



Consumer Demand for Organic Products: A Growing Trend Towards Healthy and Sustainable Consumption

*E. Karnika

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India-641003

*Corresponding Author's email: karnikaeks27@gmail.com

The need for organic produce has risen sharply in the world owing to health consciousness and environmental awareness, as well as food safety issues. Organic food is made without any use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, GMOs, growth hormones, or antibiotics. Today's consumers see organic food as a safer and healthier alternative to conventional food. The global market of organic food has grown to nearly €145 billion in 2024 and is growing very fast. In India, the market for organic foods is seeing tremendous growth owing to higher incomes, urbanization, changes in lifestyles, and healthy eating habits. This article talks about various aspects of organic food and its consumption in India.

Introduction

Organic products are sourced from agricultural production processes that do not employ the use of artificial fertilizers, chemicals, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), growth enhancers, and antibiotics. These include a variety of products like fruits, vegetables, cereals, pulses, dairy produce, spices, and processed foods. Previously, consumers made food purchases based on price, taste, and availability. However, changing lifestyles and increased concerns regarding health and the environment have greatly altered consumer tastes. Nowadays, consumers are increasingly looking for food items that are healthy and safe, and not contaminated with any kind of chemicals. Consumers are also demanding environmentally friendly food production methods.

There are various reasons that contribute to the growing popularity of organic foods among people. Firstly, there are fears concerning the health implications arising from the consumption of foods sprayed with synthetic pesticides and chemicals. In this regard, people tend to consume organic foods, which they consider to be healthy and safe. Secondly, the growing consciousness regarding the environment and various problems associated with it, including soil depletion, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and climate change, encourages consumers to embrace sustainable agricultural practices. Through organic farming, some of the environmental problems are addressed, as it involves the improvement of the quality of the soil, conservation of natural resources, reduced use of chemicals, and ecological balance. As a result, there is a transition among consumers from seeking for low-cost foods to those that offer them health benefits and ensure the sustainability of the environment.

Methodology

Secondary information was gathered through an exhaustive literature survey of data obtained from both domestic and foreign sources. Reports issued by FiBL (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture), IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority), OTA (Organic Trade Association), and other market research firms were considered for this purpose. In addition, scientific journals and

reports about consumption of organic foods and consumer behavior were also consulted. Analysis of the gathered information focused on the identification of emerging trends in consumer demand for organic food products, factors that influence purchasing decisions, growth trends in the market, opportunities, and problems associated with the consumption of organic foods.

Results and Discussion

The global market for organic food products has seen significant growth in the last decade. The rise in consumer consciousness related to their health, environment, and quality of food products has greatly contributed to the growth of organic food markets in both developed and developing nations. As per the report issued by FiBL and IFOAM, the retail market size for organic food and beverages was around €145 billion in 2024 as compared to €136.4 billion in 2023.

Currently, organic farming is being carried out in almost 190 countries using around 99 million hectares of agricultural land. There are more than four million farmers who produce organic products globally. The United States remains the biggest producer of organically grown foods, followed by Germany and China. Some other notable producers of organic products are France, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, and Australia.

Organic industry has experienced rapid growth due to several reasons. The reasons include an increase in disposable income levels, urbanization, heightened customer awareness levels, governmental support towards sustainable farming, and the availability of effective distribution networks. Additionally, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic created a positive attitude towards immunity among customers, hence the need for organic food products. Consumers now give preference to food that has high nutritional content and quality levels.

Factors Influencing Consumer Demand

Health Consciousness

Health consciousness is still the most important factor that influences consumer demand for organic products. Today's consumers view organic foods as better for their health since there are no harmful chemicals contained within these products. Pesticides, food additives, and synthetic chemicals are factors which make consumers look for food products which do not threaten their health.

Numerous studies reveal that consumers regard organic products as more nutritious, fresh, and healthier compared to conventional foods. In addition, the increased number of cases of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes has increased consumers' demand for health foods. In particular, parents tend to choose organic products for their children. Wellness trends, fitness trends, and preventive care have further led to the growing demand for organic food. Health and wellness bloggers as well as dieticians and health care practitioners regularly discuss healthy eating habits through their social media accounts, which raises consumer awareness about organic food consumption.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is another crucial aspect behind the consumption of organic foods. Consumers have started recognizing the impact of conventional farming techniques on the environment because of issues such as soil degradation, water contamination, pollution caused by greenhouses gases, and reduction in biodiversity. With increasing emphasis on environmental sustainability, consumers are opting for environmentally sustainable products. Organic farming helps conserve the environment by minimizing the use of chemical fertilizers, ensuring improved soil health, protecting water bodies, and ensuring biodiversity. Organics also help maintain ecological balance and contribute towards sustainable management of natural resources. Environmental sustainability-conscious consumers see consumption of organic foods as an act of environmental conservation.

Food Safety and Product Quality

Food safety is an issue that plays a major role in determining the consumer behavior when buying products. The issues of food poisoning, high levels of pesticides, contamination, and the abuse of chemicals have created anxiety about food quality among consumers. Organic products ensure that there is trust in terms of food production standards and product quality. Organic product labels and certifications create confidence among the producer and consumers. Certification helps prove that products have been produced following acceptable organic standards. This makes it easy for customers to buy such products because they ensure food safety and quality.

Ethical and Social Issues

Ethical factors have become important considerations in the purchasing behaviors of consumers. Ethical concerns involve such topics as the well-being of animals, fair dealings with farmers, creation of livelihood opportunities, and socially responsible means of production. Organic farming practices tend to embody such ethics since they promote both environmentally friendly and socially responsible agricultural activities. People who are interested in ethical purchasing usually tend to prefer products that help in developing the rural sector as well as create a sustainable livelihood. Younger consumers, in particular, tend to show greater awareness in such matters.

Consumer Preference for Organic Goods in India

India has been found to be one of the emerging markets for organic foods. The rise in demand for organic goods in India may be linked to factors like increased awareness about health and diets, lifestyle changes, urbanization, increases in income levels, and availability of information. Consumer fears related to pesticides found in fruits and vegetables have also resulted in growing demand for safer alternatives. The market value for organic foods in India stood at approximately USD 2.3 billion in 2025 and is forecast to touch USD 11 billion by 2034, which depicts significant future prospects for the market. Some of the major cities that form the Indian market include cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, and Kolkata.

There is a growing demand for organic fruits, vegetables, cereals, pulses, spices, dairy products, herbal products, and foods from millet in India. Initiatives like International Year of Millets along with greater awareness about the benefits of traditional grains have led to an increased demand for organic millets. Spices and tea products that are organic also see good demand in the market owing to their quality and safety. Various government initiatives including Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER), and different programs by individual states for organic farming have facilitated the growth of the organic industry.

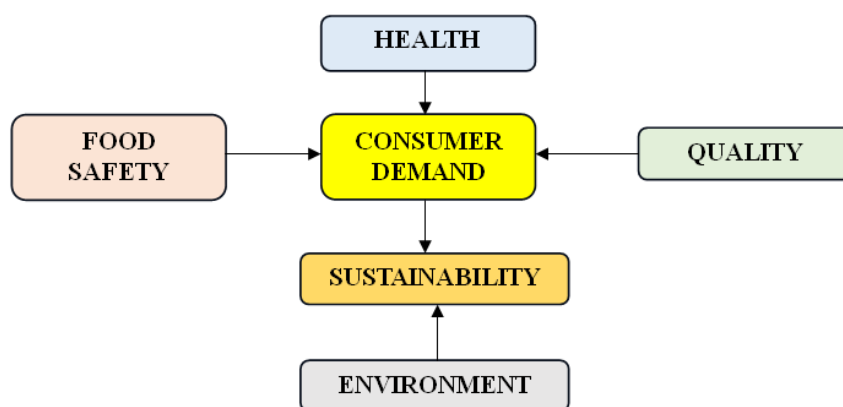


Figure 1: Major Factors Driving Consumer Demand for Organic Products

The demand for organic products is fueled mainly by five different factors that are closely related to each other as given in figure 1. The first one is health consciousness. Organic food products are considered healthier since they do not contain any chemicals and pesticides.

Environmental issues, such as soil and biodiversity conservation, and lower amounts of pollution are important for people and motivate buying organic products. Moreover, consumers view organic products as higher quality items with good nutritional content. Finally, sustainable issues, which imply production that has minimal negative impact on the environment, are important as well.

Emerging Trends in Organic Product Consumption

Development of E-commerce

The development of e-commerce channels has changed the manner in which customers buy organic products. With such platforms, it is easier to access a wide range of organic products where comparisons can be made and certified products can be ordered for delivery at one's home. Marketing through digital means and other social media sites has also made a difference in terms of awareness and availability.

Millennials and Generation Z Demand

The current young customers, mainly millennials and those from generation Z, have been identified as the new driving force behind the demand for organic products. Such consumers have greater awareness regarding sustainable practices, environmental protection, and health consciousness.

Traceability and Transparency

Customers are becoming more transparent about the source of the food, its production process, and standards. Using technologies such as blockchain, QR code, and others, customers can get informed about the sources and processes involved in food production. Transparency builds consumer confidence in products and increases their intentions to purchase them.

Increased Demand for Organic Value-added Food Products

Organic food products that have gained momentum recently go beyond fresh products. The demand is increasing in processed food products, such as organic snacks, beverages, breakfast cereals, ready-to-eat meals, baby foods, and functional food. This trend creates new opportunities for agripreneurs and food processing industries.

Challenges Facing Consumers' Demand for Products

Even as there is high growth potential in the industry, various challenges still confront the market for organic foods. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges that continues to pose problems for the industry is the relatively high cost of production compared to conventionally produced goods. This is because organic production entails increased manpower needs, reduced yields while going through the transition stage, certification costs, among others. Inadequate availability and accessibility are another major challenge to growth in the sector, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. Lack of adequate information about the certification process and labeling poses another serious challenge facing consumers' demand for organic products. Challenges of poor logistics, poor storage, and inadequate marketing systems further hinder the growth of organic markets.

Implications for Farmers, Agripreneurs, and Extension Service

The growing demand for organic food presents immense opportunities for farmers and agripreneurs. Organic farming can provide high-priced market sales, increased farm productivity, better soil condition, and reduced dependency on artificial chemicals. Both local and export market possibilities can create lucrative avenues for the growth of their business. Organic market growth is an excellent opportunity for agripreneurs to earn extra income through various ways such as value addition, branding, marketing, and e-business. The involvement of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO) will be instrumental in aggregation and marketing of their produce at a lower cost. Extension services should be employed effectively to help promote organic farming through knowledge provision, certification, training, market linkage and customer awareness about organic produce.

Conclusion

The trend towards organic products is increasing at a rapid pace owing to consumers becoming increasingly aware about health, food safety, sustainability, and ethical consumption. The organic market worldwide is witnessing steady expansion, with India being a developing country with huge scope for growth. Even in the face of difficulties like price premiums and lack of awareness regarding certifications, the future of organic products looks quite promising. Awareness among consumers, better certification processes, improved market access, and farmer education could help increase growth prospects in organic farming.

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