

## Consumers' Attitude Towards Organic Food Products – A Study with Reference to South Mumbai

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**[Abstract]** After the global pandemic of COVID-19, worldwide consumers have become more health-conscious and are trying to improve their immunity. To achieve this, they prefer to buy organic food items. The present work aims to assess consumers' attitude towards organic food products. To achieve the objectives, the study relied on primary and secondary data. The study adopted the survey method to collect the primary data with the help of structured questionnaire. Secondary data were obtained from research institutions, banks, and other financial institutions (such as universities or businesses), magazines, newspapers, publications, advertisements, and official websites. The paper provides insights about the pertinent factors influencing organic food products buying decision and expected the market area for the same. At the end the study suggests guidelines for improving the organic food sector, adopting organic food culture covering the consumers. The findings of the study will assist the government in framing the policies which will be beneficial for the corporate sector, consumers, and organic farmers along with the development of organic food industry.

**[Keywords]** organic food, organic food producers, consumers' attitude, health-conscious, immunity

### Introduction

Post COVID-19, worldwide consumers became health-conscious to improve immunity and for that many are buying organic food items. According to report of The Statista Research Department, 2022 organic food sales have shown tremendous growth in 2000-2020. In 2020, globally organic food sales amounted to 120.65 billion US dollars which is higher than 18 billion dollars of 2000. Further, worldwide app 75 million hectares of organic farmland were available in 2020 and app 1.4 million organic food producers are working, that is higher compared to any other country. According to Global Organic Food Market Report (2021-2030) the multiplication rate of the global organic food market is 14.5% and by 2025 it is predicted to grow to \$380.84 billion.

According to Export Market Research Report, the Indian organic food market in the year 2020 stood at a value of USD 1238 million and by 2028 it will reach to the value of about USD 4082 million. According to APEDA Report, India is producing all varieties of organic food products and producing organic cotton fiber, functional food products except edible sector. In India Madhya Pradesh is leading the state in producing organic food products followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka Rajasthan and Odisha. The report further says that the largest category in organic food production is Fiber crops which is followed by oilseeds, sugar products, cereals and grains, medicinal and aromatic herbs, spices and condiments, fresh fruits and vegetables, beans, tea, and coffee. In the year 2021-22 organic food export stood at 771.96 million USD (460320.40 MT). Natural nutrient goods in India, including Soya feast (61%) and Oilseed (12.85%), Cereals and millets (12.71%), Sugar (4.77%), manor edit items such as Tea and Coffee (2.16%), Flavors and condiments (1.72%), Beats (1.1%) and numerous more to the United States, the European Union, the Korea Republic, Canada, the Incredible Britain, Vietnam, Switzerland, Turkey, Australia, Ecuador, Japan and numerous more.

Concurring to FIBL and IFOAM Yearbook 2020, within the World's Natural Agrarian arrive, India secured the fifth rank and in 2021 India stood first within the add up to number of makers. On 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022 Prime Minister Narendra Modi added in his speech that organic farming should be adopted

by Indians for self-reliant and cut down the cost of imported fertilizers. Chemical free and organic farming is the duty of every Indian farmer.

Demand for organic food products have increased due to health benefits and nutrient over conventional food products (Gupta and Ogden, 2009; Basha et al., 2015). The research shows benefit of organic food products that it has nutrients, omega-3 fatty acids, less toxic metal, and most important lower pesticide residue. Organic food is chemical free because it is produced with the help of using natural substances, avoiding all chemicals, antibiotics, artificial chemicals (Wee et al, 2014; Irianto, 2015). Many studies reported that the demand for organic food products has increased because it has less exposure to toxins, pesticides, and other antibiotic-resistant bacteria (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008). Conventional food products are modern, it is also called industrial agriculture because it includes chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms (Zanoli & Naspetti, 2002; Petrescu and Petrescu-Mag, 2015). Many consumers are influenced by organic food is than conventional because it has less exposure to harmful chemicals and bacteria.

It is observed from the above data that on the grounds of health and nutrients urge for organic food products has shown growth all over the world and will increase in the future as well. Many studies on organic food products have been done at national and international level, but with respect of the South Mumbai geographical area not covered. So, the present research will be helpful in finding various reasons or factors which are affecting South Mumbai consumers' buying behavior for selected organic food products.

### Review of Literature

Priya and Parameswari (2016) studied the attitude that Coimbatore consumers have toward organic food products and led them to the conclusion that people need to be aware of natural products because that market has potential for natural food products. Rai (2021) focused on Navi Mumbai consumers' buying attitude with respect to natural food products and suggested that the natural food product require effective marketing and promotional measures, as it has more demand for the same and it will boost the business. The IMARC Group report expected that in the 2028 market will reach US\$ 4,602 Million, during 2023-2028, it is exhibiting a growth rate (CAGR) of 23.8% on the ground of health issues and easy accessibility of organic products to consumers.

### Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the connection between the respondent's behavior toward organic food products in South Mumbai and the statistical factors of the respondent.
2. To recognize factors responsible for respondents' attitude towards organic food products in South Mumbai.

### Hypotheses of the study

1.  $H_0$ : *There is no significant relationship between the gender of the surveyed consumers and freshness as a factor influencing the purchase of organic products.*  
 $H_1$ : *There is a significant relationship between the gender of the surveyed consumers and freshness is the influencing factor for buying organic products.*
2. The most affecting mindful element for customers' demeanor towards the organic products is Government drive for organic products.

### Methodological Tools Administered

The present research is survey research, empirical, descriptive, and quantitative (Kumar, 2002, Rao, 2008). It is survey research because the study took help of the primary data for collecting required data from the South Mumbai respondents. Analyst took help of essential and auxiliary information to reach at the goals of the consider. Primary data was gathered by using the force of Survey which was led in South Mumbai. A sample of 250 South Mumbai consumers targeted by convenience method. Primary data

analyzed with the help of percentage. The structured questionnaire was designed for collecting data, i.e. survey. This was collected from newspapers, research agencies, periodicals, magazines, Government publications and websites. In present review rate, frequencies, positioning strategy, chi-square test and weighted normal technique utilized for showing up at research goals and to evaluate speculation of the review.

### Factors Influencing for Organic Food Products Model

The present model covers a vital area of organic food products. It is evaluating the consumer attitude towards organic food in South Mumbai which will lead us to understand the attitude of South Mumbai consumers towards organic food in South Mumbai and potential for organic consumption in South Mumbai. A sample of 250 South Mumbai consumers targeted for collecting data. The present model will benefit from knowing the important factors which are responsible for the growth in the organic product market. Further, it will focus on consumers' attitude, psychology and tendency of producers, consumers, and government towards organic products. An analysis of consumers' preference towards the organic product will help in improving and adopting innovative marketing strategies. It will lend a hand to improve the performance and tackling the consumer's problems.

A recent trend towards organic food products will be helpful to the govt. for formulating new strategies and policies which will be beneficent to the consumers and producers. A model of judging consumers' attitude towards organic products will be thoughtful to producers and providers for developing their business. This model also will be accommodating researchers, teachers, scientists, practitioners' specialist professionals and educationalist for connecting with their individual exhibition. The present model is restricted to 250 South Mumbai respondents along with restricted objectives and methodology of the study.

### Empirical Results of Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 1 below presents the demographic profile of respondents for the sample of 250.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Items	Numbers	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	175	70
Female	75	30
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	142	58
Unmarried	104	42
<b>Education</b>		
Undergraduate	51	20
Graduate	63	25
Postgraduate	72	29
Diploma	64	26
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-28 years	46	18
29-39 years	64	26
40-49 years	76	30
50 years and above	64	26
<b>Annual Income</b>		
Less than 2 lakhs	41	16
2 lakhs - 3 lakhs	46	18
3 lakhs - 4 lakhs	48	19
4 lakhs - 5 lakhs	52	21
More than 5 lakhs	63	25

**Table 2***Use of Organic Products by Respondents for the Months/Years*

Months/Years	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 06 months	21	09
06 to 12 months	39	16
01 to 03 years	46	18
03 years to 06 years	63	25
06 years and above	81	32
Total	250	100

Table 2 reveals that 32% respondents for 06 years and above, 25% respondents used organic products for 03 to 06 years which were the maximum for study.

### *Analysis of the Hypothesis with Chi-square Method*

- 1)  $H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between the gender of the surveyed consumers and freshness as a factor influencing the purchase of organic products.

**Table 3***Statistic Subtle Elements with Variables of Respondents*

Statistic factors		Freshness			Total	Chi Square
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree		
Gender	Male	62	01	112	175	18.31
	Female	48	01	26	75	
	Total	110	02	138	250	

### *Interpreting the Results*

$$X^2 = 18.31$$

Degree of freedom in the problem  $(r-1) * (c-1) = 02$

The Table 3 value of  $X^2$  for 2 degrees of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is 5.991 Comparing calculated and table values of  $X^2$ , we find that calculated value is more than the table value. Thus, reject the ( $H_0$ ) null hypothesis, accepts alternate hypothesis and it can be concluded that “There is significant relationship between Gender of respondents of the consumers and freshness is the influencing factor for buying organic products”.

Why don't we explore another hypothesis using the positioning and weighted average technique?

- 2) Hypothesis 2: The most affecting mindful element for customers' demeanor towards the organic products is Government drive for organic products.

**Table 4**  
*Analyze the Ratings of The Respondents' Attributes*

Attributes/Purpose to prefer Organic Product	Rank (No. of Respondents)					Total Score	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5		
Nutritious and Environment Friendly	125	56	04	36	29	962	1
Availability of Products	51	55	01	69	74	690	5
Value for Money	112	51	05	45	37	906	2
Government Initiative	42	38	04	81	85	621	6
Freshness	96	42	02	52	58	816	4
Certification	107	48	03	38	54	866	3

Table 4 shows examination of positioning given by respondents regarding different variables answerable for purchasing natural items. By utilizing weighted normal strategy study found that nutritious and environment friendly, the value for money, certification and freshness are the main considerations affecting the respondent for organic products.

**Table 5**  
*Weighted Normal Technique for Positioning of Characteristics*

R A N K	W E I G H T	Nutritious and Environment Friendly		Availability of Products		Value for Money		Government Initiative		Freshness		Certification	
		X1	WX1	X2	WX2	X3	WX3	X4	WX4	X5	WX5	X6	WX6
1	5	125	625	51	255	112	560	42	210	96	480	107	535
2	4	56	224	55	220	51	204	38	152	42	168	48	192
3	3	04	12	01	03	05	15	04	12	02	06	03	09
4	2	36	72	69	138	45	90	81	162	52	104	38	76
5	1	29	29	74	74	37	37	85	85	58	58	54	54
<b>Total</b>		250	962	250	690	250	906	250	621	250	816	250	866
<b>CW</b>		3.85		2.76		3.62		2.48		3.26		3.46	
<b>Rank</b>		1		5		2		6		4		3	

$$CW \text{ - Calculated Weighted } = (\sum wxn / \sum xn)$$

Table 5 reveals the factors that most influence the consumers for purchasing organic products are nutritious and environment friendly. So, hypothesis - The most affecting mindful element for customers' demeanor towards the organic products is Government drive for organic products is rejected. The results of hypotheses testing are summarized in Table 6 below.

**Table 6**  
*Result of Hypotheses*

Hypotheses	Accepted/Rejected
There is significant relationship between the gender of the surveyed consumers and freshness is the influencing factor for buying organic products.	Accepted
The most affecting mindful element for customers' demeanor towards the organic products is Government drive for organic products.	Rejected

### Summary and Output of Statistical Analysis

The existing research faced 70% male candidate and 30% were female for the inspection. The marital status for the study was 58% of respondents married and 42% were unmarried for the study. In the educated respondent of the study, 26% diploma and 29% postgraduate respondents were the main interviewees in the study. The distinct age categories were selected for the research and 46 respondents fell into age categories of 18 to 28, 64 are from 29 to 39 years, 76 from 40 to 49 and 64 from 50 and above. 30% of respondents were from the age category of 40-49, which was the highest for the study. The study revealed that 41 respondents from less than 2 lakhs yearly income group, 46 from the group of 2 lakhs to 3 lakhs, 48 from the group of 3 lakhs to 4 lakhs, 52 from the group of 4 lakhs to 5 lakhs, 63 from the group of 5 lakhs and more. The study revealed 32% respondents used organic products for 06 years and above which were the maximum in the research. The weighted average method exposed that are nutritious and environment friendly, the value for money, certification and freshness are the noteworthy variables impacting the consumers for purchasing organic produce. With the help of the Chi-square Test, it is found that there is significant relationship between the gender of the surveyed consumers and freshness is the influencing factor for buying organic products. So, it is concluded that there are differences of opinion between men and women consumers regarding the purchase of organic products.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

Awareness and usage of organic products is increasing day by day among the public which is positive for the industry. The present study reveals that nutrition and environmental friendliness, the value for money and certification are major factors influencing South Mumbai consumers buying the organic product. Further study also reveals that the male married public age group of 40 to 49 years with higher qualification having annual income 5 lakhs and more giving preference to organic products. Due to COVID-19 pandemic people are more cautious about health and hygiene so they prefer to buy products which are nutritious, environmentally friendly and value for money. Consumer's psychology is to find the options for satisfying the need which is value for money. So, the statistics also show that consumption of organic products has increased.

Researchers should develop studies on organic products so that a variety of organic products will be available at economic prices. Professionals and practitioners should take the benefit of growth in organic products for the further development of the organic product and market by giving importance to health and safety food. Government should encourage the farmers for the cultivation of organic products by introducing special schemes and policies to organic food products, growers and consumers which will help to increase the cultivation of organic food products. Awareness of organic products is required among the South Mumbai consumers regarding the benefits of organic products because only specific classes of people are buying organic products. As well as gender should be targeted for the market segmentation. New marketing strategies should be used to convince the consumers of all segments.

The present study is limited to South Mumbai consumers which is the educated population. The study further can be extended to different parts of India along with a different variety of organic products

with development of the organic farm. Further, study can be extended to different factors of consumption or different and innovative marketing strategies for organic food products.

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