

*A Study on Consumer Preference towards Organic Food  
Products in Coimbatore City*

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**Abstract:** *Organic food and cultivation is not new to India, but the green revolution which has changed the pattern of food consumption and cultivation for few decades. Organic food is becoming more and more popular, as People look for ways to live a healthier, pesticides-free, environmentally friendly, and sustainable lifestyle. The present study aims at analysing the factors affecting preference of consumers for organic food products. Using a well-structured survey of 550 respondents covering the Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu. Suitable statistical tools have followed for analysis on consumer preference.*

**Keywords:** *Organic Food, Consumer Preference, Consumption, Environment, pesticides- free, healthier.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Organic cultivation and food is not new to India, But green revolution has changed the pattern of cultivation and consumption for few decades. Over the past decade consumption pattern of consumers have changed especially in food consumption because all consumer to eat organic food because of the consumers are start preferring to eat the organic food is good for health and its grows with use of organic manual and use natural resource, so consumers will shift to organic food items, and quality and safety in food attract consumer interest in organic food that is free from pesticides and chemical residues. Organic food is becoming more and more popular, as People look for ways to live a healthier, pesticides-free, environmentally friendly, and sustainable lifestyle. Organic food refers to crops or livestock that are grown on the farm without the application of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, and without using genetically modified organisms.

Organic farming is carried out in at least 160 countries worldwide. Organic farming is a form of agriculture that relies on techniques such as crop rotation, green manure, compost, and biological pest control. Certified organic farming in the modern sense as understood in developed countries is only around 15 years old in India. India is as one of the world's most significant countries for organic agriculture. It ranks among the world's largest producers of rice, tea, fruits and vegetables, various spices, pulses, medicinal plants, and cashew nuts. Nearly 4.5 million hectares area is currently under certified organic farms.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Growing consumers' concerns on food safety, health and environment in the recent decade has resulted increased demand for organic food across the world, including emerging economies such as India. An increase in consumer's demand for environmental and health quality has generated the movement of organic agriculture in terms of high-value products. Understanding consumer preferences is very necessary. So, the researcher is trying to portrait the consumer's preference towards organic food products in Coimbatore city.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the Consumer Preference towards organic food products.
- To suggest suitable measures thereof.

### IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- This study will try to shed light on the consumer preference towards organic products.
- This study will try to answer the following question. What made the consumer to prefer the organic products in Coimbatore?

### V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The time was very limit to conduct the research on the selected topic.
- With respect to actual population the sample size was too small.

### VI. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

T. Mohanasoundari , A. Kalaivani (2016) in their study captioned that, they have brought out the fact that the people were well aware of images and availability, but not loyal entirely too organic food products. The respondents without doubt attracted towards Organic food products. So the marketers must create promotions which are both realistic and moral and the product availability in terms of volume and variety are required to become successful in marketing organic food products.

Brijesh Sivathanu (2015) in his study entitled has showed that the Consumers prefer organic food due to safety, human health, and environmental concern and also due to attributes like nutrition value, taste, freshness and appearance of organic food matters a lot for consumers. It has been observed that females have more preference for organic food products as compared to male respondents. More number of educated respondents prefers to buy organic food products. Age group of 29-39 prefers to buy organic food as compared to other age groups. Also people of higher income group prefer to buy organic food.

Shanmugapriya K.S., Gopal S. Murali, Swaminathan B.(2014) in their study titled have showed that the consumers with high income, higher education and relatively older in age prefer to purchase organic vegetables. Price of the produce was perceived as the major constraint followed by inadequate availability and lack of information.

Rupesh Mervin and R.Velmurugan (2013) in their study ascertained that consumer's preference towards organic foods depends on gender, age, occupation, monthly income, family status and level of awareness towards organic foods.

Rupesh Mervin and R.Velmurugan (2013) in their study ascertained that consumers attitude towards organic foods depends on gender, monthly income, area of residence and state of health.

Chengyan Yue, Jennifer H. Dennis, Bridget K. Behe, Charles R. Hall, Benjamin L. Campbell Roberto G. Lopez (2011) in their study titled have indicated that the socio demographic background of consumers affects their preferences for different types of plants, which also has important implications for target marketing. They found that organic food purchasers were more interested in organic plants than non-organic feed purchasers, an important implication for plants produced in sustainable ways by the green industry.

### VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Area of the study

- The area of the study is confined to Coimbatore city

**Sources of data**

- The primary data have been gathered directly from the respondents using through a structured questionnaire/interview schedule.
- The secondary data have been gathered from journals, Magazines and websites.

**Sampling design of the study**

- Convenient Sampling technique was used to select the respondents.

**Tools for analysis**

- Chi-square
- Friedman rank test

**VIII. FINDINGS****FACTORS INFLUENCING TOWARDS ORGANIC FOODS**

Variables	Level of Preference			Total	Chi-square	
	Low	Moderate	High			
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	53 (16.2)	194 (59.1)	81 (24.7)	328 (100.0)	<b>0.574</b>	
Female	37 (16.7)	122 (55.0)	63 (28.4)	222 (100.0)		
<b>Age (Yrs.)</b>						
Up to 25	14 (15.1)	60 (64.5)	19 (20.4)	93 (100.0)	<b>23.228**</b>	
26 to 50	68 (18.0)	222 (58.9)	87 (23.1)	377 (100.0)		
Above 50	8 (10.0)	34 (42.5)	38 (47.5)	80 (100.0)		
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married	71 (18.6)	203 (53.3)	107 (28.1)	381 (100.0)	<b>9.383*</b>	
Single	19 (11.2)	113 (66.9)	37 (21.9)	169 (100.0)		
<b>Educational Qualification</b>						
School Level	20 (18.5)	67 (62.0)	21 (19.4)	108 (100.0)	<b>12.852</b>	
Diploma	11 (21.2)	31 (59.6)	10 (19.2)	52 (100.0)		
Under Graduate	39 (16.2)	136 (56.7)	65 (27.1)	240 (100.0)		
Post Graduate	7 (07.7)	54 (59.3)	30 (33.0)	91 (100.0)		
Professional	13 (22.0)	28 (47.5)	18 (30.5)	59 (100.0)		
<b>Occupation</b>						
Employee	39 (22.8)	108 (63.2)	24 (14.0)	171 (100.0)		<b>45.448**</b>
Profession	13 (16.2)	38 (47.5)	29 (36.2)	80 (100.0)		
Business	18 (23.1)	40 (51.3)	20 (25.6)	78 (100.0)		
Retired	2 (05.7)	15 (42.9)	18 (51.4)	35 (100.0)		
Student	8 (09.6)	57 (68.7)	18 (21.7)	83 (100.0)		
Homemaker	8	47	31	86		

	(09.3)	(54.7)	(36.0)	(100.0)	
Agriculturist	2	11	4	17	
	(11.8)	(64.7)	(23.5)	(100.0)	
<b>Monthly Income (₹)</b>					
Up to 15000	30	128	69	227	<b>9.394</b>
	(13.2)	(56.4)	(30.4)	(100.0)	
15001 – 30000	27	84	23	134	
	(20.1)	(62.7)	(17.2)	(100.0)	
Above 30000	33	104	52	189	
	(17.5)	(55.0)	(27.5)	(100.0)	
<b>Family Income (₹)</b>					
Up to 30000	31	85	20	136	<b>47.230**</b>
	(22.8)	(62.5)	(14.7)	(100.0)	
30001 – 60000	32	128	32	192	
	(16.7)	(66.7)	(16.7)	(100.0)	
Above 60000	27	103	92	222	
	(12.2)	(46.4)	(41.4)	(100.0)	
<b>Family Expenditure (₹)</b>					
Up to 10000	33	128	43	204	<b>7.758</b>
	(16.2)	(62.7)	(21.1)	(100.0)	
10001 – 20000	30	117	54	201	
	(14.9)	(58.2)	(26.9)	(100.0)	
Above 20000	27	71	47	145	
	(18.6)	(49.0)	(32.4)	(100.0)	
<b>Type of Family</b>					
Joint	41	106	54	201	<b>4.435</b>
	(20.4)	(52.7)	(26.9)	(100.0)	
Nuclear	49	210	90	349	
	(14.0)	(60.2)	(25.8)	(100.0)	
<b>Status in Family</b>					
Head	47	129	62	238	<b>3.712</b>
	(19.7)	(54.2)	(26.1)	(100.0)	
Member	43	187	82	312	
	(13.8)	(59.9)	(26.3)	(100.0)	
<b>Look after Food Labels</b>					
Yes	53	213	112	378	<b>9.798**</b>
	(14.0)	(56.3)	(29.6)	(100.0)	
No	37	103	32	172	
	(21.5)	(59.9)	(18.6)	(100.0)	
<b>Period of Consumption</b>					
Up to 1	50	174	41	265	<b>31.186**</b>
	(18.9)	(65.7)	(15.5)	(100.0)	
2 to 3	16	67	44	127	
	(12.6)	(52.8)	(34.6)	(100.0)	
Above 3	24	75	59	158	
	(15.2)	(47.5)	(37.3)	(100.0)	
<b>Frequency of Consumption</b>					
Several times a Week	23	76	39	138	<b>27.858**</b>
	(16.7)	(55.1)	(28.3)	(100.0)	
Once a Week	25	63	54	142	
	(17.6)	(44.4)	(38.0)	(100.0)	
Once a Month	26	143	40	209	
	(12.4)	(68.4)	(19.1)	(100.0)	
Few times in a Year	16	34	11	61	
	(26.2)	(55.7)	(18.0)	(100.0)	
<b>Level of Awareness</b>					
Low	19	36	11	66	<b>136.729**</b>
	(28.8)	(54.5)	(16.7)	(100.0)	
Moderate	70	241	54	365	
	(19.2)	(66.0)	(14.8)	(100.0)	
High	1	39	79	119	
	(00.8)	(32.8)	(66.4)	(100.0)	

Level of Perception					
Low	44	42	1	87	331.890**
	(50.6)	(48.3)	(01.1)	(100.0)	
Moderate	46	240	31	317	
	(14.5)	(75.7)	(9.8)	(100.0)	
High	0	34	112	146	
	(00.0)	(23.3)	(76.7)	(100.0)	

\* Significant at five per level \*\* Significant at one per cent level

To ascertain prominent reasons that induce a consumer to prefer organic foods Friedman rank test is employed.

Reasons	SA	A	NO	DA	SDA	Total	Mean Score	Rank
Price	214	291	37	6	2	550	4.78	1
	38.90	52.90	6.70	1.10	0.40	(100.0)		
More Income	183	297	57	11	2	550	4.54	3
	33.30	54.00	10.40	2.00	0.40	(100.0)		
More accessibility in the market	193	276	62	17	2	550	4.52	4
	35.10	50.20	11.30	3.10	0.40	(100.0)		
More time to look for organic food	179	297	54	18	2	550	4.43	7
	32.50	54.00	9.80	3.30	0.40	(100.0)		
Product Certification	176	270	73	21	10	550	4.22	8
	32.00	49.10	13.30	3.80	1.80	(100.0)		
Trust on Products	198	275	57	15	5	550	4.49	5
	36.00	50.00	10.40	2.70	0.90	(100.0)		
Better / Shorter cooking conditions	190	278	56	18	8	550	4.43	6
	34.50	50.50	10.20	3.30	1.50	(100.0)		
Freshness	204	272	61	6	7	550	4.59	2
	37.10	49.50	11.10	1.10	1.30	(100.0)		

- Consumer's who are above the age of 50 years, have high level preference towards organic food products. Consumer's whose age ranges between 26 and 50 years have low level of preference towards organic food products.
- Married consumers have high level of preference towards organic foods products.
- Retired employees have high level of preference towards organic foods. Businessmen have low level of preference towards organic foods products.
- Consumer's whose family income ranges above Rs. 60000 have high level of preference towards organic foods. Consumer's whose family income ranges up to Rs. 30000 have low level of preference towards organic foods products.
- Consumer's who look after the food labels before buy an organic food product have high level of preference towards organic foods products. Consumer's who never look after the food labels before buy an organic food product have low level of preference towards organic foods products.
- Consumer's who consume organic foods for a period more than three years have high level of preference towards organic foods products. Consumer's who consume organic foods up to one year have low level of preference towards organic foods products.
- Consumer's who consume organic foods once in a week have high level of preference towards organic foods. Consumer's who consume organic foods few times in a year have low level of preference towards organic foods products.
- Consumer's who have high level of awareness on organic foods have high level of preference towards organic foods. Consumer's who have low level of awareness on organic foods have low level of preference towards organic foods products.
- Consumer's who have high level of perception towards organic foods have high level preference of organic foods. Consumer's who have low level of perception towards organic foods have low level preference of organic foods products.

- From the Friedman rank test, it is inferred that majority of the consumers considers price, freshness, their income etc. before preferring organic foods products.

#### IX. SUGGESTIONS

- The government has to make effective measure for the awareness of the people towards the organic food products.
- Pricing can be reduced by the marketers of organic food products.
- Government should take steps to provide organic food products at a cheap price through Public Distribution System. So, that it is affordable by all income groups of people.

#### X. CONCLUSION

Organic food product is been accepted as a nutritional food and keeps human healthy. Price is the only factor that disturbs the consumption. Government can take steps to distribute organic food products at a subsidised rate. The preference of consuming organic food products was found to be satisfactory. Though there are few problems, the organic food product consumption is gradually increasing day by day.

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