



RESEARCH ARTICLE

RELUCTANCE OF WOMEN TOWARDS PURCHASING OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS WITH REFERENCE TO VELLORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The modern revival of organic farming dates back to the first half of the 20th century at a time when there was a growing reliance on these new synthetic, inorganic methods. Consumer's consumption pattern has been changing rapidly about the food safety as well dietary consuming in India. Consumers become more anxiety about the food they consume. With the accessibility of organic food products in the market people have begun buying in the local retail markets. The relative success of organic farming in many countries are due to the high awareness of the health problems caused by the consumption of contaminated food products, the ill effects of environment degradation, appropriate supports by the government. Organic farming is one of the widely used methods, and considered as the best alternative to avoid the ill effects of chemical farming. The marketers should increase the supply and availability of the organic food products to match their consumer demand. But there seems to be a mismatch between the grown of organic food product industry and consumers' reluctance to purchase organic food products. In traditional India, agriculture using organic techniques like pesticides, fertilizers, additives etc., were obtained from plants and animals products. The system is oriented towards high production without much concern for ecology and the very existence of man himself. In this backdrop, the present empirical research work is an attempt to explore the reluctant factors towards buying organic food products in Vellore city, Tamil Nadu, India.

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INTRODUCTION

Organic foods are foods produced by organic farming. Organic farming has been predominant since the time the practice of agriculture began. The word, 'Organic farming', was first introduced by Lord Northbourne. And the term is used in his book, 'Look to The Land', in which he had put suggestions for a wholesome approach to ecologically- balanced farming. However the practice of organic farming has been widespread from the time agriculture was first conceived. It was with the beginning of 'green revolution' that the natural way of growing crops started becoming unpopular and economically less feasible. More crop yields meant higher profits to the farmer and better utilization of the land. At times when only one crop was grown per season or year, the farmers who used fertilizers had started growing two crops during the same time-period. Organic food farming continued in small, mostly family-run, farms or kitchen gardens where people grew food

for their own requirements. The produce was sold in farmer's markets. Large scale organic farming has been started by farmers and scientists, as a mark of dispute to the agricultural industrialization. Now, organic food is widely accessible and has become very popular, with rising sales. While the standards differ worldwide, organic farming features cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that nurture cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Organic products are grown without the use of fertilizers, pesticides and genetically modified organisms (GMO's). Organic food industry is rapidly increasing and fastest growing sector. A study published by the National Research Council in 1993 determined that for infants and children, the major source of exposure to pesticides is through diet. The basic purpose of organic farming is to enrich the natural biological cycles and to meet animal welfare standards (Lockie *et al.*, 2004). Organic foods are also not treated with irradiation, industrial solvents or chemical food additives (Allen Gary, Albala, Ken, ed. (2007). Global demand for organic products remains robust, with sales increasing by over five billion US dollars a year (Willer, Yussefi-Menzler and Sorensen, 2009). In this background, this empirical research

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study highlights the women reluctance in purchasing organic food products in the market.

### Concept of Organic Agriculture

The National Organic Standards Board, a federal advisory panel to the USDA for developing organic legislation, defines organic agriculture as "an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance ecological harmony."

### Organic food – Types

Fresh organic food Most of the organic food sold in the markets and various retail outlets is in the fresh form. Fruits, vegetables, meat, egg and dairy products falls under this category.

### Processed organic food

Processed food are generally popular and covers a huge range in any super market all over the world. The products such as canned foods, frozen vegetables and other ready-to-eat foods are labelled 'organic', if the production and processing of these foods doesn't involve the use of chemicals, fertilizers and if they conform to the required standards. These foods are usually incur additional cost than the non-organic ones.

### Features of organic food products

Organic food and products are characterised by the following features.

#### Sustainably Farmed

Organic farming uses viable agricultural principles which increases the soil fertility and prevents top soil degradation and erosion. Keeping the soil in a good condition and preventing its erosion is considered as important in achieving a natural balance with the environment in which a farm exists and to be as self-sustaining.

#### Free of chemicals

Organic food is grown in absence of synthetic chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers. In organic farming, diseases, weeds and pests are proactively and preventively managed through cultural methods such as good soil health for natural plant resistance, physically stronger plants, beneficial insects, companion planting, natural predators and crop rotation. Organic farmers uses plant derived, biodegradable pesticides as a second line of defence. These are strictly monitored under tight restriction. Organic food products are processed without the use of synthetic food additives such as preservatives, flavourings, fillers, trans-fats, enhancers, stabilizers and sweeteners.

#### Non- genetically modified organisms

Organic food does not contain artificial human intervention as genetic modification is not allowed in the production and

processing of organic food products. The long term effects of genetically modified food causes several diseases.

### Review of Literature

The literature review prepared for this study on reasons behind customer reluctance to purchase organic food products reflects the opinion of various experts based on their experience. In order to confirm the importance of this study, the following various literature has been reviewed to get statement of problems. Tarkianinen and Sundqvist (2005) indicated that there are direct and significant correlation through intention to purchase and subjective norms. They found a significant positive method association for organic food usage through attitudes and subjective norms. Neena Sondhi and Vina Vani (2007) expresses that that potential of marketing organically grown agricultural produce and products in the domestic market. Rajagopal (2007) stated that strategic product positioning and effective retailing augment the customer perceptions and help building the long-run customer values towards the non-conventional products owning unfamiliar brands. Efthimia Tsakiridou, Christina Boutsouki, Yorgos Zotos and Kostantinos Mattas (2008) expressed that consumers seem to be informed about environmental and health issues. Tiziana de Magistris and Azucena Gracia(2008) indicated that consumer' attitudes towards organic food, in particular towards the health attribute and towards the environment are the most important factors that explain consumers' decision-making process for organic food products. Moreover, it has been found that larger information on the organic food market, which drives to a higher consumers' organic food knowledge, is important because it positively influences consumers' attitudes towards organic food products. Paladino and Baggiere (2008) stated that Consumer awareness also encouraged consumers to take some responsibility to reduce environmental damage through recycling and purchasing ecologically sound products. The most important attribute for buying organic products because they are free from pesticides, freshness and cleanliness of the products. Kriti Bardhan Gupta (2009) expressed that that the consumer behaviour for food products in India from different perspectives. Smith and Paladino (2010) indicated that people's decision to buy a product, depends on their knowledge about that specific product. Thus rise of knowledge directly impact directly on organic food farming methods. Musdiana Mohamad Salleh, Siti Meriam Ali (2010) stated that health consciousness factor have more impact on customer purchase intention towards organic food products rather than the environmental concern. Werner and Alvensleben (2011) stated that there is a relationship between the quantity of consumers concern for the environment and their motivation to buy products that are organic. Justin Paul and Fyoti Rana (2012) indicated that health, availability, education and also demographic factors positively influences the consumer's attitude towards buying organic food. Zeinab Seyed Saleki, Seyedeh Maryam Seyedsaleki and Mohammad Reza Rahimi (2012) indicated that whole impacts are positive and significant except the subjective norms influence on organic buying behaviours. Gomathi and Kalyani (2013) pointed out that the study shows that awareness level of the consumer is not up to mark. Since they have lack aware, some people are still non users for the reason of no trust on purity

high price and unavailability of organic food products. John Thongersen, Marcia Dutra de Barcellos, Marcelo Gattermann Perin and Yangeng Zhou (2014) indicated that consumers' attitude toward buying organic food is strongly linked to beliefs about its healthiness. Ramesh and Divya (2013) have made an interesting observation that the main reasons for purchasing organics food products are an expectation of a healthier and environmentally friendly means of production. Shafi and Madhavaih (2013) emphasized on the facts that affect the consumer decision making process on purchasing imported health food products, in specific demographic effects such as education, income, gender and marital status. Chih-Ching Teng and Yu-Mei Wang (2015) identified that trust and attitudes play the mediating roles linking revealed information and perceived knowledge with organic food purchase intention. Consumers are more aware but they are reluctant in cost and availability about the range of products. Mohamed Bilal Basha and K. Ramesh (2014) indicated that health concern is the first motivation of organic food consumers chosen for the study and also examined the impact of demographic variables on the buying intention of consumers of organic products. Ramesh and Divya (2013) have made an interesting observation that the main reasons for purchasing organics food products are an expectation of a healthier and environmentally friendly means of production. Chandrashekar (2014) expressed consumer attitude towards organic food product consumption and consumer willingness to purchase is limited, erratic supply, higher price of the products and very limited access and information. Biao Xie, Liyuan Wang and Hao Yang, Yanhua Wang and Mingli Zhang (2015) expressed that the main trigger for purchasing organic food products is that consumers expect them to be healthier and safer. The respondents who have bought organic food products tend to have a higher education level and disposable incomes, be families with children and be older than those who have not bought them. Umamaheshwari and Chandrasekar (2015) show that organic products have a paradigm in its awareness and accessibility. Consumers are more aware but they are reluctant in cost and availability about the range of products. Chih-Ching Teng and Yu-Mei Wang (2015) stressed that the study that trust and attitudes play the mediating roles linking revealed information and perceived knowledge with organic food purchase intention. Based on the above literature, the study makes further attempts to identify women reluctance in purchasing organic food products.

### Statement of Problem

In addition to the above literature on organic food products, the study focuses to identify the several reasons behind women reluctant to purchase organic food products were presented below. The pesticides contained food products causes' cancer, reproductive dysfunction, diabetes, autism, asthma, birth defects, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases and more. Though organic food production were rapidly increasing and huge demand were created in the market but still individuals were hesitant to purchase organic products due to various reasons such as: premium price, accessibility, distasteful, health related issues, lack of awareness, side effects etc. In addition to above problems, it is also very clear to all customers that inorganic products gives several health related

problems, even though for various reasons like lack of awareness, belief, health related issues, side effects, premium price etc., make the customers hesitant to buy organic agricultural food products in Vellore city. Based on the above various problems expressed and since so far no attempt is made in Vellore city, Tamil Nadu. The present research study will fill the research gap to certain extent.

### Objective of the Study

Based on several literature review and research gaps identified, the major objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To study the demographic profile of the respondents in Vellore city.
2. To ascertain the reasons behind women reluctance towards purchasing organic food products.

### Hypothesis

1. Ho1. There is no significant association between incomes with factors affecting reluctance to purchase organic food products.
2. Ho. There is a significant association between incomes with factors affecting reluctance to purchase organic food products.

### Test of Reliability

In order to know the internal consistency among variables, Cronbach's alpha value for reliability is measured. The variables value are 0.731, which is considered as reliable. Values of Cronbach's alpha and items selected for the study are given in Table 1.

**Table 1. Description of items and reliability (Cronbach's alpha)**

Construct	Measurement Items
P1	Disbelief
P2	Premium price
P3	Limited choice
P4	Health related issues
P5	Lack of Taste
P6	Unavailability of Organic food products
P7	Leads to side effects
P8	Lack of awareness
<b>Reluctance of women Towards Purchasing Organic Food products:0.731</b>	
<b>Source: Primary data</b>	

### Methodology of the study

This study is empirical in nature. Both primary as well as secondary data were collected for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the collection of data in Vellore city. A total of 100 samples were collected from women who are non-users of organic food products were taken for the study. A self-constructed questionnaire were framed and collected through direct survey method. The questionnaire contains two sections. First section deals with the demographic profile and the second section deals with the reluctant factors that affect women purchasers of organic food products by using Likert's scale. SPSS version 21 software was used to analyse the data and statistical tools like frequency distribution and one-way Anova were used to inference the data.

## Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted only in Vellore city of Tamilnadu and the sample size was restricted to 100 respondents. The opinion given by the respondents may not reveal the same or not universal if it is conducted in some others states of India. The period of the study restricted to three months i.e., from September 2015 to November 2015.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic profile of the study

The data relating to demographic profile of the respondents were given in Table 2.

From the table, it is inferred that the majority of the respondents 34% were in the age group of 28 -32 and with regard to education 48% of the respondents were degree holders. Regarding income, 48% of the respondents belongs to income group between Rs.10000 to 20000, with respect to occupation 46% of the respondents were private employees and 52% of the respondents marital status indicates that they were married.

### One way Anova

In addition to the above analysis, further to discuss the second objective of this study the researchers applied one-way Anova in order to identify the significant relationship between income (independent variable) with 8 parameters (dependent variables) relating to the reasons for women reluctance towards purchasing of organic food products.

**Table 2. The demographic profile of the respondents**

Parameters	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18 to 22	16	16
	23 to 27	28	28
	28 to32	34	34
	33 to 37	12	12
	Above 38	10	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Education	10 <sup>th</sup> std	8	8
	+2	14	14
	Degree	48	48
	Post Graduate	22	22
	Others	8	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Income	Below Rs.10000	8	8
	Rs.10000to20000	48	48
	Rs.20000 to 30000	20	20
	Rs.30000 to 40000	20	20
	Above Rs.40000	4	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	Housewife	23	23
	Pvt. Employee	46	46
	Govt .Employee	22	22
	Professional	4	4
	Self-employed	5	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	Married	52	52
	Unmarried	48	48
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

**Table 2. One way Anova**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Disbelief	Between Groups	9.133	4	2.283	1.696	.183
	Within Groups	33.667	25	1.347		
	Total	42.800	29			
Premium Price	Between Groups	21.611	4	5.403	5.086	.002
	Within Groups	26.556	25	1.062		
	Total	48.167	29			
Limited Selection	Between Groups	4.661	4	1.165	5.968	.0.04
	Within Groups	14.806	25	.592		
	Total	19.467	29			
Health related issues	Between Groups	35.161	4	8.790	5.452	.003
	Within Groups	40.306	25	1.612		
	Total	75.467	29			
Distasteful	Between Groups	27.133	4	7.561	5.367	.001
	Within Groups	46.333	25	1.409		
	Total	73.467	29			
Lack of organic store availability	Between Groups	14.911	4	3.728	5.022	.004
	Within Groups	18.556	25	.742		
	Total	33.467	29			
Leads to Side effects	Between Groups	5.328	4	1.332	5.905	.002
	Within Groups	5.639	25	.226		
	Total	10.967	29			
Lack of awareness	Between Groups	17.833	4	4.458	10.786	.000
	Within Groups	10.333	25	.413		
	Total	28.166	29			

The data pertaining to one-way Anova were given below in Table 2.

### Findings

The results of one-way Anova reveals statistically significant association, that null hypothesis is not accepted between income and the six variables like premium price (P value =  $0.02 < 0.05$ ), lack of awareness (P value =  $0.00 < 0.05$ ), side effects (P value =  $0.02 < 0.05$ ), distasteful (P value =  $0.01 < 0.05$ ), Lack of organic store availability (P value =  $0.45 < 0.05$ ), health related issues (P value =  $0.03 < 0.05$ ), limited selection ( $0.04 < 0.05$ ). Thus, it shows that reluctant is considered to be an influential factor towards purchasing of organic food products. And for except one variable, the null hypothesis is accepted and it has no significant association between income and variables such as Disbelief (P value =  $0.183 > 0.05$ ).

### Epilogue

This present study concludes that, women were hesitant to purchase organic food products in the market and the marketers thus need to create large group awareness, build trust among the public, promote their organic food products through effective marketing and convincing the customers to prefer and purchase organic food products. To conclude this, in order to encourage consumers and be more confident in consuming organic food products without much hesitation then Government has to frame strict regulations and obligatory regulatory framework needed to be established for production, quality policies, and also adopting measures targeting the prevention of fraudulent declarations relative to the organic nature of agricultural food products.

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