Consumers Opinion about Organic Food Products

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Abstract: In this new era of so called development come with various threats to our minutely balanced life on the mother planet. Awareness of organic food is growing due to people have started to accepting the fact that today non organic items carries contamination of chemicals. This study entitled “consumer preference and consumption of organic food products” attempted to gain knowledge about consumer attitude towards organic food products. Study was conducted in six different zones in Lucknow and Kanpur district with 120 respondents during the year 2012-13. Pre-tested interview schedule was used for collection of the information from consumers. During the study period six zones were selected in two district and 20 respondents were selected from each zones. Out of total respondents, 45.8 per cent of respondents were educated lip to intermediate and 53.3 per cent respondents belonged to those families those annual income was between Rs. 1,00,001 to Rs. 2,00,000. The opinion of consumer about organic food products was that 85.83 per cent of respondents found that organic food products are good for the environment. The study revealed that consumer thought that organic food products are good for the environment as well as good for the human health but there is lack of more awareness between consumers about organic food products.

Key words: Opinion • Organic Food • Perception • Attitude

INTRODUCTION

Some people believe that organic food is only a ‘concept’ popular in the developed countries. They think that when it comes to organic food, India only exports organic food and very little is consumed. However, this is not true. Though 50 per cent of the organic food production in India is targeted towards exports, there are many who look towards organic food for domestic consumption.

AC Nielsen, a leading market research firm, recently surveyed about 21,000 regular internet users in 38 countries to find their preference for functional foods—foods that have additional health benefits. The survey revealed that India was among the top ten countries where health food, including organic food, was demanded by the consumers. The most important reason for buying organic food was the concern for the health of children, with over 66 per cent parents preferring organic food to non-organic food. Though organic food is priced over 25 per cent more than conventional food in India, many parents are willing to pay this higher premium due to the perceived health benefits of organic food. The increase in organic food consumption in India is evident from the fact that many organic food stores are spurring up in India. Today every supermarket has an organic food store and every large city in India has numerous organic food stores and restaurants. This is a huge change considering that the first organic food store in Mumbai was started in 1997. What do Indian organic food consumers prefer? The pattern of organic food consumption in India is much different than in the developed countries. In India, consumers prefer organic marmalade, organic strawberry, organic tea, organic honey, organic cashew butter and various organic flours.

However, the Indian organic food consumer needs education. There are many consumers who are unaware of the difference between natural and organic food. Many people purchase products labeled as Natural thinking that they are organic. Further, consumers are not aware of the certification system. Since certification is not compulsory for domestic retail in India, many fake organic products are available in the market.
MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in district Kanpur Nagar and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) during the year 2012-13. Three areas were selected from each district. Twenty respondents were selected purposively from each area. Thus, 120 respondents were selected. A list of respondents was prepared randomly. An interview schedule was developed consisting of schedule items for measuring the variables included in the study. Independent variables, namely age, caste, education, annual income, occupation, family size, family type and dependent variables awareness, preference, consumption etc. was used. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis for which statistical tools, such as average, percentage, weighted mean, rank and correlation coefficients were used.

RESULTS

Table 1 show the distribution of respondents according to education level, 8.3 per cent of respondents were educated up to secondary level, while 30.0 per cent respondents were educated up to high school. 45.8 per cent of respondents were educated up to intermediate and only 15.9 per cent respondents were educated up to graduate and above level. Education plays an important role for awareness about organic product. Education and knowledge of respondents affect the attitude towards organic food and purchasing behaviour of the consumer.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate and above</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to family annual income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to Rs. 1,00,000</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 1,00,001 - Rs. 2,00,000</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 2,00,001 and above</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicated that 85.83 per cent of respondents found that organic food products are good for the environment ranked I with 2.86 mean score followed by 85.00 per cent of respondents perceive that organic products are healthy ranked II with 2.85 mean score. 58.33 per cent of respondents have opinion that organic products produce without chemical fertilizer ranked 111 with 2.58 mean score and 58.33 per cent of respondents thought that organic product do not carry pesticide residue ranked IV with 2.48 mean score value.

62.5 per cent of respondents are female, belong to this group. They know the organic production method sufficiently and state that the major deterrent to the purchase of these products is the excessive price. The health conscious express a high concern about the effects on human health of the massive use of fertilizers and input of chemical origin in agriculture. The main motivations to the consumption of organic products are the safety of the products and the absence of pesticide residues. As previously mentioned, organic food contains no harmful additives, more nutrient than conventional food and is safe for human’s health. Therefore, choosing organic food seems to be a proper decision. This is the reason why
foods which are labeled as organic could make consumers think/perceive that organic foods are safe when compared with conventional ones.

CONCLUSION

This study analyses consumers consumption and preference towards organic products in food market. Organic product is relatively new to consumers. However, majority of the consumers are aware and understood what constitutes organic product. The consumers have a positive perception towards organic products. The vast information on this product has educated consumers with the benefits and advantage of consuming organic products. The organic products in the market are still under supplied and only certain products were offered in the markets. The lack of organic product in the market is one of the main barriers for these products to reach consumers. There has been increasing interest in the production as well as in the main marketing of organic products. The numbers of supermarkets and grocery store that sell these products have also shown a positive trend to response to the higher demand from the consumers. Some super markets allocate a special place for organic products to be displayed and offer some special information services for the consumers of organic product. This is in consistent with the principle of marketing organic products which is to create trust in consumers when they are consuming organic products which are safe, high quality and can enhance their health.

RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTION

- Set up agro industrial complexes near major towns for linking production, processing and marketing in the form of integrated system.
- Wide publicity should be made through mass media like television, radio, newspaper and posters to create awareness among public on organic farming systems. The propaganda aims towards spreading the message of quality, nutritious and safe food, clean environment, nature conserving system and to create demand for organic produce.
- Incentives in prices over and above the MSP rates for agricultural commodities produced through organic farming.
- Development of processed and value added items for the export market.
- Listing and documenting commodity wise traders, agencies, terminal markets and export agencies.
- To provide information on export potential of different products to the producers.
- Arrange producers and International Buyers meet.
- Participation in International Fairs and Exhibitions.

REFERENCES