



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT AND MANAGEMENT

### CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	RESPONSIBILITY ACCOUNTING IN SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE INDUSTRIES MANUFACTURING AUTO COMPONENTS <i>ANIRUDDHA THUSE &amp; DR. NEETA BAPORIKAR</i>	1
2.	LIBERALIZED FINANCIAL SYSTEM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA <i>LOWE, OLUSEGUN</i>	6
3.	AN INVESTIGATION ON HIGHER LEARNING STUDENTS SATISFACTION ON FOOD SERVICES AT UNIVERSITY CAFETERIA <i>SARAVANAN RAMAN &amp; SUBHASENI CHINNIHAH</i>	12
4.	IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING THE MAIN BARRIERS TO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT <i>DR. S. ALI AKBAR AHMADI, MOHAMAD ALI AFSHARI &amp; HAMIDEH SHEKARI</i>	17
5.	PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPONSORED MUTUAL FUNDS IN INDIA <i>NOONEY LENIN KUMAR &amp; DR. VANGAPANDU RAMA DEVI</i>	24
6.	TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN IT SECTOR <i>DR. K. JANARDHANAM, DR. NIRMALA M. &amp; PRATIMA PANDEY</i>	36
7.	FREQUENT PATTERN MINING USING DYNAMIC PROGRAMMING <i>V. G. RAJALEKSHMI &amp; DR. M. S. SAMUEL</i>	41
8.	PRICE AND LIQUIDITY CHANGES AFTER STOCK SPLITS - EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM INDIAN STOCK MARKET <i>DHANYA ALEX, DR. K. B. PAVITHRAN &amp; EAPEN ROHIT PAUL</i>	45
9.	THE IMPACT OF REVERSE CULTURAL SHOCK AMONG REPATRIATES <i>N. PADMAVATHY &amp; DR. N. THANGAVEL</i>	50
10.	BRAND LOYALTY'S INFLUENCE ON WOMEN'S BUYING BEHAVIOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS <i>R. SUNDARI &amp; DR. M. SAKTHIVEL MURUGAN</i>	57
11.	ANALYSIS OF COTTON TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN KARUR DISTRICT, TAMILNADU <i>DR. N. RAJASEKAR &amp; M. GURUSAMY</i>	63
12.	ANALYSING THE TRADING ACTIVITIES OF MUTUAL FUNDS TO IDENTIFY THE TREND OF THE INDIAN STOCK MARKET <i>M. JEEVANANTHAN &amp; DR. K. SIVAKUMAR</i>	69
13.	VIABILITY OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS' BUSINESS AMONG THE NON-ORGANIC PRODUCT CONSUMERS – A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY <i>DR. R. DHANALAKSHMI</i>	75
14.	EMPLOYEES PERCEPTION TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON VEDANTA LTD. IN ODISHA <i>DR. B. CHANDRA MOHAN PATNAIK, DR. IPSEETA SATPATHY &amp; DEEPAK KUMAR SINGH</i>	79
15.	CASH CONVERSION CYCLE AND CORPORATE PROFITABILITY – AN EMPIRICAL ENQUIRY IN INDIAN AUTOMOBILE FIRMS <i>DR. A. VIJAYAKUMAR</i>	84
16.	A STUDY ON BEST PRACTICES IN FINANCIAL SERVICES AT A PUBLIC SECTOR COMPANY AT BHOPAL <i>DR. N. SUNDARAM &amp; AJAY KUMAR SHARMA</i>	92
17.	AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF FIRM STRUCTURE AND PROFITABILITY RELATIONSHIP: THE CASE OF INDIAN AUTOMOBILE FIRMS <i>DR. A. VIJAYAKUMAR</i>	100
18.	PERCEPTION OF BANK EMPLOYEES TOWARDS ADOPTION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS OF INDIA <i>BINDIYA TATER, DR. MANISH TANWAR &amp; NAVRATAN BOTHRA</i>	109
19.	KEY SKILLS IDENTIFICATION AND TRAINING NEED ANALYSIS @ SMALL AND MEDIUM RETAILERS IN DELHI AND NCR <i>POOJA MISRA, NEHA JOSHI &amp; RAHUL GOYAL</i>	118
20.	STRATEGIES FOR MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS – CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED BUSINESS HOUSES <i>DR. PREETI YADAV &amp; DR. JEET SINGH</i>	127
21.	MANAGEMENT OF NPAS IN DCCBS IN INDIA – AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT <i>DR. A. DHARMENDRAN</i>	136
22.	IMPACT OF MOBILE MARKETING ON THE PURCHASE DECISION OF CONSUMERS: A STUDY OF JALANDHAR REGION <i>HARENDRA SINGH, SALEEM ANWAR &amp; SHUJA QAMMER SHAH</i>	141
23.	A STUDY ON LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THEIR IMPACT IN PUBLIC SECTOR – TAMIL NADU <i>N. PRABHA</i>	146
24.	PARAMETERS OF RATING OF INDIAN COMMERCIAL BANKS – A CRITICAL ANALYSIS <i>DR. MUKTA MANI</i>	149
25.	IMPACT OF INTERNET BANKING ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS, PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS AND FOREIGN SECTOR BANKS <i>RITU SEHGAL &amp; DR. SONIA CHAWLA</i>	156
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	164

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## VIABILITY OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS' BUSINESS AMONG THE NON-ORGANIC PRODUCT CONSUMERS – A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

Green revolution technologies such as greater use of synthetic agrochemicals like fertilizers and pesticides, adoption of nutrient-responsive, high-yielding varieties of crops, greater exploitation of irrigation potentials etc., has boosted the production output in most cases. However, continuous use of these high energy inputs indiscriminately now leads to decline in production and productivity of various crops as well as deterioration of soil health and environments. Therefore, for sustaining the productivity of the crop, maintaining the soil health and healthy ecosystem, there is need for adoption of an alternative farming system, may be the Organic Farming. The organic products available in the domestic market are rice, wheat, tea, coffee, pulses and vegetables. On the other hand, products available for export market, besides these, include cashew nuts, cotton, oilseeds, various fruits and medicinal herbs. Whereas wholesalers and traders, super markets and own shops are the major channels in the domestic market which is mainly in metropolitan cities and accounts for only 7.5 per cent of the total organic production, the market channel for export of organic products is export companies with the exception of tea which is produced and exported by tea estates. However, in the study area of Coimbatore City, the markets and shops for organic products are slowly coming due to the fact that many of the consumers are realizing the need and importance for using the organic products rather than non-organic products. Hence, it is of crucial importance to study the viability of organic products and its growth and development in terms of market share.

### KEYWORDS

Organic farming, organic products, non-organic products, market, Consumers.

### INTRODUCTION

India is the second most populous country in the world. With the increasing population the cultivable land resource is shrinking day to day. To meet the food, fibre, fuel, fodder and other needs of the growing population, the productivity of agricultural land and soil health needs to be improved. Green Revolution in the post independence era has shown path to developing countries for self-sufficiency in food but sustaining agricultural production against the finite natural resource base demands has shifted from the "resource degrading" chemical products to a "resource protective" biological or organic products. Green revolution technologies such as greater use of synthetic agrochemicals like fertilizers and pesticides, adoption of nutrient-responsive, high-yielding varieties of crops, greater exploitation of irrigation potentials etc., has boosted the production output in most cases. However, continuous use of these high energy inputs indiscriminately now leads to decline in production and productivity of various crops as well as deterioration of soil health and environments. Therefore, for sustaining the productivity of the crop, maintaining the soil health and healthy ecosystem, there is need for adoption of an alternative farming system, may be the Organic Farming.

### ORGANIC PRODUCTION

There are three types of organic producers in India – traditional organic growers who grow for their subsistence needs, commercial farmers who have surplus and export their produce through different channels, and private companies which either have their own farms or organize large conversion programmes with growers (Yussef and Willer, 2003).

In India, there are three main types of farmers engaged in organic production:

- Farmers who mostly follow the indigenous knowledge and technology developed over the past thousands of years. They normally grow for their own consumption and have little surplus.
- Farmers with small to medium sized holdings. These can be divided into two groups: those working to revive the Vedic practices, coupled with Ayurvedic tradition of health system with scientific exposition; and others who follow modern organic agriculture systems, like Steiner's biodynamic agriculture or Fukuoka's "nature farming", for example. They usually have market surplus and sometimes export their goods.
- Private companies that have responded to market demands in the North by organizing large scale conversions to organic systems. By going organic, they add more economic value to the crops, which are already cultivated in a manner similar to organic systems. They are actively engaged in promoting organic agriculture for export.

### ORGANIC PRODUCES IN INDIA

Major organic produces in India include plantation crops i.e. tea, coffee, and cardamom, spices i.e. ginger, turmeric, chillies and cumin, cereals i.e. wheat, rice, jowar, and bajra, pulses i.e. pigeonpea, chickpea, green gram, red gram, and black gram, oilseeds i.e. groundnut, castor, mustard and sesame, fruits i.e. banana, sapota, custard apple and papaya, and vegetables i.e. tomato, brinjal, and other leafy vegetables, besides honey, cotton and sugarcane especially for jaggery (GOI, 2001). But, there is no organic production of meat products like poultry, livestock and fisheries in India as yet. In 2003, 5661 farms in India were certified as organic.

### MARKETING STRATEGY FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS

The role of organic agriculture in providing food and income is now gaining wider recognition due to growing markets for organic products (Van Elzakker et al 2007). The market of organic products is growing as the number of people willing to eat organic food and pay premium price is increasing. The future of organic agriculture will, to a large extent, also depend on consumer demand and their motive for paying extra price for organically grown food. Thus, a consumer-oriented approach to understanding the market for organic products is important for pursuing better management of organic farming. However, this is a complex process, which is determined by factors such as quality production, certification, infrastructure and market environment and policies (Aryal, 2008). It is also important to understand consumer decision-making regarding organically produced foods and seek strategies about how consumption can be promoted. Production and marketing strategies are determined by consumer beliefs, attitudes, responses to organically grown products and the willingness to pay a premium price. Because organic products are credence goods, consumers may not know whether a product is produced using organic or conventional methods unless they are told so (Giannakas, 2002). Thus, awareness and knowledge about organically produced foods are critical in the consumer purchase decisions.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The organic products available in the domestic market are rice, wheat, tea, coffee, pulses and vegetables. On the other hand, products available for export market, besides these, include cashew nuts, cotton, oilseeds, various fruits and medicinal herbs. Whereas wholesalers and traders, super markets and own shops are the major channels in the domestic market which is mainly in metropolitan cities and accounts for only 7.5 per cent of the total organic production, the market channel for export of organic products is export companies with the exception of tea which is produced and exported by tea estates. However, in the study area of Coimbatore City, the markets and shops for organic products are slowly coming due to the fact that many of the consumers are realizing the need and importance for using the organic products rather than non-organic products. Hence, it is of crucial importance to study the viability of organic products and its growth and development in terms of market share.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the advent of industrial and technological revolution, many machine made products, fast food products are occupying the major portion of the everyone's consumption pattern of the human life. This leads to health problems, environmental pollution, and other social evil effects. To overcome these crises, the consumable products and other food and beverages should go for natural production by eliminating the pesticide, chemical etc. It is possible only because of the production and distribution of large number of organic products rather than non-organic products. Hence, problem factor for the study has been formulated by raising the following questions keeping in mind:

- Whether the non-organic product consumers are aware about the organic products?
- Are the consumers of non-organic products are switch over to consume the organic products and willing to pay extra for organic products?
- Does the markets/shops for organic products are easily accessible or available at the nearest area in Coimbatore city?

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is concerned with the following objectives:

- 1) To know the awareness about organic products among non-organic product consumers
- 2) To study the opportunity of organic products business among non-organic product consumers.
- 3) To examine the hindrances faced by the non-organic product consumers while buying the organic products.
- 4) To provide the valuable suggestions and recommendations to the dealers/ marketers of organic products for improving their marketability.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It was decided that a descriptive study using primary data would be appropriate to investigate the objectives. The geographical area of Coimbatore city was chosen as the study area and the required data were collected through questionnaire. The main reason for choosing Coimbatore City is that the investigator is located here and sellers of organic products are gradually coming in this city. By using the random sampling method, totally 100 organic product consumers and 103 non-organic product consumers were identified as target group of respondents from this sampling area and the required data were collected. The collected data were analyzed using Chi-Square test, frequency analysis and descriptive statistics.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data for the present study collected from the respondents through Questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques mentioned in the research methodology. The objective-wise analyses of the study are presented in this section:

### ANALYSIS ON THE ORGANIC PRODUCTS BUSINESS AMONG NON-ORGANIC PRODUCT CONSUMERS

In order to fulfill the objective of predicting the opportunity for organic products among the non-organic product consumers a separate questionnaire was developed and administered to the non-organic product consumers. The questionnaire consists of two parts which captures the awareness among the non-organic product consumers about organic products and the viability of organic products within this section of the society. Their responses were subjected to appropriate statistical tools and the results are tabulated in the following section:

### AWARENESS ABOUT THE ORGANIC PRODUCTS AMONG NON-ORGANIC PRODUCT CONSUMERS

The respondents' awareness about the organic products and its advantages were captured using appropriate queries and analyzed using frequency and chi-square test. The results are tabulated in Tables 1 and 2

TABLE 1: AWARENESS ABOUT THE ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Sl No.	Awareness	Frequency	Percent	Chi-Square (Sig at 5% level)
1	Yes	77	74.8	25.252 df=1 p=0.000
2	No	26	25.2	
	Total	103	100.0	

It is evident from the Table 1 that although they are non-organic product consumers majority of the respondents (74.8%) are very well aware about the organic products and only a few number of respondents (26) do not have any idea about organic products. However, the results are significant as the chi-square value (25.252; p=0.000) is significant for 1 degree of freedom at 5% level of significance.

Consequently, the non-organic product consumers who are aware about organic products were queried about the advantages of using organic products. Their responses were subjected to frequency and chi-square analysis and the results are tabulated in Table 2.

TABLE 2: ADVANTAGES OF USING ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Sl No.	Advantages	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-Square (Sig at 5% level)
0	No	26	25.2	5.874 df=5 p=0.319
1	Quality	14	13.6	
2	High Nutritious value	17	16.5	
3	No Health Hazard	14	13.6	
4	Benefit to the society	16	15.5	
5	Others	16	15.5	
	Total	103	100.0	

The respondents have varied opinion about the advantages of using organic products as indicated by the insignificant chi-square value (5.874; p=0.319) for 5 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance.

### VIABILITY OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS AMONG NON-ORGANIC PRODUCT CONSUMERS

This part of the analysis discusses about the viability of organic products among non-organic product consumers. For this purposes, the respondents those who are non-organic product consumers were queried about the hindrances they face that prevents them from using organic products. The frequency analysis and test of significance using chi-square on their responses tabulated in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: HINDRANCES TO BUY THE ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

SI No.	Hindrances	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-Square (Sig at 5% level)
1	There is no store nearby that sells organic products	25	24.3	2.971 df=4 p=0.563
2	High price	22	21.4	
3	No home delivery	23	22.3	
4	Availability of products	17	16.5	
5	Others	16	15.5	
	Total	103	100.0	

From the insignificant chi-square value (2.971; p=0.563) for 4 degrees of freedom, it is clear that the non-organic product consumers face varied problems that hinders them from using organic products. The foremost reason being non-availability of a store nearby that sells organic products as quoted by majority of the respondents (24.3%). The other reasons such as High price, No home delivery and Availability of products have equal contribution in the reason for not using the organic products by the non-organic product consumers.

Also, the majority (77.7%) of the non-organic product consumers have stated that they will definitely switch over to organic products if the above hindrances are rectified as portrayed in Table 4.

**TABLE 4: WILLINGNESS TO BUY ORGANIC PRODUCTS WHEN HINDRANCES ARE RECTIFIED**

SI No.		Frequency	Percentage	Chi-Square (Sig at 5% level)
1	Yes	80	77.7	32.980 df=1 p=0.000
2	No	23	22.3	
	Total	103	100.0	

Consequently, the non-organic product consumers who are willing to buy organic products were queried about the frequency of purchase. Their responses were captured and analyzed using frequency and chi-square test. The results are shown in Table 5.

**TABLE 5: FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE OF ORGANIC PRODUCT**

SI No.	Frequency of purchase	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-Square (Sig at 5% level)
1	Always	48	46.6	15.864 df=2 p=0.000
2	Sometimes	39	37.9	
3	occasionally	16	15.5	
	Total	103	100.0	

It is apparent from the Table 5 that majority of the respondents (46.6%) will purchase organic products always if all the above said hindrances were rectified. Moreover, the significant chi-square value (15.864; p=0.000) for 2 degrees of freedom depicts that the result is significant at 5% level of significance.

This finding gives a clear picture that the organic product business will flourish in Coimbatore City even among the non-organic product consumers. This is further validated and proved by the following results about inclusion of organic products in the non-organic stores also which is tabulated in Table 6.

**TABLE 6: AGREEABILITY FOR INCLUSION OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS IN THE NON-ORGANIC STORES**

SI No.	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-Square (Sig at 5% level)
1	Yes	66	64.1	8.165 df=1 p=0.004
2	No	37	35.9	
	Total	103	100.0	

From the Table 6, it is clear that majority of the respondents (64.1%) will welcome the inclusion of organic products in the non-organic products stores.

Subsequently, the percentage of extra amount that can be spent for using organic products due its enormous advantages were enquired among the non-organic product consumers and treated with frequency and chi-square analysis and the results were tabulated in Table 7.

**TABLE 7: WILLINGNESS TO PAY EXTRA AMOUNT FOR PURCHASE OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

SI No.	Willingness	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-Square (Sig at 5% level)
1	No extra	8	7.8	92.932 df=6 p=0.000
2	My monthly expenditure is already high	15	14.6	
3	An extra of 0-10% on my monthly food and grocery bill	14	13.6	
4	An extra of 11-20% on my monthly food and grocery bill	47	45.6	
5	An extra of 21-30% on my monthly food and grocery bill	13	12.6	
6	An extra of 31-50% on my monthly food and grocery bill	4	3.9	
7	An extra of above 51% on my monthly food and grocery bill	2	1.9	
	Total	103	100.0	

It is apparent from the Table 7 that majority of the respondents are ready to afford an extra amount of 11-20% of their monthly food and grocery bill for using organic products. This also further opens venue for organic product business among the non-organic product consumers.

**FINDINGS AND SUGGESTION**

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

Following are the major findings from the statistical analysis of the present study:

- Majority of the respondents (74.8%) are very well aware about the organic products and only a few number of respondents (26) do not have any idea about organic products.
- Majority of the respondents (16.5%) are of the opinion that organic products are more advantageous in terms of high nutritious value.
- The main hinders faced by the consumers of non-organic products is that there is no stores selling the organic products nearby their residence.
- Majority of the non-organic product consumers (77.7%) are willing to consume the organic products and to become the regular consumers of organic products if the hindrances like non-availability of organic products in the store, high price, no home delivery, non-availability of exclusive organic products store etc., are rectified to buy the organic products.
- Majority of the respondents (46.6%) who are in the category of the consumers of the non-organic products would like to buy the organic products always if the organic products are available regularly in their nearby store with affordable price and home delivery facility.
- Majority of the respondents (64.1%) prefer to include the organic products in the non-organic products stores for sales.
- Majority of the respondents are ready to afford an extra amount of 11-20% of their monthly food and grocery bill for using organic products.



**SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO MARKETERS / DEALERS OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

- Majority of the respondents felt that there is a non-availability of organic products in the non-organic products stores and non-availability of exclusive store for organic products. Hence, it is suggested to the marketers/dealers of organic products that the availability of the organic products with high quality and affordable price should be assured in the non-organic product stores. Further, more number of organic product store need to be kept open in and around of the Coimbatore City for the easy accessibility of both the organic and non-organic product consumers.
- Since majority of the respondents have opted to avail the home delivery of the organic products, the marketers/dealers are strongly suggested to take it as an effective tool in high end segment of the market for the organic products.
- The demand for organically produced goods is expected to grow in Coimbatore City due to the majority of the respondents' opinion that these products contain chemical free and natural content. Hence, it is suggested that the marketers/dealers of the organic products should offer their products which are affordable to the consumers. Also, some special discounts and coupons should be given to the customers to increase the sales.
- Since majority of the those who are in the category non-organic product consumers have opined that if the marketing hindrances are rectified they will definitely switch over to consume the organic products, it is strongly suggested that the marketing facilities such as easy accessibility of organic product, affordable price to the consumers, enhanced quality of the product etc., should be concentrated more by the marketers/dealers.

**CONCLUSION**

Though, the study area of Coimbatore City is well known for industrial place, even the consumers of non-organic products are prefer to buy the organic products due to the fact that these products are giving more health benefits. Moreover, the present study reveals that viability of organic products in Coimbatore City is enhanced with the value of social benefits as in terms of land fertility, keeping the environment with pesticide and chemical free and high nutritious value. This is validated by the majority of the respondents those are in the category of non-organic product consumers.

Thus, this study will contribute to a better conceptual understanding of perception of the organic and non-organic product consumers towards the viability of organic products in Coimbatore City. Meanwhile, the study can provide practical implications on how to formulate a better marketing and business policy to cover the wide segment of the customers and to fully utilize the advantages of the natural resources –Organic Products.

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