

# A Study on Awareness, Knowledge and Perception towards Organic Food Products among Young Consumer in Patna District

Anushka<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Sunita Kumari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Researcher, Department of Home Science, Patna Women's College (Autonomous), Patna University, Patna-800001, India

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Home Science, Patna Women's College (Autonomous), Patna University, Patna-800001, India

Email ID: drsunita.ignou[at]gmail.com, anushkasinha670[at]gmail.com

**Abstract:** Organic agriculture is one of the fastest growing agricultural markets in India. A growing concern among consumers for healthy diet, high nutritional compounds, confidence in food safety, environmental and animal welfare concern and also sustainability has led to a spur in the demand of healthy and safe agricultural products among consumer across the globe. The consumer's consciousness regarding the negative effects caused by conventional farming is driving them to opt for organically grown and produced products. As a consequence of this, there is an increased inclination to grow and consume organic food obtained from organic farming. Thus, in this paper, an attempt has been made to study the awareness, knowledge and perception towards organic food products among young consumer in Patna District. The main objective of this study is to measure the level of awareness towards organic food products and to assess the factors affecting consumer purchase decision towards organic food products. The sample of the study comprised of 100 youth who were selected from different areas of Patna by simple random sampling technique. A schedule questionnaire and Likert scale was used to collect the desired information. The major findings of this study revealed that majority i.e., 92% of young consumer are aware about organic food products and about 57% of consumer were of opinion that organic food grown without the use of chemical and toxic substance, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, additives and colours and are grown by using natural materials.

**Keywords:** Organic agriculture, Organic food, Awareness, Knowledge, Perception

## 1. Introduction

An organic food is that which is raised, grown, stored and processed without the use of synthetically produced chemicals or fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, or any other pesticides and growth hormones as growth regulators. Organic food is the product of farming system which avoid the use of man-made fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators and livestock feed additives. Irradiation and the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or products produced from or by GMOs are generally prohibited by organic legislation. Organic foods are foods produced by method that comply with the standard of organic farming. Organic farming means all kind of agricultural products are produced organically. This includes agricultural products such as grains, meat, dairy, eggs, fiber such as cotton, flowers, and processed food products. Organic farming management relies on developing biological diversity in the field to disrupt habitat for pest organisms. It is the fastest growing sectors in India. Organic farming is a holistic production management which maintains long term fertility of the soil in a safe and natural way. Sir Albert Howard (1873 to 1974) is a father of organic farming and he observed the method of cultivation and he adopted techniques by the local farmers in India and later he learned that composting method gives nutrients to soil. He made a document and develop organic farming techniques and spread the knowledge of organic farming to UK based soil association.

In present global scenario, the awareness and knowledge have become decisive factor in changing of consumer attitude and behaviour towards organic food. Now-a-days

consumers have become more conscious about food safety and quality because today's generation is at higher risk over chronic diseases which is causing serious health problems like asthma, cancer, heart disease, birth disorder, arthritis. It can also be linked with the numerous diseases allergies, obesity and immunity system, even youth and children are exposed to the obesity due to change in lifestyle and food habits main reason being the flare for the junk and adulterated food products. Currently the demand for the qualitative and healthy agricultural products is increasing rapidly due to the increased awareness regarding one's own health. Hence, the production and consumption of organic food increased rapidly over the last 20 years with an annual average growth rate of 20 to 25%. The increase in demand and consumption of organic food is mainly due to an increasing number of consumers associating significant environmental, biodiversity, ethical and food quality safety benefits with organic foods.

A scientific study published in the Journal of Applied Nutrition in 1993 clearly showed that organic food is very nutritious with compare to conventional food. Organically and conventionally grown apples, potatoes, pears, wheat, and sweet corn were purchased more by the people The organically grown food approximately 73% higher in iron, 118% higher in magnesium, 63% higher in calcium, 91% higher in phosphorus, 178% higher in molybdenum, 125% higher in potassium and 60% higher in zinc. The organic food averaged 29% lower in mercury than the conventionally raised food which is the harmful aspect for the human health.

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### Objectives

- To measure the level of awareness, knowledge and perception regarding organic food products among young consumer.
- To identify the factors affecting consumer purchase decision towards organic food products.

### Hypothesis

- The level of awareness regarding organic food products among young consumer is satisfactory.

### Need of the Study

The increasing consumption of non-organic food is causing serious health problems like asthma, cancer, birth disorder, arthritis etc. Despite all these serious problems, people still have a greater tendency to consume these food products and a weak inclination towards organic products is seen. In India, there are some initiatives of organic farming in the state of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Nonetheless, these initiatives and organic products has gone unnoticed by majority of the Indian consumers. A review of past literature reveals that very few studies have been conducted in India on organic foods and the reason for its low preference. There is a growing need to explore the consumer perception and attitude towards organic food in India. The present research was carried out with the aim to examine the level of awareness, attitude, behaviour and preference for organic food products among young consumer which helps to understand their perception towards organic food products.

### Problem of the Study

Today's generation is at higher risk over chronic diseases which is the largest causes of morbidity and mortality. This could be due to an account of consumption of pesticides content non-organic food products which is very harmful for the health. The poverty situation, lack of awareness and unfamiliar with factors associated with organic food products had also forced the people of India to select only the available products instead of opting alternative choices. Creating awareness regarding organic food products among young consumer is very important as they are the upcoming generation they should be educated about the merits of consuming organic products and the consumer who feel that price of organic products is premium they should also consider the risk of consuming unsafe products and consequently allocating huge amount for health care. Paying high price for organic products today is an investment for tomorrow's good health. This research has undertaken among young consumer and mainly focuses on their awareness level, attitude, behaviour and perception towards organic food products.

## 2. Methods and Materials

A descriptive and exploratory research design was followed to conduct the present study. The data collected for the study includes primary and secondary data. The scheduled questionnaire and Likert scale was prepared for collecting the information about respondents. Tabulation and frequency distribution method were taken for the data analysis. The study area under consideration was selected from the north-eastern part of the Patna district. Youth aged between 20-30 years have been taken for the study. Patna

district of Bihar was selected purposively for the present research work because of the easy accessibility of the researcher. Four areas (Patliputra, Frazer Road, Boring Road, Gola Road) under the category of the supermarkets and malls were selected purposively for the present study. Simple random sampling method is being followed in the present study. Hundred respondents were purposively selected for the present study. Out of the total 100 respondents selected, 25 respondents are distributed in each of the four area. The population of the study is the youth, who have either purchased or not purchased organic food products in Patna district. In order to address the issue, the schedule was pre-assessed with 20-25 respondents involved in the nearby actual study area.

## 3. Result and Discussion

**Table 1.1:** General Information of the Respondents

Variables	Category	
	No. of Respondents = 100	
	Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48	48%
Female	52	52%
<b>Socio economic status</b>		
Upper class	6	6%
Upper middle class	14	14%
Middle class	66	66%
Lower middle class	10	10%
Lower class	4	4%
<b>Education Qualification</b>		
Intermediate	22	22%
Graduate	58	58%
Post graduate	11	11%
PHD	9	9%
<b>Occupational Status</b>		
Government employee	10	10%
Private employee	12	12%
Business/Self employed	15	15%
Student	63	63%
Any other	2	2%
<b>Monthly household income</b>		
Below 10,000	15	15%
10,000-20,000	21	21%
40,000-50,000	48	48%
50,000 and above	16	16%

### Primary Data

To assess the knowledge regarding demographic profile of the respondents the table 1.1 has been created the findings of the table clearly indicates that 42% of respondents are male and 52% of respondents are female. Majority of respondents i.e., 66% belongs to the middle-class family and about 14% of the respondents belongs to the upper middle class and 10% belongs to the lower middle class. In context to educational qualification majority i.e., 58% of respondents are graduate and about 11% of respondents are pursuing their degree of post-graduation. Majority i.e., 63% of respondents are students according to their occupational status and 10% of respondents are government employee and about 12% of respondents are doing their job as private employee and 15% of respondents are self-employed. The findings indicates that about 48% of respondent's monthly household income is between 40,000-50,000 and 16% of

respondents have income higher than 50,000 and about 15% of respondents have monthly household income below 10,000.

**Objective 1:** To measure the level of awareness, knowledge and perception regarding organic food products among young consumer.

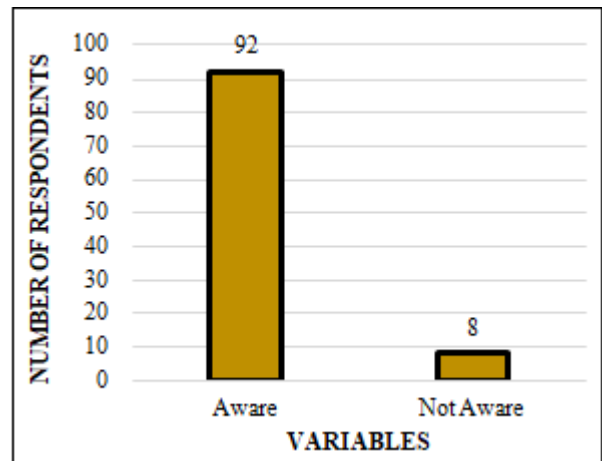


Figure 1.1 Awareness level of respondents regarding organic food products.

**Interpretation:** In order to measure the consumer awareness level, the figure 1.1 has been prepared which clearly indicates that 92% of youth are aware about organic food products while 8% are not aware.

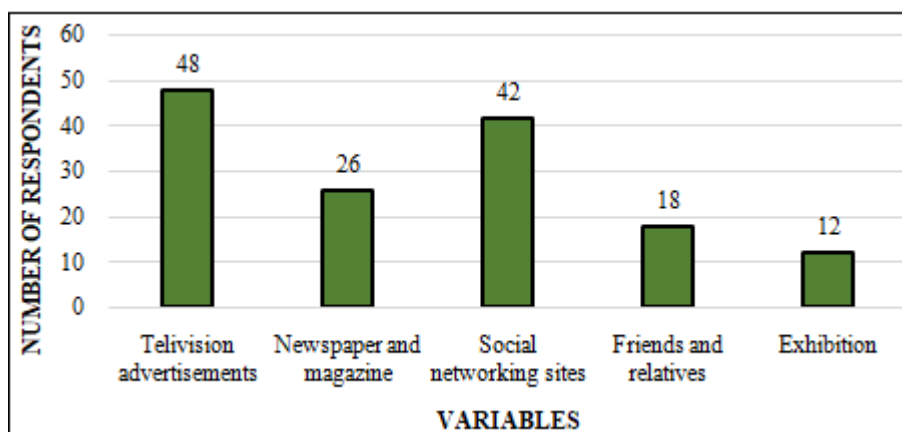


Figure 1.2 Different attributes that aware respondents towards organic food products.

**Interpretation:** Figure 1.2 shows that about 48% of people mentioned that they became aware about organic food products through television advertisement and 42% of people became aware through social networking sites.

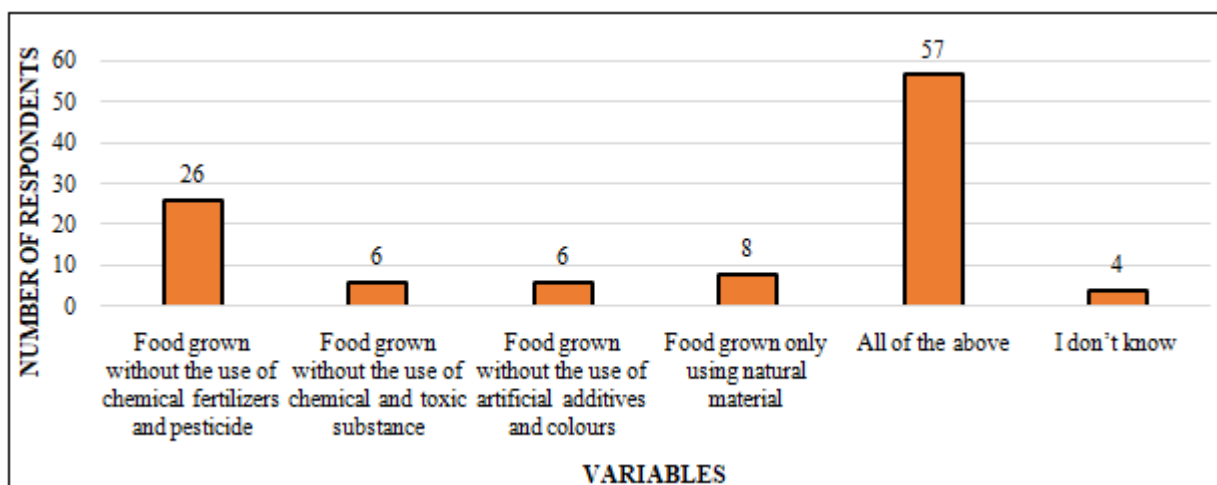


Figure 1.3: Concept regarding organic food.

**Interpretation:** Figure 1.3 depicts that majority of the respondents i.e., 57% were aware about organic food as they stated that organic food grown without the use of chemical and toxic substance, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, additives and colours and are grown by using natural materials.

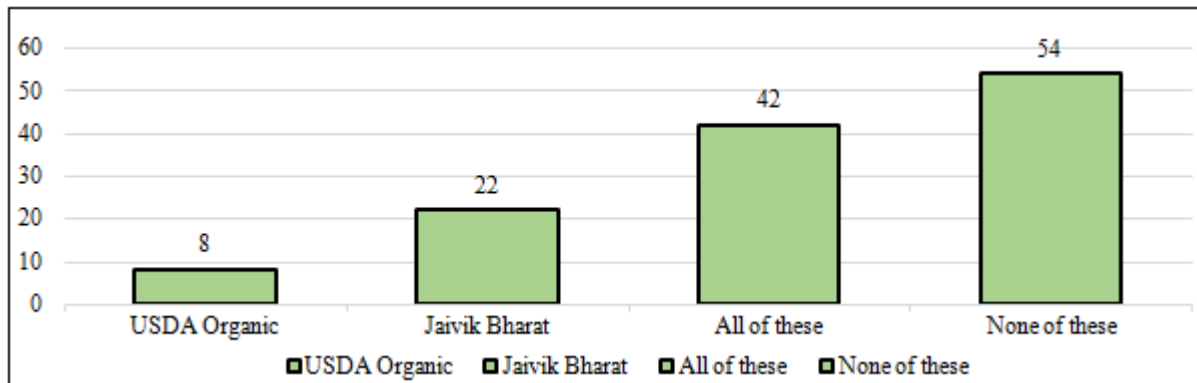


Figure 1.4: Awareness level of respondents on the types of organic certification label.

**Interpretation:** Figure 1.4 shows that majority of people i.e., 54% don't know about any of the label mentioned in the questionnaire. Hence, the findings indicate that youth are very poor in knowledge regarding organic certification label the respondents stated that they don't hear about these terms earlier because of lack of awareness regarding organic certification label.

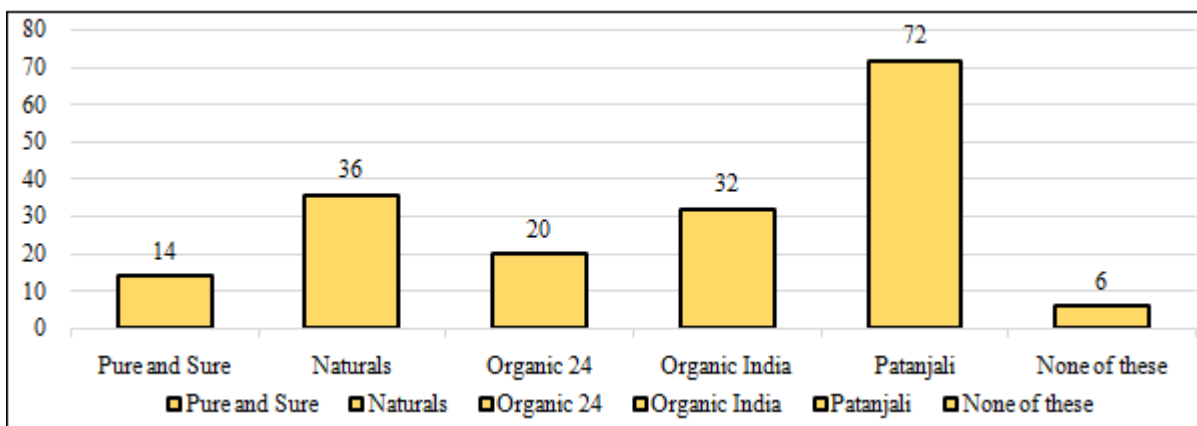


Figure 1.5 Awareness level of respondents on types of organic food products brands.

**Interpretation:** Figure 1.5 depicts that majority of respondents i.e., 72% are aware of Patanjali brand and 36% of respondents have been aware of Naturals brand of organic food products. The percentage is highest in Patanjali because of celebrity endorsement who have promoted the products and attracted the consumer especially youth in greater number.

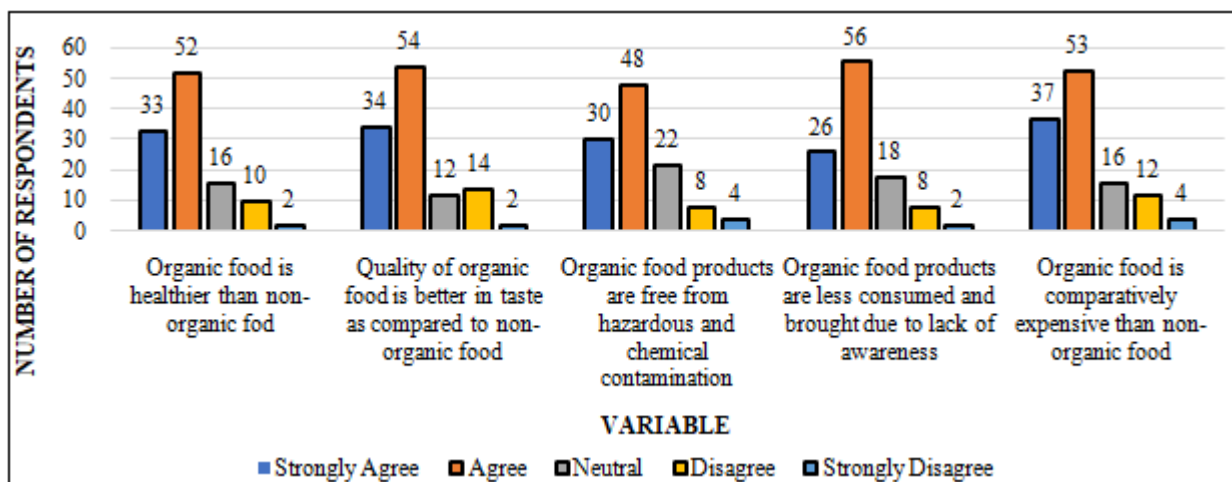


Figure 1.6: Respondents perception towards organic food products.

**Interpretation:** The figure 1.6 shows that sizeable number of respondents is strongly agree in almost all the statement mentioned above. Hence, it can be interpreted that consumer perception towards organic food is positive but due to lack of awareness and high price issues organic food is less consumed.

**Objective 2:** To identify the factors that influences the consumer purchase decision towards organic food products.

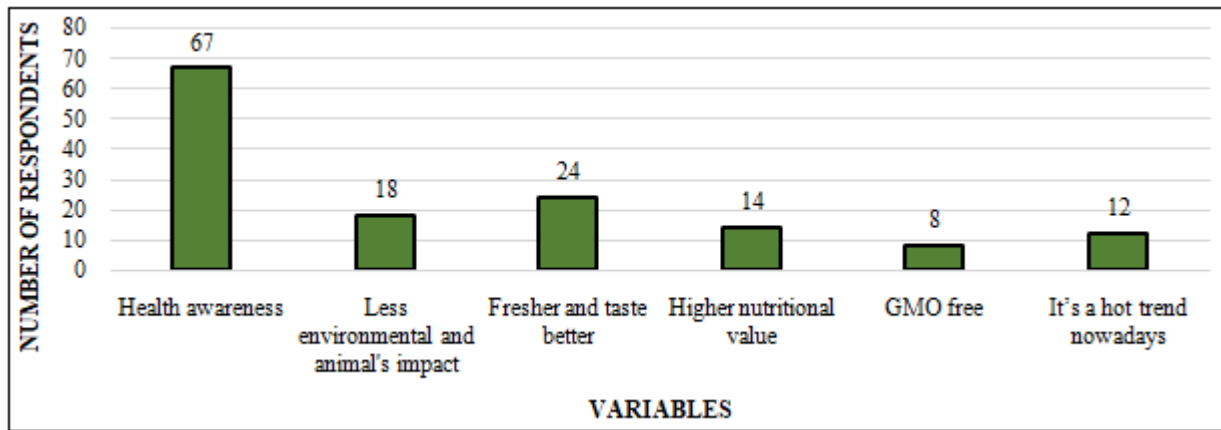


Figure 1.7 Influencing factors that attract respondents to purchase organic food products.

**Interpretation:** Figure 1.7 shows that about 67% of respondents i.e., majority believed that consumption of organic food products can make them healthy they are aware regarding their health and harmful effect of inorganic food.

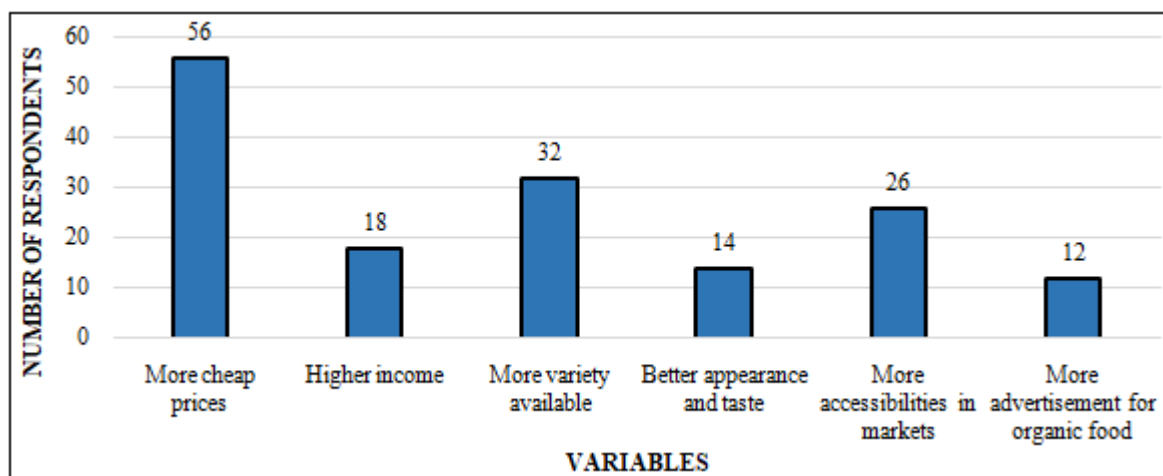


Figure 1.8: Reasons of respondents to buy organic food more frequently.

**Interpretation:** Figure 1.8 shows that majority of respondents i.e., 56% will like to buy organic food products more often if the products are available in more cheap prices and about 32% of respondents have stated that they will like to buy organic food more often if more variety will be available in the market.

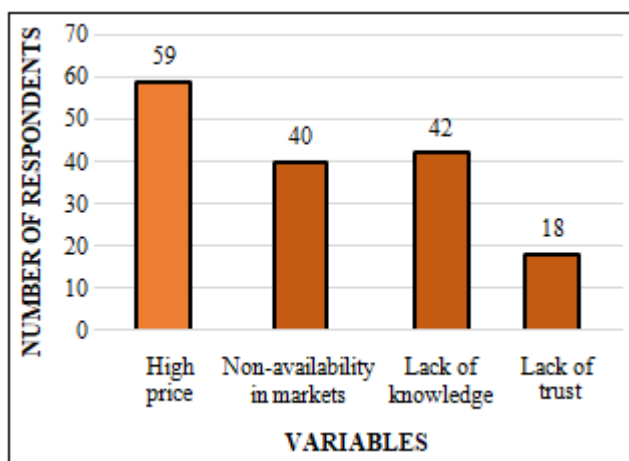


Figure 1.9 Different factors that lead to non-purchase of organic food products.

**Interpretation:** Figure 1.9 reveals that majority of respondents i.e., 59% have stated that the high price is the main issue that leading to non-purchase of organic food products and about 40% of respondents have stated that

variety of organic food products are not easily available in the market due to which they do not purchase organic food.

#### 4. Conclusion

A key challenge faced by modern world is food security. Conventional farming may be considered a success in the quest for food security, but it comes at the cost of overall well-being of the environment and ecosystem. Consumer concern about food safety, quality and nutrition increasingly important in all around the world, which has provided increased opportunities for organic food in recent years. Demand for organic food is steadily increasing in developed countries, while developing countries still need to go a long way. Therefore, the analysis of the study can be concluded that young consumer is aware regarding food safety, quality, environmental concern and negative impact of inorganic food on health and environment which is an appreciable practice by consumer. The study further shows that the factors advocated by the consumer for buying organic food products are motivated by advertisements and by their family and friends. The study clearly reflects that the factors behind choosing organic food is health concern and quality

of the product i.e., texture, taste and feeling and high price is the main issue which lead to non-purchase of organic food products. The overall opinion regarding organic food among young consumer is favourable.

Hence, it can be interpreted that the consumption of organic food has raised, but it should have raised more than what has actually happened. People are well aware of organic food and benefits driven from it, but a good number of people are found to ignore this fact and avoid consuming organic food products due to several reasons like non-availability of organic food products in the market, high price and many more. Keeping the above result in mind it can be said that organic food companies have to increase their level of production and sale their products at reasonable price which is affordable by majority of consumers.

## 5. Suggestions

- 1) Manufacturer should develop effective marketing programmes and strategies to influence consumer positively. They can highlight on the health benefits and quality of organic food products. Policy makers and regulatory bodies should also provide proper certifications and labelling on organic products to authenticate the quality to foster the consumer trust and reliability.
- 2) Advertisements and promotional programmes should be conducted to create more awareness about the benefits of consuming organic food products. Commercial advertisements should be made showing health hazardous occurring or may occur due to harmful chemical fertilizers used in inorganic production of vegetables and fruits. This can be effective way to motivate the rich and educated part of society.
- 3) The organic food products should be made cheaper and more available to people. Hence, government should take various measures to promote, production, consumption and advertisements of organic products by reducing the price of organic food.
- 4) Schools and colleges should take the concerted effort to educate and aware the students about benefit of consuming organic food, when they realize that organic food is tasty and not weird, they might become positive towards it.

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