

An Investigation into the Rising Interest in Organic Products among the Population of Mumbai

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Abstract: *Organic food refers to all the ingredients and various commodities that are produced and processes without or with minimal aid of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides as well as anti-biotics in animal husbandry. Instead, organic farming relies on natural fertilizers or manures that gives utmost importance not only to soil health, animal welfare but also helps in maintaining the biodiversity of our planet. In recent times Organic Food has been able to gain popularity owing to its health benefits as well as the intentions of the consumer to save and preserve mother Earth making valuable food choices. Organic food is often associated with higher nutritional value, reduced exposure to chemical residues, and a lower environmental impact. With the desire to support the sustainable agricultural practices, many consumers buy organic commodities and lead a healthier lifestyle.*

Keywords: Organic foods, increasing demands, Health benefits, environmentally friendly

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture, considered the backbone of India's economy, meets the essential requirements of its growing population. Despite its potential to meet the needs of the increasing population, agriculture encounters various challenges, such as land fragmentation, low productivity, and the conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. It's undeniable that India witnessed a significant surge in agricultural production during the era of the Green Revolution. The primary driving factors behind this increased productivity were the technologies introduced during the Green Revolution, supported by policies and further propelled by agrochemicals, mechanization, and irrigation. However, one notable drawback was that farmers adopting these technologies still had to heavily rely on purchased inputs.

Over the past four decades, modern agricultural practices have disrupted the natural ecosystem balance and soil health due to the improper use of chemical inputs. Consequences of the inappropriate chemical use include soil erosion, declining groundwater levels, soil salinization, pollution from fertilizers and pesticides, genetic erosion, adverse environmental impacts, compromised food quality, and heightened production costs. Consequently, many farmers no longer view agriculture as a viable option, and those who persist often face economic hardships or even resort to suicide in the face of natural disasters compounding their woes.

The exorbitant cost of imported factory-made inputs and delayed government investment withdrawal further worsen the issue. Inappropriate chemical use has led to the deterioration of the natural ecosystem balance and soil health over the past four decades, resulting in soil erosion, reduced groundwater levels, soil salinization, pollution from fertilizers and pesticides, genetic erosion, adverse environmental impacts, poor food quality, and increased production expenses. As a result, agriculture is no longer seen as a sustainable livelihood by many farmers, and those who continue to engage in it face heightened risks, especially in the event of natural disasters.

Organic farming is an environmentally sustainable agricultural system that employs ecologically friendly methods for pest control and utilizes biological fertilizers primarily derived from animal and plant waste, along with nitrogen-fixing cover crops. The development of modern organic farming stemmed from a response to the environmental damage caused by the widespread use of chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilizers in conventional agriculture, offering a range of ecological advantages.

In comparison to conventional agriculture, organic farming relies less on pesticides, mitigates soil erosion, reduces nitrate leaching into both groundwater and surface water, and promotes the recycling of animal waste within the farm.

(Dabas, 2020)

Organic farming is a production approach that actively avoids or significantly limits the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, genetically modified organisms, and additives in livestock feed. Instead, organic farming

systems emphasize practices like crop rotations, utilizing crop residues, incorporating animal manure, employing legumes, adopting green manures, managing off-farm organic waste, utilizing biofertilizers, relying on mechanical cultivation, using mineral-rich rocks, and embracing elements of biological control. These methods are employed to maintain soil productivity, enhance soil structure, provide essential plant nutrients, and manage pests such as insects and weeds in a sustainable manner.

Organic practices have the potential to boost farm productivity, rectify environmental damage that has accumulated over decades, and connect small farm families to more sustainable distribution networks, ultimately enhancing food security if they collaborate in production, certification, and marketing. In recent years, a growing number of farmers have lost interest in traditional farming, and those who once cultivated the land are migrating to other areas. Organic farming offers a means to promote self-sufficiency and food security. The heavy reliance on chemical fertilizers and toxic pesticides has a detrimental impact on the land and water resources, leading to severe environmental repercussions, including topsoil depletion, reduced soil fertility, contamination of surface and groundwater, and a loss of genetic diversity.

Organic farming, as a holistic production management system that promotes and enhances the health of agro-ecosystems, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity, is of paramount importance. Numerous studies have demonstrated that organic farming methods can yield even higher crop yields than conventional methods. Notable improvements in soil health indicators, such as increased nitrogen mineralization potential, microbial abundance, and diversity, are observed in organic farms. These improved soil health conditions also result in significantly reduced instances of insect infestation and disease. Emphasizing small-scale, integrated farming systems has the potential to revitalize rural areas and their economies.

Benefits of Organic Cuisine:

- It contributes to environmental well-being by lowering pollution levels.
- It mitigates health risks for both humans and animals by reducing product residues.
- It sustains agricultural production at a viable level.
- It cuts down on agricultural production costs and enhances soil quality.
- It ensures the efficient use of natural resources, balancing short-term benefits with long-term conservation.
- It conserves energy for both livestock and machinery, minimizing the risk of crop failures.
- It enhances soil physical attributes, including granulation, soil structure, aeration, root penetration, water retention, and erosion prevention.
- It optimizes soil chemical properties, regulating nutrient supply and retention, curbing nutrient loss into water bodies and the environment, and fostering beneficial chemical reactions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

(N. RAVISANKAR, 2021)

The organic movement, originating in grassroots efforts from the 1950s, is gaining global traction as a sustainable alternative to chemical-intensive agriculture. Currently, 187 countries are involved in organic farming, with 72.3 million hectares dedicated to it. India, contributing 43.8% of global organic farmers, seeks to expand its 4.7% share in the global organic farming area through technology development.

Integrated organic farming systems are boosting productivity, offering returns ranging from ₹171,867 to ₹433,490 per hectare in different regions. Organic farming follows a holistic "one health" approach, benefiting soil, plants, animals, humans, and the environment while enhancing ecosystem services and promoting clean, sustainable food production with minimal pollution. It is particularly suitable for small and marginal farmers, ensuring livelihoods, food security, and risk mitigation. Collaboration among research institutions, development organizations, farmers, input suppliers, and processors is essential for further organic farming adoption. The article focuses on location-specific organic farming technologies for agricultural and horticultural crops.

(Mr. M. Elayaraja, 2020)

“Embracing organic agriculture” provides the sole means to restore and revitalize our soil using traditional, chemical-free farming techniques. It offers a route to sustainable development by refraining from the use of chemicals, synthetic substances, pesticides, and growth hormones to generate ample quantities of high-quality, nutrient-rich food. Organic farming represents an alternative agricultural approach that swiftly revolutionizes farming practices, relying heavily on natural fertilizers like manure, green compost, bone meal, and others, while deliberately steering clear of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

(Antapu Siva Sankar, July 2022)

Organic farming is deeply rooted in Indian culture, reflecting a philosophy that places utmost importance on the preservation of nature and all life on our planet. The demand for organic food is surging, driven by consumers who perceive it as a healthier and safer choice. While it has opened up new avenues for export revenue, the enduring reward lies in the restoration of environmental health, which will have a profound impact on every aspect of people's lives. Furthermore, the organic produce market is the fastest-growing globally, including in India. Therefore, any plans for the development of organic farming should be integrated into a larger strategy for nature conservation and the well-being of the community and the land. These plans must align with Kerala's social, economic, and cultural values. The organic food industry in India is flourishing and deserves recognition as a distinct sector. Both the government and private sector players must collaborate to create robust policies that benefit producers, processors, and consumers alike. The potential for organic farming to thrive in India is enormous, contingent on sustained investments and support for both existing and new initiatives.

Disadvantages of Organic farming:

- Organic food comes at a premium price due to the lower yield obtained per unit of land compared to conventional farming.
- Higher production costs are incurred as organic farming demands more labour-intensive practices.
- Inefficiencies in marketing and distribution arise from the smaller scale of organic food production.
- Successful organic farming necessitates a deep understanding of local soil systems, meteorology, ecology, and various factors influencing crop growth. Without this knowledge, an individual organic farmer may struggle to protect their crops during critical stages of the farming process.
- Organic crops are more vulnerable to diseases that can potentially slow down production.
- Organic farms must undergo rigorous certification processes.

Objectives:

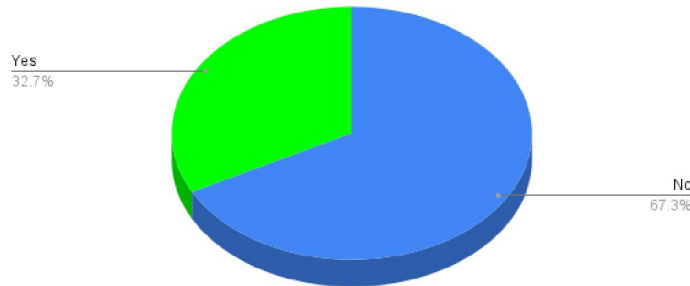
- To explore various organic ingredients available in shops of Mumbai
- To know the customer approach towards organic ingredients.
- To understand the spending capacity of residents purchasing organically grown ingredients.
- To find our health benefits of consuming Organic ingredients.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is based on primary data collected from residents of Mumbai who are aware of organically grown food and people consuming organic food as well as secondary data available in journals, websites etc.

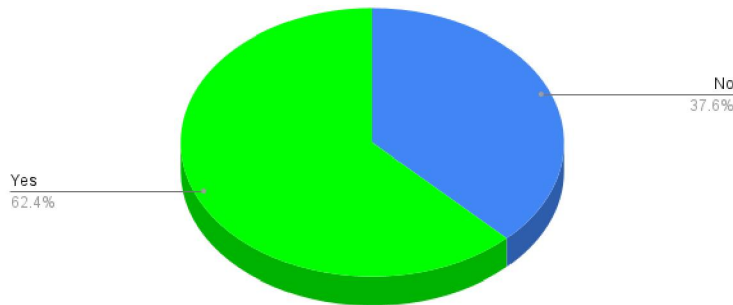
Data Analysis:

Do you buy organically grown ingredients?



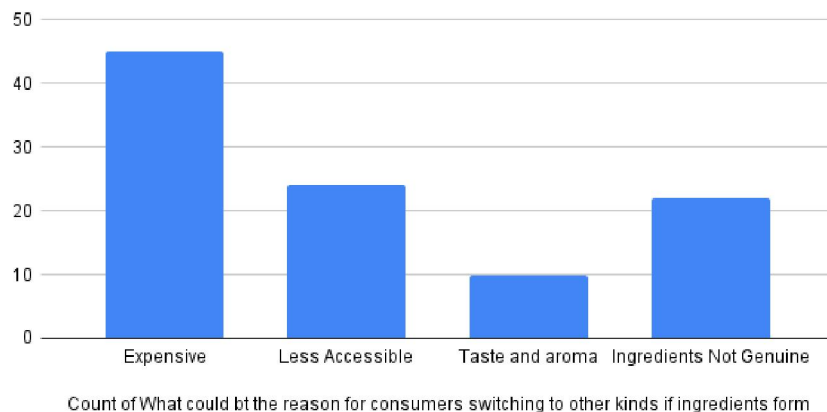
This is a pie chart of the analysis of *whether people buy organically grown ingredients*. There are 101 response out of which 67.3% of people selected No and 32.7% of people selected Yes. which results to a majority of people do not buy organic ingredients.

Do you think organically grown ingredients are healthy?



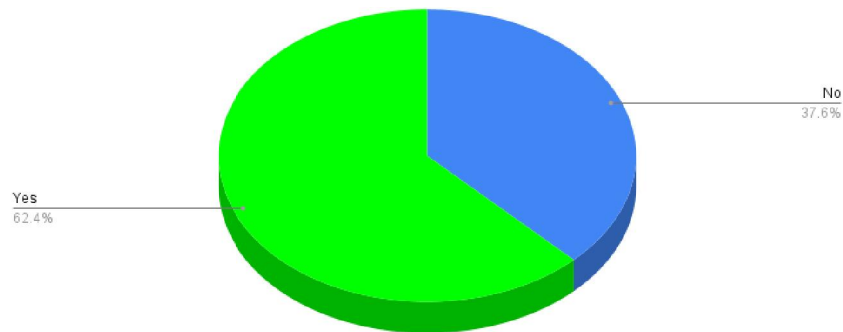
This is a pie chart of the analysis of *whether people think organically grown ingredients are healthy*. There are 101 response out of which 37.6% of people selected No and 62.4% of people selected yes.

What would be the reason for consumers switching to other kinds of ingredients form organically grown ingredients?



This is a bar graph of the analysis if *people would give the reason for consumers switching to other kinds of ingredients from organically grown ingredients*. There are 101 response out of which 45 people selected Expensive, 24 people selected Less Accessible, 10 of people selected taste and aroma, 22 of people selected Ingredients Not genuine.

With all the above-mentioned reasons would you still prefer consuming organically grown ingredients available in the markets of Mumbai?



This is a pie chart of the analysis of *whether people will still prefer consuming organically grown ingredients available in the markets of Mumbai*. There are 101 response out of which 37.6% of people selected No and 62.4% of people selected Yes.

IV. CONCLUSION

The rising popularity of organic food is primarily due to its health benefits, driving increased market demand. Organically grown products are preferred, with 73% of people aware of them but finding it challenging to distinguish genuine from fake products.

However, in Mumbai, 67.3% are hesitant to buy organic products, citing pricing and availability concerns. This reluctance stems from limited vendor awareness, lower profit margins, and a narrower target audience. Survey results also indicate that many people wouldn't recommend organics to others due to these issues.

Improved distribution channels and higher incomes are expected to boost the global organic food market. Despite awareness, our analysis suggests there hasn't been a significant increase in demand for organic goods among Mumbai residents

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