

# A Study on Major Issues Faced by the Consumers in Buying Organic Food Products in Salem District of Tamil Nadu

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## ABSTRACT

The consumption of food pattern of consumer's is changing rapidly due to rising awareness about health, higher disposable income and increasing number of modern retail outlets across the country are the major growth drivers for the organic food markets. A better quality and healthy lifestyle have become a kind of necessity to the current generation. Consumers are become more concerned about the food safety. They tend to consume foods that are nutritious, healthy, safety, and the environmental friendly. Organic products are grown under organic manure without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The organic farming method works at grass root level preserving the reproductive and regenerative capacity of the soil, good plant nutrition, and sound soil management practices and produces healthy nutritious food rich in vitality which has resistance to diseases. The consumers also face some problems on buying organic food products. The study focuses on the major issue on buying organic food products.

**Keywords:** Healthy, Nutritional, Natural, Farming and food products  
*Asian Pac. J. Health Sci.*, (2022); DOI: 10.21276/apjhs.2022.9.4S.43

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the recent years consumers have more concerned about the traditional agriculture industry. Growth in cases of bird flu and mad-cow disease and other factors such as genetically modified food drove a significant change in the industry of agriculture. In 1905, the British botanist Sir Albert Howard often referred to as the father of modern organic agriculture, documented traditional Indian farming practice, and came to regard them as superior to conventional agriculture science. During 1940, in Japan, Masanobu Fukuoka, a microbiologist working in soil science and plant pathology, quit job as a research scientist, returned to his family's farm, and devoted the next 30 years to develop a radical no-till organic method for growing grains, it is called "Fukuoka farming." Many other practices such as Rishi Krishi, Netueco Farming, Homa Farming, Panchagavya Krishi, and Boi-Dynamic farming are associated with organic agriculture.<sup>[1]</sup>

The consumption patterns of consumer will be change especially in food consumption because most of the consumer to eat organic food because, the organic food is good for health and it grows with use of organic manual and use natural resource, so consumer behavior will be shifted from conventional foods to organic food product. The quality and safety in food to attract the consumer interest in organic food that is free from pesticides and chemical residues. India is fastest and largest potential markets for organic food products.<sup>[2]</sup> With growing awareness about health foods, increasing income levels, and change in consumer behavior, India's nascent organic food market is fast transforming into the world's fastest growing organic food market. Hence, the research is to identify the reason for buying organic food products and what are the problems to be identified at the time of buying the organic food products in the study area.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Statement of the Problem

Increasing population in the world, the exploitation of natural resources was started. The people need more foods and create more demands for food products. The farmers are adding

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**How to cite this article:** Kamatchi D. A Study on Major Issues Faced by the Consumers in Buying Organic Food Products in Salem District of Tamil Nadu. *Asian Pac. J. Health Sci.*, 2022;9(4S):225-227.

**Source of support:** Nil

**Conflicts of interest:** None.

**Received:** 04/02/2022 **Revised:** 22/03/2022 **Accepted:** 30/04/2022

numerous chemicals at the time of cultivation and getting more yields to meet the more demands. Excess of use of chemicals have resulted that the soil deteriorated and its water holding capacity and infiltration. The pesticides mixed food product are caused cancer, reproductive dysfunction, diabeted, autism, asthma, birth defects, and more diseases. The consumers are more affects the above mentioned health-related problems. The protection of health is the most important blessing of human being needs to the whole life. Because, human can function to meet their expectations when having a sound and good health. To maintain the good health through eating of balanced diet and healthy foods. The organic food has been grown without use of toxic chemical, pesticides, or fertilizers. The food is a natural as can be safer for the environment and usually tastes better too. Organic food has plenty of advantages when compared to conventional food products. A major problem is that consumers are not aware quietly, have a lack of confidence, and often confuse organic with conventional products. There is a need to create awareness about the advantages of organic food among the people and promote its use.<sup>[4]</sup> Thus, this research study has been undertaken in Salem District and focuses on the major issues faced by the consumers toward organic food products. Hence, the researcher has made an attempt to identify the answer to the following questions:

1. What are the reasons to prefer organic food products?
2. What are the major issues faced by the consumers toward buying organic food products?

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The descriptive research design was adopted. It is more specific than the exploratory study, as it focuses on particular aspects of the problem studied. This designed to gather descriptive information and it provides information for formulating more sophisticated studies. The study was covered both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through well-structured interview schedule from 100 respondents in the study area using convenient sampling technique. The secondary data were collected from various websites, magazines and journals, and government reports. The area of the study is Salem District of Tamil Nadu. In order to analyze the collected data by using the tools like percentage analysis, Friedman rank tests, ANOVA test.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### Gender

About 44% of the respondents are male and remaining 56% of the respondents are female.

### Age

About 22% of the respondents are age group of up to 25 years, 34% of the respondents are 26–35 years, 26% of the respondents are 36–45 years, and 18% of the respondents are above 46 years.

### Marital Status

About 63% of the respondents are married and remaining 37% of the respondents are unmarried.

### Educational Qualifications

About 25–36% of the respondents are up to H.Sc. and graduates, 19% of the respondents are postgraduates, and remaining 8%–12% of the respondents are professional and others qualifications.

### Occupation

About 9%, 40%, and 23% of the respondents are belongs to student, home makers, and self-employed and remaining 28% of the respondents are belongs to employed category.

### Monthly Income

About 28% of the respondents are belongs to the income level of below Rs. 10000, 42%, 15%, and 15% of the respondents are belongs to the income level of Rs. 10001–20000, Rs. 20001–30000, and Rs. 30001–40000.

### Nature of Family

About 52% of the respondents are nuclear family and remaining 48% of the respondents are joint family.

### Residential Area

About 27% of the respondents are belongs to rural area, 27% of the respondents are semi-urban, and remaining 46% of the respondents are belongs to urban area.

### Usage of Products

About 34.06% of the respondents are using organic food products that are <1 year, and remaining 37.21%, 15.51%, and 13.22% of the respondents are using OFP that is 1–2 years, 2–3 years, and above 3 years.

### Expenditure Spent for Purchasing

About 41.84% and 31.48% of the respondents are spending amount for purchase of OFP that is below Rs. 2000 and Rs. 2001–4000 and remaining 26.68% of the respondents are belongs to above Rs. 4000.

### Decision-making

About 64.86%, 10.81%, and 24.32% of the respondents are take a decision to purchase of OFP that is own, spouse, and family members.

### Reason for Purchasing Organic Food Products

The following results are shown the reason for purchasing organic food products:

The above test resulted that the reason for buying organic food products is no chemical residues, rich nutritional value, and natural grown belongs to Rank I, II, and III. The least three ranks such as VI, VII, and VIII are hygienic and protective, good quality, and better taste [Table 1].

### Major Issues Faced by Consumers' toward Organic Food Products

The monthly income is compared with the problems faced by the consumers at the time of purchasing the organic food products. The above mentioned comparison is made with the ANOVA analysis.

- $H_0$ : There is no significant difference between the monthly income and the problems faced by the consumers in purchasing of organic food products.
- $H_1$ : There is a significant difference between the monthly income and the problems faced by the consumers in purchasing of organic food products.

The above result reveals that the consumers have problems with lack of choice of the product (0.000), arrival of unbranded

**Table 1:** Reason for purchasing Organic Food Products

S. No.	Reason	Mean score	Rank
1.	Good quality	28945	VII
2.	Better taste	28732	VIII
3.	Chemical free	31644	I
4.	Hygienic and protective	29123	VI
5.	No artificial ingredients	29534	IV
6.	Natural grown	29762	III
7.	Rich nutritional value	31529	II
8.	No genetically modified organisms	29327	V

product (0.011), and minimum number of shops (0.000). The *P* value of these above mentioned variables is significant at 1% and 5% level. Hence, the null hypotheses of those variables are rejected. The alternative hypothesis was accepted, that is, there is a significant difference between the monthly income and the problems faced by the consumers in purchasing of organic food products. In the above table clearly denotes that the variable of High price (0.115), Unavailability of the product (0.839), Distance from residence (0.079) and Minimum number of brands (0.355). The *P* value of the above said variables is not statistically significant at 5% level. Hence, the null hypotheses of those variables are accepted, that is, there is no significant difference between the monthly income and the problems faced by the consumers in purchasing of organic food products [Table 2].

**Table 2:** Relationship between the monthly income and the major issues on purchase of organic food products

Variables	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
High price					
Between groups	6.08	1	6.08	2.49	0.115
Within groups	1819.83	746	2.44		
Total	1825.92	747			
Unavailability of the product					
Between groups	0.14	1	0.14	0.04	0.839
Within groups	2455.05	746	3.29		
Total	2455.19	747			
Lack of choice of the product					
Between groups	132.58	1	132.58	39.29	<0.001**
Within groups	2517.34	746	3.37		
Total	2649.91	747			
Arrival of unbranded product					
Between groups	12.66	1	12.66	6.43	<0.011*
Within groups	1469.06	746	1.97		
Total	1481.72	747			
Distance from residence					
Between groups	12.53	1	12.53	3.10	0.079
Within groups	3014.58	746	4.04		
Total	3027.12	747			
Minimum number of brands					
Between groups	1.92	1	1.92	0.86	0.355
Within groups	1672.14	746	2.24		
Total	1674.06	747			
Minimum number of shops					
Between groups	167.04	1	167.04	45.01	<0.001**
Within groups	2768.55	746	3.71		
Total	2935.59	747			

\*\*Indicates significance @ 1% level and \*indicates significance @ 5% level

## DISCUSSION

The majority of the respondents are female; the age group between 26–30 years and most of the respondents are married. The educational qualifications of the respondents are up to HSC and graduates, occupational position is home maker and having monthly income of Rs. 10001–20000. The family type of the respondents is nuclear family and residing in urban areas. The majority of the respondents are using the organic food products that are up to 1–2 years and spending Rs.2000 expenditure for buying organic food products and taken decision to buying organic food products are own. The main reason for buying organic food products is chemical free, richer nutritional value, and its grown naturally. The major issues on buying organic food products are lack of choice of OFP, arrival of unbranded items, and minimum number of shops.

## CONCLUSION

The customers are the king of the market that is the logo of the globalized market. The customers are made to realize the benefits regarding the consumption of the organic food products. The organic food products tend to be having its own market share in the past decade. The organic food products have taken the market share from the conventional food products. The conventional food products are slowly and steadily losing its place in the market shelf. The organic food products tend to be both health and environmental friendly. The major problems have to be solved with more number of shops and appropriate stock methods of organic food products. The fake and unbranded items have to be eliminated by strict of the certification procedure by the government. Hence, the marketers are concentrating on promotions which are both realistic and moral and the product availability in terms of volume and variety is required to become successful in marketing organic food products.

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