

Abstract

The era of development witnessed various threats to our minutely balanced life on the mother earth. Awareness of organic food is growing due to people have started to accepting the fact that today non organic items carries contamination of chemicals. The Green Revolution caused lot of unprecedented pressure on our natural resources. Green Revolution has encouraged an increase in the production of mainly two crops, wheat and rice, but the cost paid was in terms of destruction of other crops (especially coarse cereals and pulses) and over exploitation of precious water resources and fertile soils by use of heavy doses of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and heavy farm mechanization. Growing consumers' concerns on food safety, health and environment in the recent decade has resulted increased demand for organic food across the world, including emerging economies such as India.

This paper attempted to gain knowledge about consumer attitude towards organic food products and reveals 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 among consumers about organic food products. For this purpose various journals and on the air data has been studied.

Key words: organic products, user awareness consumer attitudes.

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Introduction

“It always seems impossible until it’s done”

.....Nelson Mandela

In this era of junk foods and adulterated food products, a nutritious food substitute seems a luxury. The relentless campaign by environmentalists and health activists has been relatively successful in spreading the awareness about organic farming and the advantages of organic food products.¹ Awareness and knowledge has become a crucial factor in changing the attitude and behavior of consumers towards organic foods, which in turn drives the growth in the organic food markets. The demand for environmentally friendly products such as organic foods has significantly increased due to increasing awareness on health, food safety and environmental concerns. It has been argued that the consumer awareness & knowledge as well as consumption of organic foods are significantly higher in developed countries as compared to developing countries. In countries like India, where organic food markets are still in the early phase of its growth, comparatively have low level of consciousness.

Making a commitment to healthy eating is a great start towards a healthier life. Beyond eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and good fats, however, there is the question of food safety, nutrition, and sustainability. Specific requirements must be met and maintained in order for products to be labeled as "organic". In current scenario, to study about organic is essential to everybody in terms of body health.²

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. The pattern of organic food consumption in India is much different than in the, developed countries. In India, consumers prefer organic marmalade,

¹Nirmala Guttal, “Consumer awareness of organic products on the rise” August 12, 2013 Available at: <http://www.supportbiz.com/content/tag/ASSOCHAM%20study>

² M.Gomathi, Dr.S.Kalyani, “A Study on Awareness on Organic Food Products Among General Public in Erode City, Tamilnadu, India, Indian Journal of Applied Research Volume : 3,Issue :12, Dec 2013,p.277.

organic strawberry, organic tea, organic honey, organic cashew, butter and various organic flours.³

However, the Indian organic food product user 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. Consumer is said to be king of the market.⁴ Hence, it is the responsibility of the government agencies and NGOs, classroom teaching by teachers and informal lessons by parents to create awareness among the users of the organic products.

Organic Products: Setting out the Concept

‘Organic’ is a labeling term that denotes products produced under the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act. Organic food products are produce from plants that have been grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and animals that have not been given antibiotics, and also by minimizing pollution from air, soil and water.⁵

The term “organic” refers to the way agricultural products are grown and processed. Specific requirements must be met and maintained in order for products to be labeled as "organic. “Organic crops must be grown in safe soil, have no modifications, and must remain separate from conventional products. Farmers are not allowed to use synthetic pesticides, bioengineered genes (GMOs), petroleum-based fertilizers, and sewage sludge-based fertilizers. Organic livestock must have access to the outdoors and be given organic feed. They may not be given antibiotics, growth hormones, or any animal-by-products.⁶ Organic food products (OFP), defined as “green products” (produced in an environmentally friendly manner), as safer products (produced with fewer herbicides and pesticides), or as generally more wholesome and nutritious products.⁷

³Mithilesh Verma and, V.K. Verma, “Consumers Opinion about Organic Food Products”, World Journal of Agricultural Sciences 9 (6): 2013 p. 443.

⁴ Dr.S.S.Srivastva, “The Consumer Protection Act” 1 Edn. Central Law Agency ,Allahabad,(2000) p.1

⁵ Dr.P.Radhika, et.al, “Eating Healthy-Consumer perception of organic foods in Twin Cities”, International Journal of Marketing, financial Services and Management Research”, Vol.1, No.2 February 2012 p. 67.

⁶ Lawrence Robinson, et.al. *Are Organic Foods Right for You? Understanding the Benefits of Organic Food and the Risks of GMOs and Pesticides*. Available at:

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-eating/organic-foods.htm#what>

⁷Su-Huey Quah, Andrew K. G. Tan, “Consumer Purchase Decisions of Organic Food Products: An Ethnic Analysis”, Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 22, 2010. p.47.

The word "organic" refers to the way farmers grow and process agricultural products, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy products and meat. Organic farming practices are designed to encourage soil and water conservation and reduce pollution. Farmers who grow organic produce don't use conventional methods to fertilize and control weeds. Examples of organic farming practices include using natural fertilizers to feed soil and plants, and using crop rotation or mulch to manage weeds.⁸

Benefits of organic food products

Organic foods provide a variety of benefits. Some studies show that organic foods have more beneficial nutrients, such as antioxidants, than their conventionally grown counterparts. In addition, people with allergies to foods, chemicals, or preservatives often find their symptoms lessen or go away when they eat only organic foods. In addition:

1. ***Organic produce contains fewer pesticides.*** Pesticides are chemicals such as fungicides, herbicides, and insecticides. These chemicals are widely used in conventional agriculture and residues remain on (and in) the food we eat.
2. ***Organic food is often fresher.*** Fresh food tastes better. Organic food is usually fresher because it doesn't contain preservatives that make it last longer. Organic produce is often produced on smaller farms near where it is sold.
3. ***Organic farming is better for the environment.*** Organic farming practices reduce pollution (air, water, soil), conserve water, reduce soil erosion, increase soil fertility, and use less energy. Farming without pesticides is also better for nearby birds and small animals as well as people who live close to or work on farms.
4. ***Organically raised animals are NOT given antibiotics, growth hormones, or fed animal byproducts.*** The use of antibiotics in conventional meat production helps create antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria. This means that when someone gets sick from these strains they will be less responsive to antibiotic treatment. Not feeding animal byproducts to other animals reduces the risk of mad cow disease . In addition, the animals are given more space to move around and access to the outdoors, both of which help to keep the animals healthy.
5. ***Organic food is GMO-free.*** Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) or genetically engineered (GE) foods are plants or animals whose DNA has been altered in ways

⁸Available at: http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/basics/nutrition-basics/hlv-20049477?_ga=1.194976105.553828814.1421497726

that cannot occur in nature or in traditional crossbreeding, most commonly in order to be resistant to pesticides or produce an insecticide. In most countries, organic crops contain no GMOs and organic meat comes from animals raised on organic, GMO-free feed.⁹

6. Growers and consumers of organic food products (raw vegetables and fruits, in particular) widely claim that organic food products have a better self-life and taste. Evidences suggest that food items produced using alternative sources of crop nutrients (i.e. without fertilizers) foods were more nutritious than those produced conventionally. Organic food products generally had more of vitamins, minerals and less of nitrates than those grown with conventional agricultural food. This aspect can contribute to the nutrition security of a nation and equally to its food security.¹⁰
7. Consumption of organic food products also reduces the risk at which one can get cancer which is very important.
8. These foods don't result in the emission of greenhouse gases which affect and unstabilize the atmospheric conditions
9. Benefits of organic foods are multipronged. Improved taste, flavor and shelf life of organic products can be seen immediately in short term. The health benefits of consuming organic food though scientifically not proven and quantified, over a period of time, one surely can realize the difference in healthier lifestyle. Real benefits of Organic foods are to be seen over time, as nature intended to be.
10. Synthetic chemical based agriculture is not a sustainable way of agriculture. The farmlands over a period of time become fallow and the productivity drops drastically. World over, area under organic and natural farming is increasing every year. Organic inputs fed to land in organic farming enrich the soil to produce better crops over and over. In times, when world population is fast growing, organic farming plays a key role in feeding humanity in sustainable basis.¹¹

No, "natural" and "organic" are not interchangeable terms. "Natural" on packaged food is an unregulated term that can be applied by anyone, whereas organic certification means that set production standards have been met. These production standards vary from country to country—in the U.S., for example, only the "USDA Organic" label indicates that a food is

⁹ Lawrence Robinson, *Supra note*.

¹⁰ D.Kumara Charyulu, Subho Biswas, "Organic Input Production and Marketing in India – Efficiency, Issues and Policies", CMA Publication No – 239, September, 2010, p.31.

¹¹ Available at: <http://www.organa.in/homepage.html>

certified organic. Similar certification labels are also offered on organic products in other parts of the world, including the European Union, Canada, and Australia.¹²

Consumer Attitudes and Preferences

The growth of organic farming in India has helped consumers to choose healthier food products over non organic food products. The total volume of organic food products during the year 2013-2014 amounts to around 1.24 million MT of which 194,088 MT were for exports. This translates to almost a million plus ton of organic food products for domestic consumption. The health benefit of organic food product is well known and this has increased the demand for organic products within the country. Though there is strong demand for organic food products there is a considerable resistance to organic food products due to price difference with respect to non organic products. This variation in price is playing a significant role in consumer preference towards organic food.

Many research argued that consumers describe organic produce as natural, unprocessed and free from growth hormones. The common understanding of consumers on organic produces is that these have no pesticides; no artificial fertilizer, and residue-free safe products. Moreover, consumers often perceive organic produce as healthier with higher vitamin and mineral contents than conventional products and are environment friendly can be called welfare associated with organic production and can be termed as *Humanists*. *Secondly* the *Food Phobics* are conscious consumers who don't like unsafe foods and try to choose healthy options. They avoid eating unsafe foods as they come to know from sources like doctor or media and past incidents that it has negative impact on health. *Thirdly* *Healthy Eaters* are 'food smart' who takes balance diet with recommended quantity of nutrients & vitamins and calorie intake. *'Environmentalists'* named to the fourth factor with concerned statements about environment and wildlife. The last factor, *Hedonists* related to belief that price premium on foods signals a better product.¹³

Factors Affecting Consumers' Awareness of Organic Foods

There are some of the factors affecting consumer's awareness on organic food products. Those are gender, education level, stream of education, income level are likely important socio-demographic factors affecting the awareness level of the consumers on organic food. E.g. male members in a family are two-times more likely be aware on organic

¹² See at: <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-eating/organic-foods.htm#what>

¹³ Sushil Kumar, Jabir Ali, "Analyzing the Factors Affecting Consumer Awareness on Organic Foods in India", Symposium ID: 282, June 20-23, 2011 p.7

food than female counterpart. Education and stream of education of the consumers have significant role to play on awareness level. Consumer with annual income of more than Rs. 5 lakhs are two-times more likely to have awareness on organic food. Similarly, consumers having food safety concerns and access ICT based information for food purchase decisions are more likely to have better awareness on organic foods.¹⁴

Indian consumers are living in a dynamic world these days. They are continuously coming across new things in the world of food. Organic food is one such new phenomenon that is widely talked about but rarely understood. Availability is also a big challenge which results in low incidence of organic food products – both, in terms of trials and repeat purchases. Consequently, instead of travelling long distances to purchase less frequently stocked organic fruits or milk, consumers prefer to purchase their regular options from nearby locations.

Also, while consumers believe that the high prices of organic products may be justified due to associated health benefits and freshness, their lack of surety about the latter makes the high prices pinch the wallet and prevents organic products from becoming a part of regular grocery purchases.

On the whole, the lack of awareness and knowledge about organic foods percolates within the category to organic fruits and dairy products as well. Consumers feel unsure of the authenticity of these products due to lack of standardization of certifications and claims made by the companies.¹⁵

Among non-users of organic fruits and dairy products, the key factors that inhibit trial are high prices and low availability in the market. With the consumers' price perception already not in favour of these organic food products, the insufficient availability makes it even more daunting for them to even try out these products.

Lack of information and awareness about the products also prevents them for purchasing since they are not sure what they are paying for.¹⁶

Awareness on Organic Food Products among General Public

Consumers today operate in increasingly complex markets, challenged by growing amounts of information and an expanding choice of products. Making good choices and protecting their interests require a wider range of skills and knowledge. Consumer education

¹⁴ *Ibid* p.8.

¹⁵ Pratiche Kapoor, Shruti Garyali, "Organic Food Market in India" www.technopak.com 2011-12 p.10.

¹⁶ *Ibid*

is critical in this regard; it can be defined as a process of developing and enhancing skills and knowledge to make informed and well-reasoned choices that take societal values and objectives into account. Today consumer education covers more diverse areas than it has in the past. It now covers, for example, consumer rights and obligations, personal finance, sustainable consumption, and digital media and technology. Such education should be viewed as a long-term and continuous process that develops better decision making and skills throughout consumers' lives.¹⁷

In recent times, the environment has emerged as a hot issue for societies, governments in addition to business organizations. Its significance originates from escalating environmental degradation such as solid wastes, ozone depletion, global warming and air pollution. It is observed that different activities of business organizations like sourcing, manufacturing, logistics, and marketing have a negative impact on the environment and also considered to be the source of most of the environmental problems. All through time, people's health, both on the individual and the community level have been affected through environmental problems.¹⁸

Michael Pollan said: "If it comes from a plant, eat it. If it was made in a plant, don't." He advised this for the sake of our health and the health of the planet - social, economic, environmental, and spiritual. It is all connected.

Generally, organic food is often more expensive than conventionally grown food. But if you set some priorities, it may be possible to purchase organic food and stay within your food budget. Purchase the organic versions of the foods you eat the most and those that are highest in pesticides if conventionally grown. Venture beyond the grocery store. Consider the following ideas for finding organic food:

Grow food: All of us can grow at least one edible plant in our homes or spaces near our homes. It doesn't get any more fresh, local, or organic than that.

Buy local: encourage farmers near us who are first and foremost farming, under circumstances that are often difficult, and especially those who are trying to practice sustainable agriculture through low-external input, crop diversity, natural nourishment of the soil and plants, and non-pesticidal and non-herbicidal management of pests and weeds. You can find locally grown foods at the farmers' market or join community supported agriculture

¹⁷*Consumer Education: Policy Recommendations of the OECD'S Committee on Consumer Policy, DSTI/CP(2009)5/FINAL*

¹⁸ Dr. N. Ragavan, Dr. R. Mageh "A Study on Consumers' Purchase Intentions towards Organic Products" PARIPEX - Indian Journal of Research Volume: 2 Issue: 1, January 2013, p.111.

Avoid packaged food: As people's food habits move towards eating packaged and highly processed foods, eating will become an industrial act and the more industrial food we eat, the more industries will rise to manufacture, package, advertise and market those edible-food like substances. These industries create pollution and waste, in addition to landlessness, sponsored research, misinformed policy, and disease.¹⁹

Shop at farmers' markets. Many cities, as well as small towns, host a weekly farmers market, where local farmers bring their wares to an open-air street market and sell fresh produce direct to you. Often you will find items for less than you'd pay in the grocery store or supermarket.

Join a food co-op. Find out whether there is a natural foods co-op, also called a cooperative grocery store, in your area. Co-ops typically offer lower prices to members, who pay an annual fee to belong.

Join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, in which individuals and families join up to purchase "shares" of produce in bulk, directly from a local farm. Local and organic!²⁰

Point to remember while shop for organic products

Fruits and vegetables are cheapest and fresh when they are in season hence it is suggested that purchase them in season. Public can also find out when produce is delivered to the market. Compare the price of organic items at the grocery store, the farmers' market and any other venue remember that organic doesn't always equal healthy -Junk food can just as easily be made using organic ingredients. Making junk food sound healthy is a common marketing ploy in the food industry but organic baked goods, desserts, and snacks are usually still very high in sugar, salt, fat, or calories. It pays to read food labels carefully.²¹

Rights and Responsibilities of the Consumer

Consumer rights are now an integral part of our lives like a consumerist way of life. They have been well documented and much talked about. We have all made use of them at some point in our daily lives. Market resources and influences are growing by the day and so is the awareness of one's consumer rights. These rights are well-defined and there are

¹⁹ AID CARES - campaign on organic agriculture: consumer awareness, responsibility and empowerment, see at: <http://www.aidindia.org/main/>

²⁰ Lawrence Robinson, *et.al.* *Are Organic Foods Right for You?* Understanding the Benefits of Organic Food and the Risks of GMOs and Pesticides. *Supra* note 7.

²¹ *Ibid*

agencies like the government, consumer courts and voluntary organisations that work towards safeguarding them. While we all like to know about our rights and make full use of them, consumer responsibility is an area which is still not demarcated and it is hard to spell out all the responsibilities that a consumer is supposed to shoulder. These rights are as follows:

1. Right to Safety

Consumer right to safety is as vast in its purview as the market reach itself. It applies to all possible consumption patterns and to all goods and services. In the context of the new market economy and rapid technological advances affecting the market, the right to safety has become a pre-requisite quality in all products and services.

2. Right to information

Right to information means the right to be given the facts needed to make an informed choice or decision about factors like quality, quantity, potency, purity standards and price of product or service. The right to information now goes beyond avoiding deception and protection against misleading advertising, improper labeling and other practices. Ideally, a consumer should have knowledge of the entire 'cradle to grave' journey of the product to determine whether it's safe and beneficial for use or not.

3. Right to Choice

The right to choice has a very different definition in developing countries. For a population dependent on the environment for livelihood, the right to choice and other consumer rights need a shift in focus. The focus needs to be on choice of good practices like organic farming and conservation of natural heritage. In cities, people should be able to choose cleaner and safer ways of transportation over polluting ones. Similarly, healthy and fresh food should be chosen over junk food. The right to choose must essentially be a consumer's right to choose a safe and healthy product of good quality over an unsafe or defective product.

4. Right to be Heard

The right to be heard means that consumers should be allowed to voice their opinions and grievances at appropriate fora. Consumers should also have a right to voice their opinion when rules and regulations pertaining to them are being formulated. The right to be heard holds special significance in the Indian context because Indian consumers are largely unaware of their rights and passively accept their violation. Even when they have legal recourse, they prefer not to use it for fear of getting embroiled in legal complexities. To allay consumer fears and to allow them to express their views and grievances, consumer forums

have been in existence in India for a long time. Consumers have been approaching these forums and consumer NGOs regarding their problems and complaints.

5. Right to Consumer Education

Consumer education empowers consumers to exercise their consumer rights. It is perhaps the single most powerful tool that can take consumers from their present disadvantageous position to one of strength in the marketplace. Consumer education is dynamic, participatory and is mostly acquired by hands-on and practical experience. Consumer education can play a crucial role in protecting consumers against such dangers. In the Indian context, sustainability and traditional knowledge can play a vital role in empowering consumers but consumers are unable to connect to their knowledge base. Consumer education can rejoin the broken link and make traditional knowledge accessible to consumers again. Some sources of consumer education are past experiences of consumers, information dissemination by government agencies and NGOs, classroom teaching by teachers and informal lessons by parents.

Consumer Responsibility

Consumer responsibility can play a very important role in not only checking the market but also in restricting unnecessary consumption. It is not the sole responsibility of the market or of the government to provide consumers with detailed information. A consumer, on his part, must make every effort to inform himself of the product or service. Consumer responsibility is based on ethics and rationale.

a. Responsibility to endorse safer products

Eco-friendliness is an important criterion in judging a product's feasibility. It is a way of assessing how much damage a product has caused to the environment. 'Eco-mark' is one way of knowing which products conform to environmental standards and are more environment-friendly than others.

b. Young Consumers and Consumer Responsibility

Children, teenagers and youth constitute a very important consumer segment for the market. Their consumption habits are unique and their purchase decisions are based on popular trends, brand image, use of new technology, flavour of food products, and style. The market also realizes that young consumers have a propensity to consumer junk food and prefer them over traditional forms of food. This characteristic is exploited by the market by associating convenience and a brand image with junk food like colas, pizzas, and fast-food joints.

c. Women consumer

Women consumers not only constitute 50% of the total consumer population but also make 80% of all purchase decisions. They are being specifically targeted by the market because of their growing purchasing power and their 'working-woman' status. Now, women have the dual role of family-makers and work professionals to play. As a result, they have less time, increased pressures and are slowly being de-linked from their traditional knowledge bank. The market takes advantage of this situation by offering to women instant services and products, like fast-food, 'two-minute' snacks, and refrigerators and washing machines with supposedly better technologies. Women consumers have the responsibility of choosing products that are not just convenient but also safe to use and eco-friendly. They must evaluate the nutrition content of food products before buying them and weight their quality with traditional foods that are less-expensive, have better nutritional scores and consume less resources like packaging and transportation.²²

Organic Products Certification

Certifying agencies play an important role for producers and consumers in facilitating access to organic markets, especially on the export and domestic level. Some of the certifying agencies are as follows:

USDA - United States Department of Agriculture

The USDA organic certification verifies that all United States Department of Agriculture regulations, requirement and specifications are adhered to. It covers a wide range of detailed monitoring and control measures. It is one of the most comprehensive and demanding certification systems to ensure absolute commitment to Organic Certification qualifications as established by the United States Department of Agriculture.

GMP- Good Manufacturing Practices

GMP certification verifies that all required practices necessary for an effective food safety program are being followed. It addresses hygiene in all aspects of the manufacturing process, including premises and equipment, primary production, packaging, warehousing,

²² Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, available at: <http://consumer-voice.org/Index.aspx>

distribution, pest control and waste management, as well as routine personal hygiene of personnel.

HACCP -Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points

HACCP based Food Safety Management System registration and certification verifies that World Health Organization standards are met in the management of food safety and hygiene. The HACCP based Food Safety Management System Registration is based on the “Criteria for assessment of an operational HACCP system”. It is an accredited registration scheme for assessing the operational status and performance of a HACCP based Food Safety Management System to ensure the safety of foodstuffs. Organizations that successfully complete the assessment earn both a highly regarded HACCP certificate and registration, communicating to consumers, retailers, governmental authorities and other interested parties that they can have justified confidence in the way that organization controls food safety and food hygiene.

ISO 9001: 2008

ISO Certification has become a most essential pre- requisite, world over. There is no better guarantee than ISO Certification in earning the buyer’s confidence and recognition for a product, internationally. ISO standards ensure vital features such as quality, ecology, safety, economy, reliability, compatibility, inter-operability, efficiency and effectiveness. They facilitate trade, spread knowledge, and share technological advances and good management practices. ISO standards provide practical solutions and achieve benefits for almost every sector of business, industry and technology, and for all three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, environmental and social.

EU Organic Certification

The EU organic logo guarantees that the product in question complies with the common European organic food standards. Consumers buying products bearing this logo can be confident that at least 95% of the product's ingredients have been organically produced, the product complies with the rules of the official inspection scheme, the product has come directly from the producer or preparer in a sealed package and that the product bears the name of the producer, the preparer or vendor and the name or code of the inspection body.

The hope is that in the long term the EU logo will be able to solve the trade problems that the organic food sector faces today.

NOP Exportation of 04 Fiber Harmony- Organic Tri-active (Flavoured Psyllium) blends from Control Union

"The NOP Processing & Exportation certificate of 18 Teas & 04 Fiber Harmony-Organic Tri-active (Flavoured Psyllium) blends certificate from Control Union opened up new avenues for sales in USA of these products after being Processed & Packaged for Exports in our own Lucknow facility. The Products being manufactured at Lucknow unit is meets the requirements of NOP-USDA Organic Production norms and is certified Organic by the Control Union International, a third party certification agency.

NPOP India Organic

Indian National Standards for Organic Production & India Organic Logo is governed by APEDA, which provides national standards for organic products through a National Accreditation Policy and Programme. The aims of the National Programme for organic production include: (1) to provide the means of evaluation of certification programmes for organic agriculture & products as per internationally approved criteria. (2) To accredit certification programmes. (3) To facilitate certification of organic products in conformity to the National Standards for Organic Products. (4) To encourage the development of organic farming and organic processing.²³

Conclusion

The perception towards organic products, beliefs about product safety for use, belief about product friendliness to the environment and availability of product information are the major determinants for the consumers' purchase intention towards organic products. Since only more than one third of the consumers are buyers of organic products, there is a greater market potential for organic products in Chennai. Consequently, it is very much important if communication message or educational activities can be initiated at the earlier stage before the consumption behaviours becomes habit. Events such as organic product fairs and shows should be held and showed among young consumers at their early age before they reach the stage of determining their future identity and self-values.

²³Organic Certification, Available at: <http://www.organicindia.co.in/organic-india-about-us.php>

Through a better understanding of the sustainable development in its ecological and social diversity and integrating it to promote organic agriculture towards sustainable human development will enhance local communities with socio-economic empowerment.