

CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS INTAKE AND PRESCRIPTION OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS FOR HEALTH SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The impact of our eating habits on health and the environment, as well as the consequences, is becoming more widely recognized. Individuals should learn to assess their daily consumption and actively participate in the process. The study's main goal is to determine consumer perception of organic food products. This study aims to fill knowledge vacuum by studying consumer perspectives on organic food products. The current study using both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The sample of 200 respondents provides an overview of consumer perceptions towards intake organic food products among youth girls. This research is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behavior towards organic food products. Furthermore, the insights gained from this study can inform policymakers, healthcare professionals, and industry stakeholders about effective ways to promote the adoption of organic food products for both individual health and broader sustainability goals.

Key Words: Consumer perception, Organic food, Sustainability, Intake prescription, Food consumption.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organic food products have become increasingly popular in recent years as consumers seek healthier, more sustainable alternatives to conventionally produced foods. "Organic" refers to a specific method of farming and food production that avoids the use of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and other artificial additives. Instead, organic farming relies on natural processes, crop rotations, and environmentally friendly practices to cultivate and produce food. Organic farmers prioritize the use of compost, natural fertilizers, and crop rotation to enhance soil fertility and reduce environmental impact. Livestock raised for organic meat, dairy, and eggs are typically provided with access to outdoor spaces and fed organic feed, without the use of growth hormones or antibiotics. Consumers are drawn to organic food products for various reasons, including concerns about potential health risks associated with pesticide residues, a desire to support sustainable and ethical agricultural practices, and the belief that organic foods may offer better nutritional value. Additionally, the organic food movement aligns with broader environmental and social consciousness, fostering a sense of responsibility

towards the planet and future generations. The Indian government has created a number of programmes to promote organic farming. These programmes benefit farmers, producers, and consumers alike. (Altarawneh, M. 2013). As per the Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce & Industries, Government of India "India produced around 2.9 Mn MT (2022-2023) of certified organic products, which includes all varieties of food products namely oil, seeds, fiber, sugar cane, cereals, and Millets. To sustain and accelerate the growth of the organic Food sector in India, the government of India has taken several initiatives. The Government of India introduced schemes such as the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), the National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), the National Food Security Mission (NFSM), the National Horticulture Mission (NHM), and the Horticulture Mission for the North East and Himalayan States, all of which in India. In general, Green or organic foods are safe, high-quality, humanely treated, nutritious, and produced in accordance with sustainable development principles. (Liu, 2003) A green consumer is someone who is aware of and interested in environmental issues. They believe that all products and services have an impact on the environment and aim to minimize damage. They are willing to change their purchasing habits and pay more for environmentally friendly products. (Soonthonsmai, 2007)

Environmental sustainability indicators, such as natural resource use, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions, are commonly used to evaluate sustainability. The supply chain, including agricultural production, food processing and packaging, transportation, and consumption, consumes natural resources and emits greenhouse gases. (Bradbeer and Friel, 2011). Understanding consumer perceptions of "sustainability" in the food supply chain is crucial for transitioning to a more sustainable food system. These insights are crucial for improving quantitative consumer research on sustainability, taking into account consumer perspectives. These insights can help policymakers create guidelines and recommendations that reflect consumer understanding of food sustainability (Feldmann 2015).

1.1 Organic food products and its Advantages

The organic food industry in India is in its early stages of development. Increased disposable income and health awareness have led to an increase in domestic demand for organic food. There is a significant premium in selling organic Products are sold to both export markets and affluent domestic consumers who value health. India has a large labor force and diverse agro climatic regions that are ideal for year-round agriculture. It maintains traditional agricultural practices. India can leverage its comparative advantage to promote sustainable agriculture and increase income for small and marginal farmers. Small and marginal farmers recognize the potential for higher net incomes through organic agriculture, despite low yields. (Wilkins & Hillers 1994)

India's market for organic food products is rapidly growing. The growing concern for health among middle-class consumers in major Indian cities has fueled the growth of the organic food market. Organic food is produced

naturally without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, as opposed to conventional food that uses them. Organic food products are free of chemicals and healthier than conventional ones. (Pradeep Kumar 2017). Organic food is becoming increasingly popular among higher-income groups due to its health benefits. The main reasons for people to switch over to organic food is i) It is cultivated manually, ii) Use of natural resource, iii) Free from pesticides and chemical residue, iv) high nutritional value and so on. Therefore, organic food gets good market potential all over the world. The main advantages of organic food while compared to conventional food, including being environmentally friendly, relying solely on natural resources, avoiding the use of chemicals, fertilizers, and pesticides, being healthier, and offering the best alternative. Organic food is increasingly popular in modern society. (Hema Gulati 2017).

1.1.2 Benefits of Organic Food

- No chemical in your daily diet: Pesticides are chemicals designed to kill living organisms and destructive for people. Organic Natural cultivating makes beyond any doubt you have no chemicals in your every day diet.
- Tastes Greater: Well- balanced soil grows healthy crops with appropriate supplementation levels. Thus, they taste great and are more nutritious.
- Reduce Health Risks: Investigate has connected linked many approved pesticides to cancer and other illnesses. Natural horticulture is the only way to prevent them from entering our bodies, reducing health risks.
- Help the small farmers: Organic farming can be a help for small farmers because it offers an elective advertise where he can get a reasonable price.

1.2 Current Scenario Of Organic Food Products

1.2.1 At Global Level

Organic agriculture is developing rapidly and today 178 countries of the world to produce organic food products. Due to increasing health awareness and concerns regarding the environmental pollution and conservation, the demand of organic food products is high in North America and European Countries. The global organic food market size was valued at USD 178.4 billion in 2021 and is expected to be worth around USD 497.3 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.06% during the forecast period 2022 to 2030. Likewise, organic livestock products are also becoming a major commodity of global organic food market. It consists of organically produced dairy products, meat, eggs and some other products. Health concerns, environmental and sustainability issues are the main reasons for emergence of the organic farming (Panday, 2012).

Organic farming is a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro ecosystem 'health' including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil's biological activity. Synthetic inputs like chemicals, drugs, antibiotics, and feed additives should be avoided as much as possible in organic livestock farming (Chander et al., 2010). As per the available statistics, India's rank 6th in terms of world's organic agricultural land and 1st in terms of total number of producers as per 2021 data (FiBL and IFOAM, 2023). The APEDA, Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Government of India is implementing the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP). The programme involves accreditation of certification bodies, standards for organic production, promotion of organic farming and marketing etc. As on 31st March, 2023 total area under organic certification process (registered under National Programme for Organic Production) is 10.17 million hectares (2022-23). (Subrahmanyeswari, 2007)

1.2.2 At India Level

India has a total agricultural land of 143 million hectares, out of which only total area under organic certification process (registered under National Programme for organic Production) is 10.17 mha (2022-23). This includes 5391792.97 ha cultivable area and another 4780130.56 ha for wild harvest collection. Among all the states Madhya Pradesh, has covered largest area under organic certification followed by Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, odisha, Karnataka, Sikkim, Jharkhand. India produced around 2.9 million MT (2022-23) of certified organic products which includes all varieties of food products namely oil, seeds, fibre, cereals, & millets, processed food etc. The production is not limited to the edible sector but also produces organic cotton fiber, food products etc. (FIBL & IFOAM Year Book, 2023)

1.2.3 At State Level

The Organic Food Market is in a growing stage in Tamil Nadu. The consumers are well aware of their health. They believe that organic food is safe, high quality, and free of chemicals. Because, the usage of chemicals in conventional farming has resulted in reduced soil fertility and improper balance of nutrients in the food product. Excess use of chemicals has deteriorated soil and its water holding capacity and infiltration. The farmers who realize the consequences of chemical farming, has to choose the best alternative which is organic farming practices. The organic farming is getting wide attention in Tamil Nadu among the farmers for varied reasons not only to minimize the external input cost for cultivation but also to safeguard the quality of resources and the environment. This is the movement in favour of organic farming in TN. The organic farming potential is providing livelihood to farmers and creates employment opportunities for rural and urban people. The present government also encourages organic farming through providing initiative programmes and schemes like PKVY (Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana).

State wise Organic Farm Production for the year 2022-23

S.NO.	State Name	Organic Production (In MT)	Conversion Production(In MT)	Total Production (MT)
1	Madhya Pradesh	738,201.84	87,424.57	825,626.41
2	Maharashtra	724,946.90	65,380.40	790,327.30
3	Rajasthan	311,170.77	11,802.18	322,972.95
4	Karnataka	237,090.18	1.25	237,091.43
5	Uttar Pradesh	215,506.50	2,013.01	217,519.51
6	Gujarat	89,978.28	49,750.40	139,728.68
7	Odisha	64,976.16	65,100.84	130,077.00
8	Jammu & Kashmir	50,230.38	0.00	50,230.38
9	Uttarakhand	43,954.51	0.00	43,954.51
10	Kerala	42,729.09	5.16	42,734.25
11	Tamil Nadu	24,964.04	109	25,073.04
12	Andhra Pradesh	24,190.25	0.00	24,190.25
13	Bihar	19,853.89	0.00	19,853.89
14	Chhattisgarh	17,703.47	0.00	17,703.47
15	West Bengal	15,409.18	0.00	15,409.18
16	Assam	14,497.86	0.00	14,497.86
17	Meghalaya	9,919.69	0.00	9,919.69
18	Himachal Pradesh	6,978.06	0.00	6,978.06
19	Punjab	482.98	5,940.72	6,423.70
20	Jharkhand	4,363.09	0.00	4,363.09
21	Haryana	2,679.58	0.00	2,679.58
22	Goa	2,488.52	70.14	2,558.66
23	Telangana	837.64	433.05	1,270.69

24	Arunachal Pradesh	793.00	0.00	793.00
25	Tripura	332.78	216.04	548.81
26	Mizoram	334.00	0.00	334.00
27	Sikkim	51.90	0.00	51.90
28	Manipur	11.00	0.00	11.00
29	Pondicherry	4.00	0.00	4.00
Total		2664679.54	288246.75	2952926.29

(Source: The information provided by the certification bodies accredited under NPOP on Tracenet)

1.3 Sustainability Performance Of Organic Food Systems At Different Levels

The above description of various levels of sustainability demonstrates that fundamentally different aspects are frequently considered and different perspectives are taken in a sustainability assessment. Organic agriculture's sustainability performance requires careful consideration due to regional and product-specific differences between organic and conventional systems.

- **Operator Level:** From an operator level, Environmental assessments show that organic farming has lower environmental impacts, including biodiversity, resource depletion, climate change, pollution, air quality, and soil fertility. The performance of organics in subsequent supply chain stages (transport, processing, and retailing) varies depending on the operator or supply chain. Organic agriculture's economic performance is often interpreted differently, and there is currently no standardized assessment method. For example, economic performance could be interpreted from an operator's goal to have a profitable and economically resilient business, but also from a societal perspective in the sense of what the operator contributes to societal goals (Schader et al., 2014).
- **Product Level:** The product's environmental performance differs significantly from the operator's. The main reason for this difference is the relationship between performance and a functional unit, which is typically related to production quantity. (Ramankutty and Foley, 2012)
- **Policy Level:** At the policy level, more general research questions can be addressed, as changes in demand patterns can be considered in addition to production-related aspects. (Schader et al., 2014)

1.3.1 Policy Strategies

- Organic farming promotes mixed farming because the components are interdependent. Integrated organic farming and season-based cropping systems will gain popularity and diversification.
- To achieve soil fertility and productivity, crop rotation with pulses will be emphasized through mixed, multi-, and intercropping systems.

- Adoption of mixed, multi-tier and intercropping systems, crop rotation with pulses will be emphasized to obtain sustainability of soil fertility and productivity.
- Farmers will receive support for practicing organic farming, including incentives for eco-friendly practices and traditional seeds. Organic farmers will receive subsidized bio-fertilizers and inputs.

1.3.2 Sustainability Development and organic Farming

Agriculture plays a crucial role in sustainable development over time. Small-scale farmers in poor countries must be included in the transformation of agrifood systems to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. (FAO, 2018). The first Green Revolution arose in response to the growing number of undernourished and malnourished people, allowing agricultural technologies such as pesticides and fertilizers to spread to developing countries. Early sustainable farming methods were implemented during this time, though they may not have been fully utilized. (Pingali, 2012). According to United Nations Sustainable Development policies, numerous member states and other organizations have backed the Zero Hunger Challenge, which has been documented as it calls for (Food et al., 2012).

1.3.3 Sustainability of Organic Food

- **Soil Health:** Organic farming practices prioritize soil health through the use of compost, cover cropping, and crop rotation. These techniques enhance soil fertility, structure, and water retention, promoting long-term sustainability.
- **Water conservation:** Organic farming typically involves more efficient water management practices, such as drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting. This helps reduce water usage and preserves this critical resource.
- **Biodiversity Preservation:** Organic farms often support greater biodiversity by avoiding synthetic chemicals that can harm beneficial insects, birds, and soil microorganisms. This can contribute to ecosystem balance and resilience.
- **Reduced Environmental Impact:** It aims to minimize environmental impact by eschewing synthetic chemicals and promoting sustainable practices. This can lead to lower pollution, improved air and water quality, and a smaller carbon footprint compared to conventional agriculture.
- **Climate change Mitigation:** Some organic farming practices, such as agro forestry and carbon sequestration, can contribute to mitigating climate change by capturing and storing carbon in the soil and vegetation.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chakraborty & Dash, (2023) Consumers are increasingly interested in eco-friendly products, such as natural food. Minimally processed foods are preferred over chemical-based products due to environmental concerns, as they lack artificial components and additives. Customers are increasingly seeking natural food options to reduce their carbon footprint and avoid chemicals in production. Pattarasuda et al., (2022) as concerns about climate change and environmental degradation grow, the food industry must adopt sustainable practices to ensure its long-term viability and meet future generations' needs. Embracing sustainability in the food industry can provide significant economic benefits, such as reducing waste, minimizing resource depletion, and improving the bottom line for businesses. With increasing global population, decreased farmland, and climate change, ensuring adequate food supply to maintain food security is of immediate concern.

Lin & Nayha Jr., (2022). Faced with a growing need to address environmental issues more urgently, developing communication that encourages sustainable behaviors can potentially enhance social well-being. Ayub, et al., (2018) examined the research on "youth girls' consumers' perception of organic food products" and identified three independent variables: health consciousness, environmental consciousness, and social influence. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the factors that influence youth girls' consumers' purchase perception of organic food products. Poore & Nemecek (2018). This study explores the environmental aspects of food production, including greenhouse gas emissions, water usage, and land use. Life cycle assessments and environmental impact studies are conducted to understand the overall sustainability of different food products. Teresa Briz (2016) food products have seen remarkable industry growth. Despite strict adherence to production practices and increased availability, many consumers remain unaware of organically produced alternatives. Awareness of organics does not necessarily lead to consumption. Increasing awareness and understanding the relationship between awareness and purchasing organics is critical to influencing demand for organically grown products.

Panzone et al. (2016) Research indicates that consumer attitudes towards environmentally friendly products differ depending on the food category. Implicit attitudes, which consumers use to evaluate products quickly, are not always associated with sustainable consumption. Conversely, explicit attitudes, which stem from a deliberate cognitive process, are more likely to predict sustainable food consumption. Mukul et al. (2013) Consumer perceptions of organic food are influenced by five factors: food safety, price, environmental friendliness, nutrition, and sensory qualities. Health and environmental concerns have led to shifting food consumption patterns. Organic food is becoming increasingly popular globally. Sharma & Bali (2014) Organic food is widely recognized as beneficial to health, as it is free of chemicals and has no negative effects on consumers. Consumers in urban areas are more aware of organic food products. Consumers believe that eating organic food reduces stress and promotes an active lifestyle. Verain, & Sijtsema, (2012) this study investigates the impact of product attributes and personal values on consumers'

intentions to purchase sustainable food products. It sheds light on the factors driving green consumerism. Chiciudean et al, (2012) People consume this type of food for various reasons, including animal welfare and environmental friendliness. Gender and age are factors that influence consumer behavior. Organic food is primarily valued for its taste and quality. Women are influenced by price and the trendy concept of being "organic."

Johnson & Folke (2007) studies have investigated consumers' awareness and knowledge regarding sustainable food production methods. This includes understanding terms such as organic, local, and fair trade. Research often highlights the positive correlation between consumer knowledge and the likelihood of making sustainable food choices. Clapp & Fuchs (2009). Studies explore the role of policies and governance structures in promoting sustainable food systems. This includes analyzing the effectiveness of government regulations and incentives in encouraging sustainable practices among food producers. Verbeke, W. (2006) this study explore that the gap between consumer attitudes and actual behavioral intentions related to sustainable food consumption, addressing a key issue in consumer behavior. Recognize that while consumers may have favorable views on sustainable practices in the food industry, various factors can influence the gap between attitude and behavior. These factors may include external influences, such as marketing strategies, pricing, and product availability, as well as internal factors like personal values, habits, and perceived barriers to sustainable choices.

Lockie et al, (2004) Consumers who are concerned about natural foods, the sensory and emotional appeal of food and more likely to engage in green consumption practices are more likely to have greater consumption of organic food Women were identified to have higher health consciousness and were seen as innovators for change towards healthier diets with their important roles in shaping a family diet.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the level of awareness among consumers regarding organic food products and their health benefits.
- To analyze the factors influencing the health sustainability with organic food products.
- To understand the level of prescription made by customers for organic food products.

4. RESEARCH GAP

From analysis of the previous studies, it is clearly observed that the studies were majorly focused on organic food products but only few studies have focused on the intake factors and elements influencing the prescription of organic food products for people consumption. Keeping this in mind, the present study is intended to analyze the "consumer perceptions towards intake and prescription of organic food products for health sustainability."

5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₁- There is no difference between location and perception on intake of organic food products.

H₂- There is no difference between age and perception of health sustainability of organic foods.

H₃- There is no difference between education qualification and perception regarding prescription organic food products.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on literature and data survey on youth girls are intake organic food products. The survey was used gather information on the demographic factors of organic food products among youth girls. These include age, education status, location, and food habits.

6.1 Sources of Data

6.1.1 Primary data:

The data was collected from primary sources using questionnaire. This study based on the primary data collected through well framed and structured questionnaire. Convenient Sampling method is used to collect the responses from the customers.

6.1.2 Secondary data:

The source of secondary data for the purpose of the study is collected from various websites, books and journals, internet, journal thesis, and newspaper & magazines.

6.1.3 Sampling Plan

Consumer Perceptions towards intake and prescription of organic food products for health sustainability is studied by using Convenience Sampling Method. Structured questionnaire was considered to be best suited for study. The study is empirical in nature as it is based on data personally gathered with help of questionnaire. Questionnaire has been tested in advance before circulating it to the field for collection of relevant data.

- Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling Method
- Sample Size = 200 Respondents

7. STATISTICAL TOOL FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The primary data is analyzed on the basis of certain standardized statistical tests which included percentage analysis, Chi square and Correlation through Ms- Excel & SPSS.

8. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Data analysis means put the data in full meaningful tables that is tabulation of data so as to make it convenient enough to analyze and draw results. Data obtained from 200 consumers entered into tables and cross tabulation had done for further analysis.

8.1 Demographic Profile

Table No: 1.1 Demographic Profile of the respondents

Demographic	Category	Frequency (N = 200)	Percentage
Age	15- 18 years	94	47%
	18-20 years	76	38%
	20-25 years	30	15%
Educational Qualification	Under graduate	106	53%
	Post graduate	94	47%
Number of family members	1	24	12%
	2	79	39.5%
	3	74	37%
	Above 3	23	11.5%
Awareness of OFP	Yes	179	89.5%
	No	21	10.5%
Food Habits	Only Vegetarian	57	28.5%
	Both Veg & Non Vegetarian	143	71.5%
Location	Urban	45	22.5%
	Semi Urban	73	36.5
	Rural	82	41%

Source: Primary data

8.2 Chi- square Test

Table: 1.2 Association between Location and Problems towards low consumption level of organic food.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.361 ^a	8	.968

The above table 1.2 explores the association between the locations and problems towards low consumption level of organic food. The chi- square test yielded a Pearson Chi-Square value of 2.361, resulting in an asymptotic significance of 0.968 ($p > 0.05$). This indicates a statistically significant association between location and problems of low consumption level of organic food. Therefore, there is evidence to suggest that the location and problems of low consumption level of organic food.

Table: 1.3 Association between food habits and problems towards low consumption level of organic food

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.385 ^a	4	.023

The above table 1.3 explores the association between the food habits and problems towards low consumption level of organic food. The chi- square test yielded a Pearson Chi-Square value of 2.361, resulting in an asymptotic significance of 11.385 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a statistically significant association between food habits and problems of low consumption level of organic food. Therefore, there is evidence to suggest that the location and problems of low consumption level of organic food.

8. 3 Correlation

Table1. 4 Health Factors and Naturals & Sustainable consumption

Correlations							
		Age group	High Nutrition Value	Rich in Vitamins and Minerals	Rich in Proteins	Natural Ingredients	Doctors Recommendation
Age group	PC	1	.091	.070	.122	.021	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.206	.333	.088	.769	.995
	N	195	195	195	195	195	195
High Nutrition Value	PC	.091	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.206					
	N	195	200				
Rich in Vitamins and Minerals	PC	.070	-.131	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.333	.064				
	N	195	200	200			
Rich in Proteins	PC	.122	-.019	-.008	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.088	.791	.907			
	N	195	200	200	200		
Natural Ingredients	PC	.021	-.064	.112	-.019	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.769	.370	.116	.793		
	N	195	200	200	200	200	
Doctors Recommendation	PC	.000	-.034	-.084	-.021	-.016	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.995	.631	.235	.772	.827	
	N	195	200	200	200	200	200

Tables 1.4 illustrate between the correlations analyses between Health factors and naturals and sustainable consumption. It is to be noted that the correlation among the variables of health factors is significant and positive. The estimate p value is less than 0.05, which shows the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between Health factors and naturals and sustainable consumption.

Source: Primary data

Table 1.5 Awareness and Naturals & Sustainable consumption

Correlations							
		Awareness about Organic food products	No artificial ingredients	No artificial color and flavors	No traces of pesticides and fertilizers	No GMO products	No chemical
Awareness about Organic food products	PC	1	.056	-.043	.081	-.003	-.051
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.434	.549	.256	.968	.474
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200
No artificial ingredients	PC	.056	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.434					
	N	200	200				
No artificial color and flavors	PC	-.043	.076	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.549	.287				
	N	200	200	200			
No traces of pesticides and fertilizers	PC	.081	-.105	-.332**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.256	.137	.000			
	N	200	200	200	200		
No GMO products	PC	-.003	.036	.042	-.040	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.968	.615	.553	.575		
	N	200	200	200	200	200	
No chemical	PC	-.051	-.045	-.006	.096	.043	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.474	.527	.935	.178	.548	
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

Tables 1.4 illustrate between the correlations analyses between awareness and naturals and sustainable consumption. It is to be noted that the correlation among the variables of awareness is significant and positive. The estimate p value is less than 0.05, which shows the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between awareness and naturals and sustainable consumption.

10. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study it is discovered that 31.5% are male, and 68.5% are female respondents. Considering the age, most of the respondents in the group of 15-18 years compared to every other age group. Educational qualification of the respondents under the survey suggests that, majority of them 86% are under Higher secondary school. Majority of the respondents are preferred both Veg & Non vegetarian 71.5 %. Most of the respondents 89.5 % are aware of

organic food Products. Majority of the respondents 41% are rural background. Location and problems of low consumption level of organic food are associated significantly.

- In health factor point of view, high nutritional value 42.2%, rich vitamins and minerals 23.5%, rich in proteins 23%, natural ingredients 20.6% to highly influence respondents to purchaser to option for the organic food products and the variable of doctor recommendation 28 % seems to have less influence on the purchase of the organic food products. However, Health factor is highly influencing the respondents to purchase organic food products.
- Natural and Sustainable Consumption point of view, no artificial ingredients 26%, no artificial color and flavors 36 %, no traces of pesticides and fertilizers 16.3%, no chemicals 20.5%, to have higher influence category on the minds of the consumers which is revealed by the opinion of the consumers. The variable of GMO products 32.6% tends to have low the purchase of the organic food products. The overall opinion of respondents is that the Natural and Sustainable Consumption factor is highly influencing the respondents to purchase organic food products.
- People are unaware of product information on organic food labels. The consumers of organic food products are buying a product on the basis of trust. The awareness should be the first element of the purchase process, so marketers need to focus on the consumer awareness and take necessary steps to increase the confidence level of the people about the organic food products and prove the reliability of the product information on organic food products.
- The source of knowledge of organic food products tend to be predominantly from friends and relatives of the customers, the trend has to be changed with aggressive advertisement campaigns from the marketing aspect in-order to reach wide customer base and attract new customers towards the organic food products.
- The study also found that the numbers of organic food shops are very less. Because the organic food products are not available in all the shops, it is only available in selected exclusive organic food shops. This results in very low consumption of organic food products. So, the marketers must try to establish more number of organic food shops and render the availability of products to the consumers especially in the study area.
- The attitude of the respondents towards preferring organic food products is obtained through different dimensions namely reason for purchase knowledge about organic food products, reason for purchase and switch over from conventional food products to organic food products, purchase decision, types of products, duration usages, frequency of purchase. The majority of the respondents are well known about organic food products through friends and relatives reference followed by self- knowledge 46%, farmers 17.5%, advertisement in TV/ Radio 24.2%, specialist doctors and environmentalist 12.3%, and there is no knowledge about the awareness programs.

- The study also found the preference for consumption regularly is obtained from respondents. A maximum of preferred pulses 44.2%, preferred cereals and the others such as rice 34%, Millets 11.5%, Jaggery and sugar 12.5% preferred in regular basis.
- The majority of 62.6% of respondents are aware and 37.4% are highly aware on organic products because those products are not contaminated with chemical pesticides, not use of preservatives, artificial color etc.
- A maximum of 43% of respondents are not aware and 57% are highly aware about the organic food products brands which is available in the market.

Further, the study revealed that majority of consumers buy organic food once in four week, it indicates that respondents' buying frequency is quite low and do not buy organic food on regular basis. The demand for organic food has been increasing in recent years and majority of respondents started buying organic food during the period of 2022-2023. Due to increase in health awareness, change in lifestyle & food habits, concern regarding environmental issues, and increase in awareness of organic food motivated people to consume organic food products. Herbs & Spices, pulses, fruits and vegetables are the most frequently buying product categories in organic food. The consumers want to buy all categories of organic food in future but there is a huge gap between supply and demand of organic food products in market.

11. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous literature regarding organic food products. Current study provides intake factors and elements influencing the prescription of organic food products for people consumption. The perceptions of consumers regarding organic food are both positive and negative. On positive side the consumers strongly believe that organically grown food are healthier than conventional food, safe and free from synthetic fertilizers. On the other hand, negative perception that these products are perceived as rather expensive and difficult to access.

- Most people are aware of the health benefits of organic foods, but few include them in their daily diet. It is the responsibility of the marketers to use best source of information suggested by this study such as through internet, print media and through specialized organic stores to influence the perception of customers.
- The government should take steps for increasing the trust level for buying organic food products through strengthening of certification procedures for farmers as well as the retailers, in order to avoid the fake products into the market and provide true certification for the perfect organic food product.
- It is the duty of retailers who can create and develop knowledge and awareness among the consumers therefore every retailer should maintain a separate shelf for organic food products. In order to make the organic consumption more convenient to the customer, the retailers and government should take

necessary steps to increase the number of organic outlets and increase the regular supply of organic food products.

- Consumers worldwide are shifting their food consumption habits due to growing health concerns, environmental protection, and awareness of pesticides used in production. Nowadays, consumers are more concerned about the food they eat and wish to have more nutritious food that is produced without using chemicals. As a result of this, consumers have recently begun to seek out organic foods.
- Farmers can increase revenue and availability by focusing on organic cultivation and direct marketing to local markets. Farmers should take the initiative to convert their farmland into organic fields now, which will increase cultivable land in the near future. To achieve economies of scale, they should try to produce a wider range of products in larger quantities.
- The study found that there are few organic food shops. Because organic food products are not available in all stores, they are only available in a few select organic food shops. This leads to a very low consumption of organic food products. As a result, marketers must work to increase the number of organic food shops and make products more accessible to consumers.
- The Government and marketers should raise awareness about the benefits of organic food products on social media. Increase consumer awareness of organic food products by implementing training and demonstration programmes. To increase the market potential of the organic food industry all that is required is to educate consumers.

12. CONCLUSION

Today's consumer lifestyle are dynamic and ever- changing. High organic food consumption is associated with significant nutritional and environmental benefits. The low consumption of animal-based foods contributed to the latter, while the production system led to higher dietary costs and lower pesticide exposure. To encourage higher intention to buy more organic foods, related institution should promote and support consumers to know organic foods in local origin, animal welfare and environment attribute undoubtedly. For future research, we recommend that researchers focus on the purchasing habits of young girls consume the organic foods. This is to develop a sustainable strategic management to expand the organic market by increasing customer demand, increasing producer productivity, and reducing chemical use during production for the benefit of society, the environment, and the economy.

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