

Propelling Force for Predilection of Organic Food Products

R. S. Darranishree¹ and Dr. P. Praveen Kumar²

¹ Student, Saveetha School of Management,
Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences,
Chennai – 77, India

² Asst. Prof, Saveetha School of Management,
Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences,
Chennai – 77, India.

Abstract

Growing incidence in the occurrence of diseases has lead people to adopt healthy lifestyle. The food items consumed acts as a major role in the health of an individual which has resulted in the increased preference for organic food products. Organic farming is the method of cultivation of food products with the use of biological materials avoiding antibiotic synthetic pesticides, genetically modified organisms and synthetic fertilizers. This paper focuses on the health risk associated with the consumption of food produced by conventional means and also its detrimental effect on the environment. Conventional farming practice has resulted in pollution, global warming and reduction in soil fertility. In India, there is a lack of awareness about the risk associated with the conventional farming practices. Government should impart sufficient information, guidelines and programs in encouraging the organic farming and consumption of organic food products.

Key words: *organic food products, synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, farming practices, health risk.*

1. Introduction

Organic farming is the traditionally viable agricultural approach which restricts the use of synthetic inputs and the central thesis of organic farming approach (Narayanan, S. 2005) is sound soil management and outturn of rich nutrition food that restrains to diseases (Kumar, M.P. and Gulati, H. 2017) while the modern agriculture implicate the application of technology, notably the use of synthetic fertilizers and fungicide with the intention of being materialistic and fast production (Narayanan, S. 2005). The boundless use of chemical fertilizers and fungicide has resulted in ill

effect on the human health and environment includes reduction in the immune system, spurring of heart diseases, depression, cancer (Singh, A. and Verma, P. 2017) contamination of ground, water bodies etc (Kumar, S.AD. and Chandrashekar, H.M. 2015). On contrast organic food products are yielded without the utility of pesticides or chemical fertilizers thus endorse harmony among human health, nature and the other living organism (Kalyani, K. 2017). The significance of organic farming is growing in many countries. Australia has the largest area of organic farming followed by Argentina and Italy (Narayanan, S. 2005). The global organic food market sprouted up. In India, organic farming is not a contemporary concept whereas, deeply rooted and widely multiplied right from Indian civilisation (Kumar, M.P., and Gulati, H. 2017). High product prices, insufficiently integrated supply chain and certification barriers have dropped down the market demand in India. Moreover 70 percent organic products produced are being exported from India. With gradual increase in the global organic production, it is estimated to increase to \$102 billion by 2020. With consistent growth in India, it is estimated to reach 20 to 30% annually to boost the global market rate (Kalyani, K. 2017). In recent times, organic products are promoted as way of life rather than as a product (Chandrashekar, H.M. 2014). The inflation in demand of organic products is anticipated to grow in the decades to arrive thus showing huge potential growth of organic products in future (Mehra, S and Ratna, P.A. 2014).

2. Literature Review

Consumer buying behaviour is highly influenced by the belief, attitude and knowledge. The demand of manufactured product is increasing

with the improvement in standard of living, preference, life style and taste. People with the preference of taste, pleasure and egocentric values are feasible in buying the organic produce. There is no much awareness of organic product in towns and villages of India, on the other hand major cities of India have an acceptable point of availability as well as utility of organic produced goods. In order to enlarge organic food products market in urban and semi urban areas, the awareness about the intake of organic products are spread through advertising campaign or media. (Pandurangaro, D. et al. 2017)

Advancement in technology, improvement in life style and preference are intending to increase the yield of agricultural products which result in the emergence of green revolution. Green revolution uses abundant synthetic fertilizers, this led to challenge in the environmental sustainability. Government support and policy, knowledge about the product, anticipated belief and attitude are the driving forces for the consumer to opt for the organic produce. Knowledge and awareness about the product are the key vital factor that influences the customer attitude towards purchase of organic produce (Hossain, M.T.B. and Lim, P.X. 2016). India is having a considerable increase in the demand of organic products in the recent trend due to the readiness of customers to scale more for organic food produce. Consumers are becoming more conscious on environmental issues leading to utilization of eco-friendly products and services owing to less adversity on environment (Padmathy, J. and Saraswathy, R. 2016).

Sensory appeal of products, maintaining body weight and judicious consumption are some of the factors that have changed synthetic consumers as green consumers (Oroian, C.F. et al. 2017).

There are various kinds of farming natural farming, permaculture farming, organic farming, conventional farming and biological farming. Organic farming is gaining its momentum as harmonious practice after the development of quality food concept. Organic farming prevents chemical contamination, improved soil fertility, better quality of water, restrain soil erosion and minimum pollution. On the other hand, the conventional farming is associated with the boundless use of chemicals fertilizers, pesticides in order to increase the production but which in turn affect the ecology as well. The production of chemical fertilizer and pesticides are done using non renewable resources, this has huge impact on our energy resources. Organic farming is the best solution to overcome the ill effect of conventional farming (Narayanan, S. 2005).

Organic food market and products show a consistent gradual pattern of growth in Indian trade and families due to dominance in taste, quality, nutrition content and better environment. Inadequate presence of retailers, absence of certified brands, higher price and government policies favouring export has slowed down India to contribute 20-30 percent annually to the global growth rate in the long run. The virtue security of organic produce precisely influences the intensity of consumption, competence of market, advertisement message and selection of circulating medium pave way to the organic consumer. Another supreme reason for purchase of organic products is health concern of the children. Education influences buying behaviour of customers. Huge potent is anticipated for organic farming and products in decades to come (Abdin, S.Md. et al. 2016).

India is a country with numerous villages, most of their livelihood depends on agriculture but the awareness about organic foods has failed in many villages. The middle class people in India show much concern in their health with respect to the food they consume in the recent times. The awareness among the urban middle class and upper class Indian have made daily diet with organic pulses, cereals, dairy food and other items like confectionaries, beverages etc. While upper class people in India follows organic foods in their daily diet. This has directed huge growth of organic farming sector in India. The people in villages are also in desperate to use organic foods but the lack of knowledge and low level income has restrained their buying capacity of organic farm produced products (Kumar, M.P. and Gulati, H. 2017).

Lack of facility, limited availability, less organic produce, problem with conservation, lack of packing system, limited market and paucity of advertisements coined out to be the hefty reasons for withering of organic farming produce. Organic farming can take its roots with the adoption of proper aids in marketing strategy, improvement in infrastructure, facilities to pack, fee certification, training program to farmers, regulated government policy and support. India will see leap in organic farming by overcoming these barriers (Kumar, .S.AD. and Chandrashekar, H.M. 2015).

Demographic factors gender, educational qualification, age, household size and income influence the willingness of organic products consumption. Women show higher keenness towards the purchase of organic produce rather than men. In the present era, younger generation are aware of the sustainability and environmental threat but they fail to pay for it. While older people are just health conscious and they are ready to invest in their health with consumption of organic

food. Less educated people show lack of interest in purchasing organic foods while most of highly educated are green consumer (Mehra, S and Ratna, P.A. 2014).

3. Health Concerns

Health Consciousness attributes the willingness of a human to take on healthy action or concern about healthy diet and activities to keep healthier (Hossain, M.T.B. and Lim, P.X. 2016). Health concern is the mainspring which magnifies the constructive attitude approach to the organic product (Mehra, S and Ratna, P.A. 2014). Health issues are contemplated to be part of the diverse trends which have recently arose in the food market (Oroian, C.F. et al. 2017). With rise in burden of health related issues and food safety, plenty of consumers have moved towards the organic products (Chandrashekar, H.M. 2014). The main attribute of Consumer's preference is the nutritional contents (Hossain, M.T.B. and Lim, P.X. 2016) vitamins and minerals, food with low sugar and salt content which influence the mind of the buyers towards the organic food products (Mehra, S and Ratna, P.A. 2014). Natural products are involved in cultivation of organic food whereas the conventional food are produced using fertilizers and pesticides. Boundless use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides resulted in ill effect on the human health and environment causing various forms of diseases like reduction in the immune system, spurring of heart diseases, depression and cancer (Singh, A. and Verma, P. 2017) comparatively organic product is healthier and chemical free than conservative food products (Kumar, M.P. and Gulati, H. 2017). Ultimately, health consciousness has turned out to be the imperative driving force for the consumers including the restaurants and food chain to opt for organic products (Hossain, M.T.B. and Lim, P.X. 2016).

4. Environmental Welfare

Environmental concern is ascertained as the state of sensitivity to the surrounding environment that governs the decision of the consumer to purchase green products. At present environment is facing innumerable threats like soil, water and air pollution, ozone depletion and global warming issues. Hence consumers are given insight to alter their way of consumption (Hossain, M.T.B. and Lim, P.X. 2016). It is felt that the greatest threat to environmental sustainability is conventional method of farming (Narayanan, S. and Narayanan, S. 2005) as it involves the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticide leading to a contamination of ground water, sneaking suspicion of injurious health effect and variation in the

habitats of flora and fauna. Thus organic farming is placed as an outstanding solution. Basic morality in the organic farming is to reduce the ill effect of chemical farming. The primary facet of organic farming is elevating soil fertility, restraining the chemical use and synthetic components, protection of ecosystem, prohibiting problems related to stock densities and increased biodiversity (Hasen, B., Alroe, H.F. and Kristensen, E.S. 2001). Organic agriculture integrates innovation, tradition and science which in turn promote benefits to all human and living things. As a result, environmental concern is coined out to be one of the top most considerations among organic consumer's purchase behaviour (Pandurangaro, D. et al. 2017).

5. Price

The organic foods are affixed with high price rate due to its limited availability in the store which influences the consumer behaviour to buy organic products in the market (Tarkiainen, A. and Sundqvist, S. 2005). The organic product price is slightly greater than the conventional products while people have predominant perception that conventional product declines the health of human due to the use of hazardous chemicals. This turned out to be the key reason for the shift of consumer from conventional to organic product. The customers are satisfied to pay higher rates for organic products due to the perception that the organic food is healthier. In addition, parents prefer organic food in spite of it being 25 percent higher the conventional food (Paul, J. and Rana, J. 2012). Environmental friendly consumers have also shown eagerness to pay a higher value for green products due to concern about the mother earth thus they opted to consume less polluting products like organic produce which weigh against the synthetic produce (Padmathy, J. and Saraswathy, R. 2016). Products price not only endow with the indication of the intrinsic quality features of a product, but also in other hand it replicates the value of eminent inputs used in the production (Ankomah, S & Yiridoe, E. 2006). Green consumers asserted that the price paid for organic produce is the cost of investment made to healthy life owing to increase in the trade of organic produce. The concept of healthy life investment has elevated the consumer demand thus flourishing the organic produce industries. Though price is not an absolute obstruction but it has the control over decision making practice. Mindset of the educated buyers who intend to purchase organic products by spending huge sum of money as disposable profits and significance for capital and need to rationalize cost premium through other gains (Mehra, S and Ratna, P.A. 2014). Consumer education created the awareness to verify the environmental claims and

individual benefits while paying huge price rate for the products they consume. The retailers are placed in a situation to convince the buyers by providing ample information about the benefits like quality, taste and freshness (Paul, J. and Rana, J. 2012). Therefore it is inferred that these foods are more wholesome compared to conventional foods thus price is not consider as major barrier for the organic buyers (Hossain, M.T.B. and Lim, P.X. 2016).

6. Conclusion

Organic farming is superior to conventional farming with respect to individual wellbeing as well as environmental welfare. Health being characterized as an asset, organic farming proves to be better in nutritional value, also reduce the occurrence of diseases such as cancer, heart ailments, diabetics, etc. Conventional farming practice adds to the risk of environmental degradation and sustainability of soil and water. There is a pressing need for adopting eco-friendly alternate ways of farming to mitigate environmental impacts caused by synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides. There is an increase in the preference for organic food among educated people which has resulted in the gradual increase in this sector. Lack of awareness among rural population, limited distribution channels and growth of organic produce limited the availability of organic food products in the markets. Increased awareness, innovating market strategies, proper labelling and robust distribution channel will ensure the growth of organic food sector by replacing the conventional food products in the market. Though the price is on an upper scale compared to conventional food products it is not an absolute barrier as it reduces the future health complications of an individual and sustainability of the environment. Consumer should be educated with the benefits of organic food produce which in turn will increase the demand for it in the market. Government should provide incentive for farmers to adapt to organic farming methods and ensure proper returns at par with the conventional farming. In the long run, organic farming retains the soil fertility and control the contamination of water resources. Organic farming will witness huge potential of growth in the upcoming years by providing new avenues for primary sector leading to growth in the economy.

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