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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

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PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR AND INFLUENCE OF SOCIO ECONOMIC FACTORS WITH REFERENCE TO ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behaviour refers to the actions of consumers in the market place and the underlying motives for those actions. There has been a growing awareness of the fragility of the environment. Marketers saw increasing consumer interest in the environment as a marketing opportunity to target ecologically- concerned consumers. Affective responses helps consumers to reach purchase decisions the marketers seek to influences affective responses by creating messages that appeal to consumers. Organic foods are made according to certain production standards. The Government of India has set up a National Institute of Organic Farming. The formulate rules, regulations, and certification of organic farm products in conformity with international standards. All this arguments leads the marketers to find answer, to whether their socio economic studies helps the residents to buy organic food products and whether the attitude about organic food product is positive and influences to buy organic food products and In order to answer the above queries, the present study has been carried out. An empirical study entitled "Purchase Behaviour And Influence Of Socio Economic Factors With Reference To Organic Food products" "has been carried out with a objectives to find out purchase behavior of the respondents and willingness to purchase of Organic food products, Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural aspects of attitude of respondents to Organic Food Products. The study was carried out in Coimbatore City with the sample size of 200 respondents who reside close to the Organic Food Store "Sreevatsa Organic Farm Products" and familiar with Organic Food Products by adopting multistage sampling technique. The null- hypothesis was tested for the socio-economic factors and willingness to purchase organic food products. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, chi-square test, analysis of variance, Spearman's rank correlation and Friedman Test.

KEYWORDS

organic food products, willingness to purchase, cognitive and affective attitude.

INTRODUCTION

hat we do to the earth we do to ourselves" or "We pass through the earth and the earth passes through us".

- Wendell Berry
Meeting the needs of the consumer is the primary challenge that every marketer faces. The relative importance of 'demand pull' from green consumers, or 'legislative push' from socio- environmental legislation various widely between different forms of market. In most markets the final consumer and the buyers within any marketing intermediaries, are an important influence on the greening process. Consumer behaviour is defined as the process and physical activity individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services (Laudon Dellabitta). Consumer behaviour refers to the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they except will satisfy their needs. Consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources like time, money and effort on consumption related items (Schiffman and Kanuck). Marketers saw increasing consumer interest in the environment as a marketing opportunity to target ecologically-concerned consumers. A number of businesses and industry groups have responded to environmental concerns by integrating environmental issues into their corporative polices.

Organic foods are made according to certain production standards. The National Organic Standards Board of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) established a national standard for the term "Organic". Organic food must be produced without the use of sewer-sludge fertilizers, most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, genetic engineering (biotechnology), growth hormones, irradiation and antibiotics. Environmental Marketing is based on three principles: social responsibility, the pursuit of sustainability and a holistic approach. It is open-ended, focuses strongly on the natural environment, has an intrinsic value and focuses on global concerns rather than those of particular societies.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The rationale for carrying out this study is that consideration for the environment could come only from well-informed citizens who are aware of, and fully committed to their rights to a quality health and environment. Nevertheless, before any behaviour can be changed, it is necessary to evaluate the current state of consumers awareness and knowledge. Therefore consumer's attitude, willingness to pay for organic food product and intention to purchase organic food will be the main agenda of this study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present era is of mass production and mass distribution. The growth of competition amongst the producers of organic food products to capture markets has resulted in the invention of almost all kinds of organic food products. Effective awareness has become more in dispensable. In the modern commercial world all kinds of organic institutions find awareness as a suitable means of publicity. The marketers need to find answer, whether the attitude towards organic food product is positive and influences to buy organic food products and whether the socio economic profile helps the residents to buy organic food products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to understand the attitude of the consumers towards buying organic food products, specifically the study is trying:

- a. To study the association between socio-economic status of the respondents and their willing to purchase organic food products
- b. To gain knowledge about respondents attitude towards organic food products
- c. To suggest suitable measures for improving the marketability of Organic food products

HYPOTHESIS

Ho: there is no significant relationship between socio-economic variables and pleasure of eating organic food products. Ho: there is no significant relationship between socio-economic factors and frequency of purchase of organic food products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Coimbatore city was selected as the area of the study owing to the reason that, it is the second biggest city in Tamil Nadu,India. It is an industrial hub with educated population, middle class, active environmental organization spreading awareness on environmental degradation at the pioneer stage guiding towards

organic food consumption. More than 50,000 acres across the state have been brought under organic certification programme by Tamilnadu Organic Certification Department's efforts. The study covers the period of three months from January 2010 to March 2010. Primary data was collected using structured interview schedule. The Secondary data collected from government reports, publication, research reports, and books.

For this study, multistage random sampling techniques is used for selection of the 200 sample respondents. The sample is drawn from the sample unit namely the members of household drawn from the residential area located in the ward number 34 of North zone of Coimbatore Municipal Corporation where The Sreevatsa Organic Farm Products is located. The Sreevasta Organic Farm Products a speciality shop which deals with organically cultivated grains, pulses, edible oil, fruits, vegetables milk and milk products from organically fed cattles and also Organic manures. Familiarity of organic food products in the main criteria in sample selection. The collected data is analyzed with the help of statistical tools like Percentage analysis, Chi-square test and Scaling technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study has been presented under the following headings:

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND WILLINGNESS TO PURCHASE ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

The analysis has been classified into the association between each of the socio-economic variables and its influence in purchase decision was analyzed by applying indexing to the opinion of the respondents. The socio economic variables used to reflect their willingness to buy the organic food products.

AGF

The various age groups of the respondents have a substantial effect to the market for organic food products. The readiness to purchase of the organic food products prevail among respondents within the age group of 20 to 30 years, who constitute 25.50 percent of the sample(table1). As the chi-square value (5.976) is lesser than the table value (7.81) at five percent level of significance, the null- hypothesis is accepted. It is proved that there exist no association between the age of the respondents and willingness to purchase.

GENDER

The female respondents (36.50 percent) and male respondents (31.50 percent) had the willingness to buy the organic food products(table2). Since, the chi-square value (0.301) is lesser than the table value (3.84) at five percent level of significance, the null-hypothesis accepted. There exist no association between the gender of the respondents and willingness to purchase of organic food products.

MARITAL STATUS

The respondents who are married (49.50 percent) and 18.50 percent who are unmarried were willing to buy the Organic food products. As the chi-square value (7.558) is the lesser than the table value (7.88) at five percent level of significance, the null-hypothesis accepted(table3). There is exist an association between the marital status of the respondents and readiness to buy the organic food products.

OCCUPATION

Occupation brings several contacts to an individual. The interaction with colleagues might influence the purchase of organic food products. The table 4 shows the willingness to purchase of organic food products with regard to occupation of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were home makers (16 percent) showed their willingness to purchase the organic food products forms the majority. As the Chi-square value (3.484) is the lesser than the table value (9.49) at five percent level of significance, the null-hypothesis accepted. There is exist no association between the occupation of the respondents and readiness to purchase of organic food products.

EDUCATION

The table 5 shows the willingness to purchase of organic food products and the education of the respondents. The majority of the respondents with higher level of education were willingness to buy organic food products, among them were graduates (27 percent) and post graduates (19.50 percent) The chi-square value (1.692) is lesser than the table value (7.81) at five percent level of significance, the null-hypothesis accepted. There exist no association between the education of the respondents and readiness to purchase of organic food products.

INCOME

It is understood from the table 6 that, about 16.50 percent of the respondents belongs to the income level of Rs. 10000 to 20000. The chi-square value (0.357) is lesser than the table value (9.49) at five percent level of significance; the null-hypothesis is accepted. There exist no association between the income level of the respondents and readiness to buy organic food products.

FOOD HABIT

Majority (29 percent) of the respondents with vegetarian food habit were eager to purchase the organic food products (table7). The chi-square value (6.756) is greater than the table value (5.99) at the five percent level of significance, the null-hypothesis accepted. There exist an association between the food habit of the respondents and willingness to purchase Organic Food Products.

PLEASURE IN EATING ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

The association of socio-economic status of the respondents and pleasure of eating organic food products was analysed with null hypothesis (table 8). Since, the chi-square value is lesser than the table value at five percent level of significance, the null-hypothesis accepted. There exist no association between the socio economic profile of the respondents and pleasure of eating organic food products.

FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

The association tested between frequency of purchase of organic food products with regard to socio-economic factors of the respondents (table9), shows that the chi-square value is lesser than the table value at five percent level of significant, the null- hypothesis is accepted. There is no association between socio-economic factors of the respondents and frequency of purchase of organic food products.

To test the co-variability between the variables, spearman's rank correlation was used. The ranking of affective component of respondent's attitude towards organic foods products by employing spearman's rank correlation co-efficient is presented in table 10.

The table 11 reveals that, the following correlation co-efficient is found to be significant at one percent level and positively correlated. They were "Better taste" in organic food with "Ecological" and "Certification". The "Better for health" with "Better for animal", "Contains no dirt and bugs", "Better for farmers", "Very low yield", "Ecological", "Better quality", and Low calories".

Further, to find out the existence of association between the elements of organic food products and liking of the respondents the Friedman test was employed. From the table 12 the mean ranking shows that the highest rank was assigned to "Ecological" benefits of the organic food followed by the "very low yield", "Free from harmful substances" and the variable "Expensive" were influenced the attitude of respondents. Since, the calculated chi-square value (7.93) is lesser than the critical value (32.9) at five percent level of significance there exist an association between the various elements of associated with organic food products and their influence in purchase decision of the respondents.

FINDINGS

BEHAVIOURAL COMPONENT OF RESPONDENT'S ATTITUDE

Association between socio-Economic variables, purchase behaviour and its influence on purchase decision of Organic food products by the Respondents **AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Majority of the respondents with the age group of 20-30 years were ready to the purchase the organic food products.

GENDER

- In general, the willingness to purchase of the organic food products was found high among female respondents.
- Among the male respondents 13.50 percent were not ready to purchase of the organic food products.
- There is no association between the gender of the respondents and willingness to purchase of organic food products.

MARITAL STATUS

- The willingness to purchase Organic food products was maximum among married respondents.
- Among unmarried respondents, a considerable percentage of respondents were not ready to purchase of organic food products.
- There is no association between the marital status of the respondents and ready to purchase of Organic food products.

OCCUPATION

- The willingness to purchase of the organic food products was found comparatively high among homemakers.
- The association was not found between the occupation of the respondents and willingness to purchase of organic food products.

EDUCATION

- No association was found between education and the willingness to purchase of the organic food products
- The ready to purchase Organic food products was high among the Graduates and Post graduates, whereas it was low among the respondents with primary education.

INCOME

- Respondents with income upto Rs.20,000 pm were willingness to purchase of Organic food products.
- There exist no association between the income of the respondents and willingness to purchase of organic food products.

FOOD HABIT

- The willingness to purchase organic food products was maximum among vegetarian.
- There exists an association between the Food habit of the respondents and eager to purchase of organic food products.

PLEASURE IN EATING ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

There is no association between socio economic profile of the respondents and the pleasure of eating organic food products.

FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE

There is no association between socio economic profile of the respondents and the frequency of purchase.

ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDE OF RESPONDENTS TOWARD ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

AFFECTIVE COMPONENT OF RESPONDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS PURCHASE OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

- Majority of the respondents assigned first rank to better taste, and better for health and sixth rank to very low yield and seventh rank to better for farmers. =>The Spearman rank correlation revealed that the following correlation co-efficient is found to be significant at one percent level and positively correlated.
- They were better taste of organic food with Ecological and certification.
- The better health with better for animal contains no dirt and bugs, better for the environment, better for farmers, free from harmful substances, better quality and certification.

=>The mean ranking by fisherman's two way analysis showed that the highest rank was assigned to ecological, benefits of the organic food followed by the very low yields, free from harmful substance and expensive were influenced the purchase decision of the respondents.

COGNITIVE COMPONENT OF RESPONDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS PURCHASE OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Cognitive aspect of attitude is analysed for the reason for not buying organic food products.

The purchase organic food product was restricted mainly due to "Time constraints" and "convenience to get Organic food".

=>The Spearman's rank correlation revealed that the following correlation co-efficient were found to be significant at one percent level and positively correlated.

- The respondents never bought organic food products as it was too expensive and they did not have the habit of eating Organic food cereals.
- It will not available where they shop.
- => The mean ranking by Friedman's two way analysis showed that the highest rank was assigned to the reason that they haven't noticed, preferred other cereals, no habit of eat organic cereals no care about "organic", were the reasons for not buy organic food products by the respondents.
- There exists an association between the ranking of never buying the organic food products by respondents.

SUGGESTIONS TO MARKETERS OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

The following are the suggestion made to the marketers of Organic food products based on the results of the study.

- Sustained improvement in product features would lead to increase in consumption of organic food products.
- The increase frequency of viewing the advertisement of organic food products and better taste would influence the purchase organic food products. The influence of advertisement of organic food products with an increase in education found particularly among graduates.
- To persuade to buy organic good products, the variables like familiarity, personal ideology, social interaction and monitory cost and habits had greater influence in buying organic food products.
- The familiarity of the organic food products among customers depends on the promotional efforts of the marketers. The availability organic food products need wider advertisement.
- Allocation of separate shelves for organic food products in departmental stores
- ⇒ Positioning organic food products by their specific attributes
- Positioning organic food products by influencing consumer beliefs about the benefits they derive on consuming.
- ⇒ Positioning by reputation for quality "only organic".
- ⇒ The attitudes of "never buying" could be modified by educating consumers on the benefits of organic food products.
- The price premium is the major hindrance for non-buying of organic food products. The customers need motivation to buy even with a small price premium than to just avoid on one hand and the cost of cultivation and cost of marketing to be brought under check on the other hand.
- ⇒ The products initially should be made available in prominent market places and also gradually, in all the shops.
- Education programme on Environment and the benefits of organic farming and consumption of organic food products will make the consumers more environmentally conscious "Green Consumer".
- ⇒ "organic" to be promoted as "the way of life" them considering it as "product".
- ⇒ The agriculture marketing and co-operative departments to help farmers get a good price for organic produce.
- Ensuring quality of organic by farmers through certification by the Tamilnadu Organic Certification Department, which help them get a good price.
- Demand creation large-scale production and availability of organic food products should go hand in hand. According a more responsible advertisement can play a positive and beneficial role in bringing out a desirable among homemakers in Organic food products market.

CONCLUSION

Consumer behaviour plays a major role in Organic food products segment. The marketers of organic foods need to be innovative and dynamic in order to complete with the changing purchase behaviour in the Organic food products market among urban residents. The importance of organic food products was ignored for quite a long period. As results of environmental sustainability, importance is shifted towards Organic food products rather than conventional

farming. The study brought out the fact that the people were well aware of images and availability, but not loyal entirely too organic food products. The respondent without doubt attracted towards Organic food products. So the marketers must create promotions which are both realistic and moral and the product availability in terms of volume and variety are required to become successful in marketing organic food products.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- A similar study could be attempted with the rural household.
- Assessment study on consumer behaviour of Organic food products so as to enhance its market share.
- Influence of advertisement in the preference for organic food products could be attempted.
- A study on ways and means of increasing the market for organic food products could be undertaken.
- Assessment of consumer attitude with regard to organic food products.

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TABLES

TABLE 1: AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND WILLINGNESS TO BUY OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Age	Willingness to purchase of organic food products										
(in years)	Percentage of the respondents										
	Yes	res No Total									
20-30	11.00	8.00	19.00								
30-40	30.50	10.00	49.50								
40-50	13.00	2.00	15.00								
50-60	10.00	6.50	16.50								
Total	68.00	32.00	100.00								
Chi-square	value: 5.976, Df:	3, Prob: 0.1128									

Source: Primary data

TABLE 2: GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS AND WILLINGNESS TO PURCHASE ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Gender	Willingness to	Willingness to purchase of organic food products								
	Percentage of	Percentage of the respondents								
	Yes	Yes No Total								
Male	31.50	13.50	45.00							
Female	36.50	18.50	55.00							
Total	68.00 32.00 100.00									
Chi-squa	Chi-square value : 0.301, Df:1, Prob:0.583									

Source: Primary data

TABLE 3: MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS AND PURCHASE WILLINGNESS TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Marital Status	Willingness to purchase of organic food products								
	Percentage of	Percentage of the respondents							
	Yes	Yes No Total							
Married	49.50	17.00	66.50						
Unmarried	18.50	33.50							
Total	68.00 32.00 100.00								
Chi-square value : 7.558, Df:1, Prob:5.975E-03									

Source: Primary data

TABLE 4: OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS AND WILLINGNESS TO BUY ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Occupation	Willingness to purchase of organic food products								
	Percentage of the respondents								
	Yes	Yes No Total							
Self employed	14.00	4.50	18.50						
Employed	14.00	8.50	22.50						
Casual Labour	14.50	5.00	19.50						
Students	9.50	4.00	13.50						
Home makers	16.00	1.00	26.00						
Total	68.00 32.00 100.00								
Chi-square value : 3.484, Df:4, Prob:0.4803									

Source: Primary data

TABLE 5: EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS AND PURCHASE WILLINGNESS TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Education	Willingness to purchase of organic food products								
	Percentage of the respondents								
	Yes	Yes No Total							
Primary	13.50	7.50	21.00						
Higher secondary	8.00	2.00	10.00						
Graduate	27.00	12.50	39.50						
Post Graduate	19.50	10.00	29.50						
Total	68.00	32.00	100.00						
Chi-square value: 1	Chi-square value: 1.692. Df: 3, Prob: 0.6387								

Source: Primary data

TABLE 6: WILLINGNESS TO BUY ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

TABLE 8. WILLINGINESS TO BUT ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS									
Income (in Rupees)	Willingness to purchase of organic food products								
	Percentage of the respondents								
	Yes	Yes No Total							
Below 10,000	7.50	3.50	11.00						
10,000-20,000	16.50	8.00	24.50						
20,000-30,000	7.50	3.50	11.00						
Above 30,000	33.00	5.50	38.50						
Nil	8.00	7.00	15.00						
Total	68.00 32.00 100.00								
Chi-square value : 0.357, Df:4, Prob: 0.9858									

Source: Primary data.

TABLE 7: FOOD HABIT AND WILLINGNESS TO PURCHASE ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Food Habit	Willingness to purchase of organic food products									
	Percentage of the respondents									
	Yes	Yes No Total								
Vegetarian	29.00	11.00	40.00							
Mostly vegetarian	22.50	7.50	30.00							
Not vegetarian	16.50 13.50 30.00									
Total	68.00	32.00	100.00							
Chi-square value: 6.756, Df: 2, Prob: 0.0341										

Source: Primary data

TABLE 8: PLEASURE IN EATING ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

TABLE 6. I LEASONE IN LATING GROANIC TOOD I RODGETS									
Socio-Economic Variables	Chi- Square value	Degree of freedom	Table Value	Results					
Age	3.800	3	7.81	Not significant					
Gender	4.709	1	3.84	Significant					
Marital Status	2.977	1	3.84	Not significant					
Occupation	4.160	4	9.49	Not significant					
Education	4.298	3	7.81	Not significant					
Income	4.936	4	9.49	Not significant					
Food habit	8.219	2	5.99	Significant					

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 9: FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

.,											
Socio-Economic Factor	Chi-square value	Degree of freedom	Table Value	Results							
Age	18.335	12	21.0	Not significant							
Gender	0.777	4	9.49	Not significant							
Marital Status	4.389	4	9.49	Not significant							
Occupation	19.958	16	26.3	Not significant							
Education	22.565	12	21.0	Not significant							
Income	37.426	16	26.3	Not significant							
Food habit	12.810	8	15.5	Not significant							

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 10: TEST OF CO-VARIABILITY ON AFFECTIVE COMPONENT OF THE RESPONDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS (SPEARMAN'S RANK CORRELATION)

Elements	Better Taste	Better for health	Better for animal	Contains no dirt and bugs	Better for the environment	Expensive	Better for farmers	Very low yield	Ecological	Free from harmful substances	Better quality	Low Calories	Certification
Better Taste	1.000	.100	.010	.100	.000	.138	.065	.175*	.212**	.117	.024	.036	.273**
Better for health		1.000	.222**	.174*	.095	.121	.220**	.147*	.150*	.117	.311**	.289**	.007
Better for animal			1.000	.260**	.048	.008	.103	.030	.039	.039	.208**	.037	.145**
Contains no dirt and bugs				1.000	.113	.103	.241**	.025	.189**	.039	.121	.140*	.098
Better for the environment					1.000	.106	.101	.225**	.119	.063	.216**	.033	.158*
Expensive						1.000	.070	.142*	.002	.009	.124	.001	.173*
Better for farmers							1.000	.027	.032	.031	.207**	.019	.005
Very low yield								1.000	.093	.127	.097	.069	.073
Ecological									1.000	.039	.209**	.059	.069
Free from harmful substances										1.000	.023	.378**	.233**
Better quality											1.000	.189**	.017
Low Calories												1.000	.086
Certification													1.000

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 11: MEAN RANK OF AFFECTIVE COMPONENT OF THE RESPONDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS (FRIEDMAN TEST)

Variables	Mean Rank
Better Taste	2.74
Better for health	3.41
Better for animal	8.19
Contains no dirt and bugs	5.58
Better for the environment	8.13
Expensive	8.21
Better for farmers	6.65
Very low yield	8.48
Ecological	10.34
Free from harmful substances	8.23
Better quality	5.66
Low Calories	7.48
Certification	7.93
χ^2	727.019
Df	12

Source: Primary Data



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