

# A STUDY ON BUYER BEHAVIOUR OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CUDDALORE DISTRICT

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## Abstract

Most of the people have realized the benefits of organic food and the direct relation between organic food, environment and their healthy and active life so they are more and more interested about this market. This research aimed to evaluate the current status of consumers' buying behaviour towards organic foods products. The study was conducted in Cuddalore district. Both primary and secondary data have been collected for this study. This study is empirical in nature, based on survey method. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 264 consumers with the help of exit interview. Taking into consideration the objectives of the study, a schedule was constructed based on Likert scaling technique. Pre-testing of schedule was done, involving 50 consumers to know the relevance of the questions. In the light of pre-testing, necessary changes were incorporated in the revised schedule. The secondary data were collected mainly from journals, magazines, books and other publications.

**Key words:** Organic food, organic farming, green marketing, green products, sustainable agriculture, etc.

## 1. Introduction

Organic food refers to food items that are prepared and processed without using any chemicals. Organic livestock raised for meat, egg, and dairy products must have access to the outdoors and be given organic feed. Organic foods have been proven to contain 50 per cent more vitamins, minerals and nutrients than similar food that is produced in regular manner. Organic food is healthier than conventional food is quite strong, and is the main reason for increase in its demand over the past 5-6 years. Organic foods often have more beneficial nutrients, such as antioxidants, than their conventionally grown counterparts and people with allergies to foods, chemicals, or preservatives often find their symptoms lessen or go away when they eat only organic foods. Organic food is fresher because it doesn't contain preservatives that make it last longer. Organic farming is better for the environment. Organic farming practices reduce pollution, conserve water, reduce soil

erosion, increase soil fertility, and use less energy. Organically raised animals are not given antibiotics, growth hormones, or fed animal by products. Organic farmers are on the cutting edge of science as they are focused on finding ways to produce quality foods without the use of the chemicals that are harmful to our health, and the health of the planet.

## **2. Organic agriculture**

The term organic is rooted in bio from Greek bios meaning life or way of living. Organic food products was first coined in 1940s and refers to food raised, grown and stored or processed without the use of synthetically produced chemicals or fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, fungicides, growth hormones and regulators or genetic modification. Organic farming is a certifiable farm management system with controls and traceability that is in harmony with the local environment using land husbandry techniques such as soil conservation measures, crop rotation and the application of agronomic, biological and manual methods instead of synthetic inputs. This is different from traditional farming, which is often subsistence oriented using few or no purchased inputs.

## **3. Consumers' awareness about organic food**

Consumer's awareness refers to product characteristics exploration and recognition by consumers. This is the organic product's characteristics/attributes such as nutritional contents, whether the product is certified organic or not, locally produced or imported, country of origin, labelling information including date of expiration, and level of freshness. Furthermore, specific brands are likely to be considered by the consumers to have high quality organic products, so such consideration may affect his decision-making about purchasing a specific brand of food products.

## **4. Objectives of the study**

1. To find out the factors influencing consumers to purchase organic food products in Cuddalore district.
2. To study the perception of consumers towards organic food products in Cuddalore district.
3. To study the limiting factors of consumers in the purchase of organic food products in Cuddalore district.
4. To suggest suitable measures for the effective purchase of organic food products by consumers based on the findings of the study.

## 5. Research methodology

The study was conducted in Cuddalore district. Both primary and secondary data have been collected for this study. This study is empirical in nature, based on survey method. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 264 consumers with the help of exit interview. Taking into consideration the objectives of the study, a schedule was constructed based on Likert scaling technique. Pre-testing of schedule was done, involving 50 consumers to know the relevance of the questions. In the light of pre-testing, necessary changes were incorporated in the revised schedule. The secondary data were collected mainly from journals, magazines, books and other publications.

## 6. Results and discussions

**TABLE 1**  
**Age of the Respondents**

Age (Years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Up to 25	75	28.4
26 to 50	131	49.6
Above 50	58	22.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows that out of the 264 respondents 28.40 per cent of the respondent are belong to the age group of upto 25, 49.6 per cent respondents are belong to the age group of 26 to 50 years and 22 per cent of the respondents are belong to the age group of above 50 years. Hence, the majority of the respondents are in the age group of 26 to 50.

**TABLE 2**  
**Gender of the Respondents**

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	131	49.6
Female	133	50.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

Table 2 indicates that out of 264 respondents 49.6 per cent of the respondents are male and the rest of 50.4 per cent of the respondents are female. Hence, majority of the respondents are female

**TABLE 3**  
**Residential Area of the Respondents**

Area	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Urban	67	25.4
Semi urban	123	46.6
Rural	74	28.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows that 25.4 per cent of the respondents are belonging to urban, 46.6 per cent of the respondents are in the residential area of semi urban and 28 per cent of the respondents are in the residential area of rural.

**TABLE 4**  
**Marital Status of the Respondents**

Marital status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Married	103	39.0
Unmarried	161	61.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

Table 4 reveals that out of 264 respondents 39 per cent of the respondents are married and the rest of 61 per cent of the respondents are unmarried. Hence, majority of the respondents are unmarried.

**TABLE-5**  
**Monthly Income of the Respondents**

Income (Rs.)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Upto 10000	83	31.4
Rs.10000 to 25000	135	51.1
Above 25000	46	17.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

Table 5 reveals that out of 264 respondents 31.4 per cent of the respondents are earn upto Rs.10000 and the rest of 51.1 per cent of the respondents are belonging to Rs.10000 to 25000 monthly income category and 17.4 per cent of the respondents have above Rs 25000.

**TABLE 6**  
**Purchase of Organic Products**

Products	Level of Importance					
	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Less Important	Not Important	
Organic Vegetables	118	65	38	19	24	264
	(44.7)	(24.6)	(14.4)	(7.2)	(9.1)	100
Organic fruits	132	52	40	10	30	264
	(50.0)	(19.7)	(15.2)	(3.8)	(11.4)	100
Tea and coffee	26	86	95	17	40	264
	(9.8)	(32.6)	(36.0)	(6.4)	(15.2)	100
Oil	118	61	39	19	27	264
	(44.7)	(23.1)	(14.8)	(7.2)	(10.2)	100
Sugar	115	40	73	7	29	264
	(43.6)	(15.2)	(27.7)	(2.7)	(11.0)	100
Rice (Basmati)	132	51	37	14	30	264
	(50.0)	(19.3)	(14.0)	(5.3)	(11.4)	100
Spices	120	42	47	19	36	264
	(45.5)	(15.9)	(17.8)	(7.2)	(13.6)	100
Nuts	122	61	37	14	30	264
	(46.2)	(23.1)	(14.0)	(5.3)	(11.4)	100
Wheat	105	50	52	32	25	264
	(39.8)	(18.9)	(19.7)	(12.1)	(9.5)	100
Herbal	118	40	73	8	25	264
	(44.7)	(15.2)	(27.7)	(3.0)	(9.5)	100
Cotton	134	49	37	14	30	264
	(50.8)	(18.6)	(14.0)	(5.3)	(11.4)	100
Milk and Milk Products	128	37	52	12	35	264
	(48.5)	(14.0)	(19.7)	(4.5)	(13.3)	100
Other organic products	29	88	95	12	40	264
	(11.0)	(33.3)	(36.0)	(4.5)	(15.2)	100

Source: Primary data

Table 6 indicates that 44.7 per cent respondents are very important in organic vegetables. 50 per cent of respondents are very important in organic fruits. 36 per cent of respondents are neutral in tea and coffee. 44.7 per cent respondents are very important in oil, 43.6 per cent respondents are very important in sugar, and 50 per cent respondents are very important in rice. 45.5 per cent respondents are very important in spices, 46.2 per cent respondents are very important in nuts, and 39.8 per cent respondents are very important in wheat. 44.7 per cent respondents are very important in herbal, 50.8 per cent respondents are very important in cotton, 48.5 per cent respondents are very important in milk and milk products, and 33.3 per cent respondents are important in other organic products.

**TABLE 7**  
**Reason for Purchase of the Organic Products**

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Natural food	80	30.3
No chemical	48	18.2
Herbal food	48	18.2
Healthy food	39	14.8
No pesticides	49	18.6
Total	264	100

Source: Primary data

Table 7 indicates that out of total 264 respondents 30.3 per cent of the respondents' opinion about organic food products is natural food, 18.2 per cent of the respondents' opinion is no chemical, 18.2 per cent of the respondents' opinion is herbal food, 14.8 per cent of the respondents' opinion is healthy food and 18.6 per cent of the respondents' opinion is no pesticides.

## 7. Suggestions

1. Lack of awareness is the reason for low consumption of organic foods. More and more wall, newspaper and TV advertisement and awareness program is needed.
2. Government is all. Hence it shall provide support to grow of organic farming and good organic product perfect market environment facilities, and financial support.

## 8. Reference

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