ABSTRACT

Consumers are concerned about food produced using conventional large scale agri production systems which make use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Large scale use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides pollute the environment. The residue of pesticides on food materials can harm the health of humans. Organic foods are produced without use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. This study seeks to identify the factors which motivate and deter the consumers from purchasing organic food.

Keywords: Henry Garett ranking Technique, Organic foods

INTRODUCTION

There has been an increasing discomfort in the minds of the consumers with regard to use of food produced using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. In addition to health concern, consumers are also worried about its environmental impact. Organic food refers to food produced by methods that comply with the standards of organic farming. Standards vary worldwide but organic farming in general features practices that strive to cycle resources, promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity. Organizations regulating organic products may restrict the use of certain pesticides and fertilizers in farming. (Wikipedia). Materials and methods that enhance the ecological balance of natural systems are used in production of Organic Foods. Organic food is produced without pesticides, herbicides, inorganic fertilizers, antibiotics and growth hormones. (Honkanen et al 2006)

According to TechSci Research report, ‘India Organic Food Market by Product Type, Competition Forecast and Opportunities, 2011-2021’, Indian organic food market is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of over 25% during 2016-2021. Health conscious consumers are opting for organic food while the government is also making efforts to increase adoption of organic food, by way of launching various policies and expanding land area under organic cultivation. Organic pulses and food grains dominated demand for organic food in India in 2015 and is expected to dominate the market through 2021. The western states in India dominated the demand for organic food. (www.techsciresearch.com) In this context it will be beneficial to study the factors which motivate as well deter the purchase of organic foods.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Richa et al (2016) examined the motivations and impediments to buy organic food as also perceptions of organic food through survey of 150 respondents of Delhi and NCR of Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Noida (India). The intention to purchase organic products is dependent on consumer’s belief on the safety and health aspect of the product, trust and certification, information and availability and lifestyle. The impeding factors were identified like doubt in the professed quality of organic food, lack of awareness and price parity.
Cabuk et al (2014) examined the effect of health consciousness, environmental concern and food safety concern on both intention towards buying organic food and attitude towards organic foods. It was found that the attitude to buy organic foods play a fundamental role both in terms of direct impact on the intention to buy organic foods and the indirect impact as a mediator on how health consciousness, environmental concern and food safety affect the intention to buy organic foods. Teng et al (2014) tried to understand how information revealed on organic food labels and perceived organic knowledge drive consumer trust and attitudes towards organic foods.

Shafie et al (2012) aimed an evaluation of the literature on the consumer attitude towards organic food and concluded that understanding the determinants of increasing levels of organic food consumption such as motivation, behavior, beliefs and demographic variables are most critical in understanding the potential of the organic market to keep up with its increasing growth. Paul et al (2012) found that health, availability and education from demographic factors positively influence the consumer’s attitude towards buying organic food. Overall satisfaction of consumers for organic food is more than inorganic food but the satisfaction level varies due to different factors.

Magistris et al (2008) investigated the consumers’ decision making process for organically produced foods in Italy. It was found that larger information on organic food market results in higher consumer organic food knowledge which positively influences attitudes towards organic food.

Hughner et al (2007) integrated and synthesized the findings of published research on organic food consumption and identified several themes that reflect the various rationales used by consumers when deciding to purchase organic food. Health and nutritional concern, Superior taste, Concern for environment, Food safety-lack of confidence in conventional food industry, concern over animal welfare, More wholesomeness, Nostalgia and Fashionable/Curiosity are the themes identified with regard to consumer purchase motives. The themes with regard to deterrents of organic food purchase are High price premiums, Lack of organic food availability-poor merchandising, Skepticism of certification boards and organic labels ,Insufficient marketing, Satisfaction with current food source and Sensory defects . Honkanen et al (2006) studied the relations between ethical food choice motives, attitudes and intention to consume organic food by estimating a structural equation model.

Lockie et al (2002) studied the motives behind food choice and the ways in which organics and food related issues are constructed by Australian food consumers. Davies et al (1995) investigated purchasing behaviour of organic food in Northern Ireland and concluded that the main reasons for purchase of organic food was taste, health and environment. The primary factor in organic food purchase was found to be the (largely female) consumers’ level of personal disposable income.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the factors which motivate consumers to purchase of organic food from the extant literature
2. To identify the factors which deter consumers from purchasing organic food from the extant literature
3. To rank the motivating and deterrent factors with respect to purchase of organic foods in order of importance to the consumer, using Henry Garett Ranking Technique.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 56 respondents in Kochi were given a list of the motivating and deterrent factors with respect to purchase of organic food, identified from the extant literature and asked to rank them in order of importance. Convenience sampling was used. The ranks given by the respondents were then tabulated based on Garrett’s Ranking Technique.
FACTORS WHICH MOTIVATE CONSUMERS TO PURCHASE ORGANIC FOOD

From the extant literature the following factors were identified which motivate consumers to purchase organic food.

**Health Concern:** The consumers have become more health consciousness as the prevalence of lifestyle diseases is on the rise. Hence the consumers are attracted to food products that they perceive to be healthy. Perception on organic food to be healthy significantly influences the intention to purchase organic food. (Richa et al 2016) Those consumers who consider organic food products to be healthier present a higher intention to purchase organic food products. (Magistris et al 2008) Davies et al (1995) found that health concern was an important reason for purchase of organic food products. Consumers purchase organic foods for a significant reason of health benefits. (Paul et al 2012)

**Taste:** The consumers perceive that the small amount of vegetables they grow in their home gardens without chemicals is tastier than the ones which have been produced by conventional ways of farming and available for purchase in the markets. They perceive that the organic food which is also produced without pesticides and chemical fertilizers will be tastier. Davies et al (1995) found that taste was an important reason for purchase of organic food products.

**Concern for Environment:** The concern for environment has increased among the consumers with reporting of increased levels of pollution due to industries, conventional agricultural practices and developmental activities. Hence the consumers are attracted to organic food products which are grown without use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, the use of which are known to damage the environment. The intention to purchase organic food is significantly influenced by perception on organic food to be environmentally friendly. (Richa et al 2016) Consumer attitude towards environment is an important factor that explains consumers’ decision making process for organic food products. (Magistris et al 2008) Davies et al (1995) found that concern for environment was an important reason for purchase of organic food products.

**Food Safety:** With increase in diseases like cancer, heart ailments etc. and the main reason attributed to food habits consumers concern for food safety has increased. Various instances of food scare have decreased the consumers trust in conventional food products. Safety concern is a major motive of organic food purchase. (Harper et al 2002)

**Fashionable Lifestyle:** Organic food has received considerable coverage in the media recently and this has placed organic foods as a fashionable item. (Hill et al 2002)

**Concern for Animal Welfare:** Today’s consumers are very much concerned about animal welfare issues in agri production systems. Ethical concerns specifically in relation to standards of animal welfare play a significant influencing role in the decision to purchase organic food. Animal welfare is used by consumers as an indicator of more important product attributes such as safety and impact on health. (Harper et al 2002)

**Nostalgia:** There is frequent complaint among the aged population that food does not taste as good as in bygone times. The middle aged consumers also perceive a lack of taste in the food as compared to food served by their mothers when they were young. There is nostalgia with regard to the times when most of the vegetables came from the home garden or the immediate locality. Chinnici et al (2002) in their study identified a nostalgic group who associated consumption of organic produce with the genuineness and tastes of the past.

**Availability:** The availability of organic food in shopping centres, where consumers purchase from, motivates the consumers to purchase organic products. Lack of time may be a deterrent in seeking out specialty stores which sell organic products but the availability of organic foods can induce consumers to purchase organic foods. Availability of Organic Products affects intention to buy organic products. (Paul et al 2012)
Trust and Certification: One of the main doubts in the minds of the consumers is whether the food marketed as organic is indeed grown according to methods which comply with standards of organic farming. If the consumers are able to trust the product and the certification they will be sure to buy the organic food products. Intention to purchase organic food is dependent on trust and certification. (Richa et al 2016) Trust serving as an antecedent of attitudes significantly mediates the relationship between revealing information, perceived knowledge and organic food purchase intentions. (Teng et al 2014)

FACTORS WHICH DETER CONSUMERS TO PURCHASE ORGANIC FOOD

High Price Premiums: The price premiums charged on organic food products are high. Hence many consumers cannot afford to buy the organic food products. One of the major inhibiting factors in the purchase and growth of organic products is the price disparity between organic and conventional food products. (Richa et al 2016) Paul et al (2012) identified high price as the second most important inhibiting factor with regard to purchase of organic food after non availability.

Lack of Availability: Organic foods are mostly sold in speciality stores. Also the quantity of organic foods available is less compared to food cultivated by conventional methods of farming. This acts a deterrent in purchase of organic foods. Non availability of organic food was cited as the major reason for not purchasing organic food. (Paul et al 2012) Lack of availability was found to be the second most important impeding factor for purchase of organic foods after Lack of ability to identify organic foods.(Biemans 2011)

Lack of Awareness: Many consumers are not aware about the availability of organic foods which are perceived to be healthier and safer than conventional foods. The lack of ability to recognize organic food was considered by consumers as the most important factor that discourages them to buy organic food. (Biemans 2011)

Lack of trust in Organic labels: : Many consumers lack trust on organic labels, they wonder whether the organic foods sold under the labels are indeed cultivated by following the principles of organic farming. Some studies have found that consumers tend to distrust certification bodies leading them to question the genuineness of organic foods. (Aarset et al 2004)

Satisfaction with current food: Many consumers are satisfied with the current food they buy and hence have no intention to purchase organic food products. Roddy et al(1994) found consumer satisfaction with conventional food to be a key reason in not purchasing organic food.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2212</td>
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</tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>2320</td>
<td>41.43</td>
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Table 2-Ranking of Deterrents of Organic Food Purchase by Consumers

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</table>

RESULT

Table 1 shows that the most important factor which motivates consumers to buy organic foods is health and nutritional concern. The second most important motivator is taste of organic food. Many studies (Richa et al 2016, Magistris et al 2008, Davies et al 1995 and Paul et al 2012) have shown that health and nutritional concern is a very important factor which motivates the consumers to purchase organic food.

Table 2 shows that the main deterrent for purchase of organic foods is the high price of the organic food. The next most important deterrent to purchase of organic food was that it was not easily available.

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