fuels play a huge role in producing food as well. Industrial farming has farming machinery and petroleum-based chemicals that require huge amounts of fossil fuels, which deplete the soil of its nutrients. The ratio for fossil fuel energy needed for beef production is 35 to 1 as well as 3 to 1 for all other agricultural products. Modern agricultural methods cause aquifers to dry out, pollinators such as bees are dying and the climate is getting hotter and drier. Organic farming practices use less energy and are designed to benefit the environment by reducing pollution and conserving water and soil quality and use methods to grow food that support sustainability. Pesticides and fertilizers are more harmful than helpful for the crops. The pesticides that conventional farms use also contribute to the resistance that insects and pests develop. They are constantly developing new tactics to invade the produce, which then leads to the conventional farmers' use of stronger chemicals. Animal manure, compost and green manure are used as natural fertilizers. It nourishes the soil allowing crops to survive during drought periods. It also helps preserve our planet and farmland especially for the future generations to come. Farming organically generously promotes biodiversity. Biodiversity in organic food means that there is a greater quantity and variety. Generally, the more biodiversity there is on a farm encourages stability (Organic Agriculture).

Organic Food Becomes More Popular

Organic food has been the trend nowadays. More and more people tend to buy organic produces and the related livestock although the price of them is more expensive than the non-organic farming produces. Some people may have doubts about this phenomenon. So, Why? The reasons behind this trend are because organic food is nutritious and healthy, the living standard of human race was generally raised and sustainable development has been the hot

topic nowadays.

Firstly, organic food is more nutritious and healthier than the non-organic farming produces and the related livestock. Pesticides, weedicides, some chemical fertilizers, antibiotics and other toxic chemicals are prohibited to the organic farming. Only some safe chemicals which passed the standard and with small amount can be used. Thus, the farmers of organic farming seldom use chemicals but instead, they use some natural methods to raise the yields, control pests and rear their livestock. For example, crop rotation, terrace; using dead tissues, litters from plants and feces from animals. All these methods are natural, and are useful to increase soil fertility and control pests. Besides, the farmers let their livestock to eat pasture which is grown in their organic farms and do not use antibiotics to feed livestock. However, for the non-organic farming, the farmers always overuse chemicals to fasten both crops and livestock's growing periods. Although the non-organic produces may have a better appearance, they may contain heavy metal and chemical residues. Eating non-organic food is dangerous while eating organic food is safer and healthier. Organic food contains more vitamins, antioxidants and other nutrition values. Therefore, organic food is more nutritious and healthier is one of the reasons why it becomes more popular. Secondly, the living standard of human race was generally raised since these few decades

Research methodology:

The secondary data pertaining to the study was obtained from various journals, magazines, books, newspapers, research reports, articles in the related topics published in the refereed journals and also from the library resources and internet sources. Information had also been drawn from available literature pertaining to the field of knowledge. Further, for the purpose of analysis, detailed information was collected from the secondary sources and required information has been collected from respective organic shops and from popular websites

Objectives:

To determine the level of awareness about the organic products

To analyse consumers' attitude towards the organic products

Findings:

There is low awareness among people but they are keen to know about organic food. Awareness programmes may be organized for general public through exhibitions and promotions of organic products.

- Awareness exists among the educated consumers but the intention to purchase is not present. When informed about the benefits many of them are interested to try trials in fairs, or other methods of free sampling will create new consumers.
- Price is a huge barrier to purchase, the consumer must be informed of the reasons for the high prices and labelling should be transformed to contain information on nutritional benefits so as to justify the prices.
- Proper certification may be given to products as labelled “Organic” to specify the “purity”.
- Organic Products may be offered by many shops by the retailers to avoid unavailability.
- Advertisement may be given for organic products by social organization to ensure health.
- consumer knowledge of fair trade business practices has a strong positive relationship with purchase intention.
- informing the impact of organic food on environment.
- Motivating the consumer by offering some discounts and offers.
- Retailers should introduce number of stores to provide facility to the customer and provide service like home delivery for the convenience of customer.
- Evade using plastic covers for packing the organic product.
- Exploit alternative method to avoid air conditioner in organic shops to protect the products.
- Organic food could be sold as a lifestyle product if presented appropriately
- The best method to reach consumers is through the internet blogs/ websites on nutrition/ lifestyle foods or recommendation of professionals like doctors and dieticians

CONCLUSION

Organic farming is based on the principle of maximum production with high quality without affecting the soil fertility and environment. Due to the continuously

increment in world population, demand of organic vegetables has been increased.

Implementation of scientific approach, skilled labour input, use of high nutritive manures and sufficient irrigation has increased the efficiency of soil and product quality.

In present scenario, market of organic food has been expanding gradually which shows the huge prospective demand of organic product in future and different countries have focused on export and earn maximum profits. Application of organic agriculture has a very important role in the case of fruits and vegetables production because of organic product has good quality and nutrition content.

The awareness level of the consumer which is not up to mark. Due to unawareness, some people are still non users for the reason of no trust on purity, high price and unavailability of organic food products. So awareness programme has to be organized for farmers initially and to motivate them to produce it. By the way, supply can be increased. It may avoid high price and unavailability of the product. Another main conclusion from this study has been that consumers are not very well informed about the benefits of organic products. Proper labelled organic product can be increase the trust on organic. There is a strong role for the private sector in promoting the consumption of organic products whose demand outlook is quite bright.

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