



# A STUDY ON CONSUMERS BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD IN GUWAHATI

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**Abstract:** The concentration of organic production and outputs is crucial for the country's organic production to develop. The development of an effective marketing structure is critical for India's organic agriculture to thrive. In Guwahati, this article made a modest attempt to examine customer perceptions of organic products and marketing. The findings revealed that the majority of consumers, particularly in metropolitan areas, choose organic food products. Since organic product marketing is so poor in the studied area, demand for organic products is increasing but supply is quite low. The main causes include a lack of organic producers, a lack of suitable market facilities, a lack of outlets, a lack of awareness, and so on. As a result, if farmers and the government are interested in organic farming, it would be much easier to improve the marketing system for organic food items in Guwahati city.

**Index Term:** Organic Products, Price, Health, Consumer satisfaction, Guwahati city.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour has started to shift towards organic products over the last decade, particularly in food consumption, as most consumers believe that eating organic food is beneficial to health and that it grows with the use of organic manual labour and natural resources. As a result, consumer behaviour has transitioned towards organic food consumption, and safety and quality in food encourage consumers' interest in organic food. Organic agriculture aims to create healthy, high-quality meals without the use of synthetic chemical products. As a result, sustainable farming not only protects the environment but also improves community health, resulting in major economic and social advantages in rural communities. Consumer and government interest in organically grown foods has grown in recent years, mostly in industrialised nations, as a result of consumer concerns about food safety, people's health, and the environment. The organic food business has been steadily growing over the last decade, although its overall percentage of the entire food market remains tiny. Even in nations with well-developed organic industries, such as Switzerland, Austria, and Denmark, organic fresh produce consumption accounts for less than 5% of overall food consumption (Kilcher, Willer, Huber, Frieden, & Schmutz, 2011). Several previous studies have found that customer perceptions of organic food have a considerable effect on consumer choice (Azucena Gracia, 2007). Organic agriculture production and commerce have evolved as a significant industry in India. As in other developing countries worldwide, it is seen as a vital approach for promoting long-term development. Organic agricultural growth in India is gaining traction among farmers, producers, processors, traders, exporters, and consumers.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study was conducted on customers' perceptions and satisfaction with organic products. A total of 120 respondents from the Coimbatore district were chosen for this purpose using a stratified random selection technique. The sample was examined using simple percentage analysis, frequencies, and the chi-square test. The majority of the customers are aware of organic products and their health benefits, but they are not completely loyal. The study also concluded that the customers felt safe while purchasing organic products. The cost of organic products was on the higher side, but consumers were willing to pay the price as long as it was for the matter of health benefits (D Hari Priya, 2019).

Organic products are said to have a variety of health benefits. Organic products contain higher levels of minerals, antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, and other nutrients. It has also been discovered that the vast majority of organic foods do not contain any residue of synthetic pesticides or nitrates (Huber, 2014).

Another study on “Analysis of Circular Thinking in Consumer Purchase Intention to Buy Sustainable Waste-To-Value Foods” It has revealed that the younger age group (18–35) has a higher preference for purchasing sustainable products. The study also found that gender differences in the same age group have no effect on consumption patterns on organic products (Shahjahan Ali, 2021).

(Mohamed Bilal Basha, 2015) With a sample of 50 respondents, an attempt was made to investigate consumer attitudes about organic food. The study's goal was to forecast people's intentions to buy organic products. Environmental issues, health and lifestyle concerns, product quality, and subjective standards on the attitude toward organic products were the elements that influenced customers. According to the findings, these factors are the most often stated reasons for purchasing organic goods. The survey also revealed that the general population is becoming more knowledgeable of organic products, including their health benefits as well as environmental issues. Consumer attitudes vary, but their attitude regarding purchasing intent is often favorable.

(Chen, 2007) has attempted to comprehend the motivating variables that influence Taiwanese consumers' attitude towards organic food. According to the study, consumers' moods, environmental concerns, political values, and religion all have an influence on consumers' attitudes towards organic food products. Among the above-mentioned variables, the study showed that political values had a significant impact on consumers' positive attitudes towards organic products. The researchers emphasised the need for measures to be taken on food safety assurance by government agencies and to eliminate consumers' doubts about the product's legitimacy.

### III. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

With increased concerns about food safety and health, more customers are turning to organic products. The rise in consumer demand for organic food has been ascribed to a growing need for food free of pesticides and chemical residues, among other factors. Organic food helps to maintain a healthy balance between ourselves, other living species, and nature. It also encourages the use of no chemical preservatives and the preservation of food's authenticity. This avoids the overuse of dangerous compounds and so assures health. The goal of this study was to learn more about customer attitudes toward organic food products and determine whether there was any chance of influencing their behaviour. The study's argument is that environmental concern can only come from well-informed individuals who are fully aware of and devoted to their rights to good health and the environment. However, before changing any habit, it is vital to assess the present level of customer awareness and understanding. As a result, the major focus of this study will be on consumers' attitudes, perceptions of organic produce, and their willingness and ability to pay for organic produce goods.

### IV. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- understanding of customer attitudes about organic foods
- Intake and prospective market for organic food items in the research area
- Analyze the marketing challenges that organic products face and make recommendations for solutions.

### V. METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using primary data. The primary data was acquired by distributing structured questionnaires to customers using simple random sampling techniques. The data was analysed with the percentage analysis method.

### VI. SAMPLE DESIGN

The following sample size will be utilised to collect primary data in order to investigate demand determinants for organic goods and consumer perceptions of organic products in Guwahati.

### VII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The research was limited to organic food goods and market places in Guwahati City. The conclusion reached solely based on the replies of respondents in the research region.

### VIII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Classification of Respondents based on Gender

Sl. No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	52	52
2	Female	48	48
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

The above table 1 shows that 52 percent of respondents were male, while the remaining 48 percent were female. As a result, the vast majority of male respondents purchased organic items.

Table 2: Classification of Respondents based on Age

Sl. No.	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	18-30	30	30
2	31-40	38	38
3	41-50	18	18
4	51 and above	14	14
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Table 2 reveals that 30 percent of respondents are between the ages of 18 and 30, 38 percent are between the ages of 31 and 40, 18 percent are between the ages of 41 and 50, and the remaining 14 percent are beyond the age of 51. People between the ages of 18 and 30 are well-informed about organic products, and they buy more of them in the research region.

Table 3: Classification of Respondents based on Occupation

Sl. No.	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Employed	28	28
2	Self-Employed	22	22
3	Business	31	31
4	Student	19	19
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Table 3 reveals that 28 percent of Employed persons, 22 percent of Self-employed, 31 percent of Business, and 19% of students out of 100 respondents prefer to buy organic products in the study region, therefore we can conclude from the table and figure that more Business prefer organic food products.

Table 4: Reasons for purchasing of the Organic Food Products

Sl. No.	Influencing Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Health Benefits	58	58
2	High Quality	12	12
3	Low Price	9	9
4	Environmental Concern	21	21
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Table 4 reveals that 58 percent of respondents choose organic food to keep excellent health, 12% prefer high quality, 9% want low price, and the remaining 21 percent are more concern for environmental causes out of 100 respondents.

Table 5: Duration of Consumption of Organic Food Produce

Sl. No.	Duration in Years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	less than 1 Year	12	12
2	2 Year	11	11
3	3 Year	18	18
4	More than 3 Year	59	59
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Table 5 shows that 12 percent of respondents have been purchasing organic food products for one year, 11 percent have been using them for two years, 18 percent have been using them for three years, and the remaining 59 percent have been using them for more than three years.

Table 6: Purchase of Various of Organic Food Produce

Sl. No.	Food Products	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Vegetables	45	45
2	Fruits	11	11
3	Cereals, Pulses and Milk	7	7
4	All Organic Products	37	37
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Table 6 clearly illustrates that the majority of respondents (45%) buy vegetables since they are perishable in nature, 37 percent buy all organic items, 7 percent buy cereals, pulses & milk, and the remaining 11% buy fruits.

Table 7: Information about how respondents come to know about organic stores

Sl. No.	Sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Friends / Family	42	42
2	Direct Ads	14	14
3	Press Ads	10	10
4	Online Reference Ads	27	27
5	T.V Ads	7	7
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Table 7 demonstrates that respondents get more information about organic stores from friends/family (42%) than from direct mailers (14%), 27 percent from online reference websites, 10 percent from press advertisements, and just 7 percent from television advertisements. As a result, as compared to other information sources, knowledge about organic stores will be spread more by friends/family.

Table 8: Respondent preferences for quality while buying organic product

Sl. No.	Qualities	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Low	5	5
2	Standard	74	74
3	High	21	21
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Table 8 clearly illustrates that the majority of respondents (74%) choose standard quality organic goods, while 21% prefer higher quality, and the remaining 5% prefer low organic products.

Table 9: Consumers' satisfaction with the quality of organic products

Sl. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	92	92
2	No	8	8
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

According to Table 9, the majority of respondents (92 percent) are happy with the quality of organic products. However, only a small percentage of consumers (8%) are dissatisfied with organic products.

Table 10: Respondents' views on the cost of organic products in comparison to other organic stores

Sl. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very Good	9	9
2	High	73	73
3	Average	12	12
4	Equal	6	6
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

According to table 10, 73 percent of respondents believe that organic product prices are high because factors of production and procurement costs are higher than conventional products, 12 percent believe that organic product prices are average, 6% believe that organic product prices are similar to other organic products, and the remaining 9% believe that organic product prices are very good in the study area.

Table 11: The classification on frequently purchase habits of Respondents

Sl. No.	Timeline	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Daily	24	24
2	Weekly	67	67
3	Monthly	3	3
4	Occasionally	6	6
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Out of 100 responders, 67% buy organic items weekly, 24% buy daily, 6% occasionally, and 3% buy once a month.

Table 12: Respondents ranking for organic products

Sl. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Outstanding	7	7
2	Excellent	21	21
3	Good	57	57
4	Average	15	15
Total		100	100

Source: Primary survey 2022

Table 12 shows that the majority of respondents (57%) think organic products are good because they believe they are beneficial for their health, while the remainder 21% think they are great, 15% think they are ordinary, and 7% think they are outstanding.

## IX. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

According to the findings, respondents have a variety of issues while purchasing organic items in stores. The study's findings are as follows:

1. Organic products are not always available in the store. As fruits and vegetables are only delivered once a week in the store.
2. There is no decent product packaging system.
3. Because a greater percentage of farmers are not growing organic crops, organic products are not supplied all week.
4. There are several issues with preserving and storing organic products. Because no fertilizers or chemicals are used throughout the growing and storage process. As a result, it is exceedingly perishable in nature.
5. Because the price of organic products is so high, consumers are hesitant to purchase them. As the product's is not affordable to the average person.
6. Consumers are unfamiliar with the concept of organic products.
7. In the city, there are few stores that sell organic items.
8. When compared to non-organic items, organic products receive virtually little advertising.
9. One of the main factors that influences the purchasing of organic products is the consumer's educational background. The findings demonstrate that none of the respondents are illiterate, and the bulk of the consumers are college graduates.
10. A greater proportion of customers express satisfaction with the product, and all of them recommend it as being healthful in nature.

## X. SUGGESSTION

1. Farmer awareness and training programmes are necessary since an increasing number of farmers are not farming without the usage of pesticides. Because a farmer is exclusively interested in producing high-yielding commercial crops, he will use more chemical fertiliser and pesticides.
2. Government assistance: The government should encourage the growth of organic farming and farmers by providing appropriate organic food market facilities, financial assistance, and so on.
3. Infrastructure resources: Provide assistance to organic forming post-harvesting operations. Because yields may fall during the conversion phase, there is a need to give some type of incentive to impacted farmers.
4. Product packaging: Provide a proper packing facility for a certain product.
5. Marketing development: It is critical to expand into new marketing areas. Because organic products do not have a regulated market facility.
6. Because the market is regulated, provide separate price and market facilities in the domain alone. Because a growing percentage of customers want organic products.
7. Provide free certification services: The increased frequency of watching organic food product advertisements would impact the purchasing of organic food items.

## XI. CONCLUSION

India has enormous potential for a great revolution in organic agriculture, which is mostly unexplored. The government's efforts to simplify regulatory systems for improving organic products and raising awareness among local customers for domestic consumption would help organic farming flourish more quickly. Furthermore, we can all aid the farmer in growing the organic produce. When purchasing any product, not just organic items, customer experience plays a significant effect. As the supply of organic stores and products is restricted, but the demand is high, so farmers and the government are thinking about enhancing or boosting production of organic items, as well as appropriate packaging, quality, and market mechanisms. It helps farmers better their level of life and is also good for the environment, therefore it benefits the government. Organic product sales are increasing across the board. Organic food marketers must be creative and dynamic in order to compete with urban and rural residents' altering purchasing habits in the organic food sector.

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