

A PROSPECTIVE STUDY OF POTENTIAL MARKET OF ORGANIC FOOD & ATTITUDE OF FARMERS TOWARDS ORGANIC FARMING IN SOLAPUR CITY (MAHARASHTRA)

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ABSTRACT

The Indian economy is still quite reliant on agriculture and it contributes nearly 14% of the country's gross domestic product and almost 60% of the population is dependent on agriculture. The concept of organic food is gaining widespread acceptability and the market is growing rapidly in countries like India and China. The growth in the organic food market of India can be attributed to the radically increasing awareness regarding organically grown products which is free from pesticides. The organic farming concept is gaining prominence in India not only in the farming community, but also among the city dwellers as we can see a lot of individuals venturing into this field. This study will help not only to identify the potential market of organic Farming in Sholapur city but also one of the great opportunities for new entrepreneurs , farmers, government, existing business to set up the new venture through organic farming in Sholapur city.

KEYWORDS: *Organic farming, Awareness level, attitudes of Farmers towards organic farming and Potential market for organic food in Sholapur city.*

INTRODUCTION

The Indian economy is still quite reliant on agriculture and it contributes nearly 14% of the country's gross domestic product and almost 60% of the population is dependent on agriculture. The trend of organic food that was initiated in the developed regions such as Europe and North America has expanded to developing countries like India and China. Europe and North America are the largest consumers of organic food; however, the organic food market in Asia is likely to account for the highest growth rate over the next five years. The concept of organic food is gaining widespread acceptability and the market is growing rapidly in countries like India and China. The growth in the organic food market of India can be attributed to the radically increasing awareness regarding organically grown products which is free from pesticides.

According to "India Organic Food Market Forecasting report, 2018", Indian organic food market is anticipated to grow at a significant CAGR of around 19% during 2012-2018. In India, majority of the demand for organic foods is originating from Tier I cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Gurgaon and Pune. Companies are witnessing increase in sales as a result of increasing demand from metro cities and the entry of several new players in the organic food market offering an online channel for purchase. The major players in Indian organic food market are Conscious Foods, Sresta, Eco Farms, Organic India, Navdanya and Morarka Organic Foods. Organic food usually costs up to 20% to 30% more than conventional food items which is one of the major challenges in Indian market as majority of the consumers are quite price sensitive. However, at the same time increasing health consciousness and increasing disposable income among Indians is incessantly increasing the demand for organic food.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Assis, and Mohd Ismail, (2011) in his study on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Farmers towards Organic Farming Organic farming is gaining popularity all over the world as it can diversify agricultural production system toward attaining improved productivity, farm income as well as food safety. The rise of organic farming was driven partly by consumers' concern with food quality and safety, as well as the protection of the environment. Organic Farming produces safe and nutritious food as it helps prevent soil pollution by stopping risky chemical reactions in the soil and avoiding produce contamination, as well as soil erosion, by wind and rain. One of the important parties that can enable the country to produce more organic products through organic farming is the growers or farmers. The final decision of farmers to use a new practice like organic farming system is usually the result of their knowledge of the practices as well as their perception. Therefore, the main purpose of this preliminary study was to investigate the knowledge, perception or attitude, and practices of vegetable growers towards organic farming.
- Jaganathanetal (2012) in his study Knowledge Level of Farmers on Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu Organic farming is a production system in which the environment is preserved, farmers and workers have fair access to the means of food production while receiving a fair return for their labour and consumers have their food at fair prices. The area under organic farming in India has been increasing steadily since 2000 after launching National Programme for Organic Production. The study was conducted to find out the knowledge level of organic and inorganic farmers on organic farming in Tamil Nadu.
- Yadav et al (2013) in his study the post-independence period, the most important challenge in India has been to produce enough food for the growing population. Hence, high-yielding varieties are being used with infusion of irrigation water, fertilizers, or pesticides. This combination of high-yielding production technology has helped the country develop a food surplus as well as contributing to concerns of soil health, environmental pollution, pesticide toxicity, and sustainability of agricultural production. Scientists and policy planners are, therefore, reassessing agricultural practices which relied more on biological inputs rather than heavy usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Organic farming can provide quality food without adversely affecting the soil's health and the environment; however, a concern is whether large-scale organic farming will produce enough food for India's large population. As the study focuses on the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices on Organic Farming, it will be useful to the NGO who have been working for the cause of sustainable Agriculture and its help the NGOs to identify the challenges and difficulties faced by the farmers in switching over to Organic Farming. Government can learn the implication of the study and frame appropriate policies to promote Organic Agriculture.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Aim of the Study

This main purpose is to identify potential market of organic food and to know the scope of organic farming for farmers in Solapur city, which will understand the wiliness of the farmers towards organic farming and consumers towards organic food and also suggest them implement the same to overcome these findings and make proper use of suggestions for the benefit of farmers and people to improve the income generation of the city's agriculture sector.

Statement of the Problem

The concept of organic food is gaining widespread acceptability and the market is growing rapidly in countries like India and China. The growth in the organic food market of India can be attributed to the radically increasing awareness regarding organically grown products which is free from pesticides. The researcher has to find out the potential market for organic farming in Solapur city, and find out of if there is any scope for organic food market to expand the business in Solapur city. The researcher also wants to identify the wiliness of the people towards organic food and farmer's towards organic farming.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study awareness level of Organic food in Solapur city
- To study potential market for organic food park in Solapur city.
- To study the attitude of customers towards organic food in Solapur city
- To know the requirements and expectations about organic food from farmers and customers

Hypothesis of the Study

- H_0 : Organic farming and rural economy are significantly independent
- H_0 : Customer attitude towards organic food are significantly independent
- H_0 : Farmers attitude towards organic farming are significantly independent

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for collecting information of this study is through questionnaire, interview & observation. This collection of information's main purpose is to study and Attitude of Farmers and Customer towards Organic Farming in Solapur city and to suggest the entertainment sectors to make required improvements from the findings of this research and also suggest them implement the same to overcome these findings. This study does not include only one method i.e. Questionnaire. But there are three more methodology adopted to classify collection of information. They are:

Sources of Data

- **Primary Data:** The data which is collected fresh and original in character with the advance consent taken by way of Interview backed by Questionnaire, Group Discussion. Questionnaire and Group Discussion and Interview schedules will be prepared for solapur people (50) and farmers (50) The questionnaire is structured, objective, and Probing by simple random sampling.
- **Secondary Data:** This data which is collected from published literature & internal documentation. The following secondary sources were used to data collection through Annual Reports Published report by magazine, research paper, Journals, Articles & Internet.etc

Table 1: Sample Size Used for Data Collection

S. No.	Type of Respondent	Total No. of Respondents
1	Farmers	50
2	Common People / Customer	50

Total	100
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Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to Solapur city only.
- The study is based on 100 respondents from Two criteria only i.e Farmers and Customers.
- It's difficult to pertain information from different criteria respondents on time and schedule.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS: REVIEW OF FARMERS AWARENESS LEVEL OF ORGANIC FARMING

Table 2: Producing Organic Food in Farming

Producing Organic Food in Farming	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	38	76
No	9	18
Some Extent	3	6
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 76% respondents are aware about Organic Farming and Food&6% are aware at some extent and 18% are not at aware about Organic Farming.

Table 3: Producing Organic Food in Farming

Producing Organic Food in Farming	No. of .Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	8
No	42	84
Some Foods	4	8
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, only 8% respondents are producing organic food in their farm regularly and 8% respondents are producing some of them foods as per demand.

Table 4: Types of Organic Food Producing in Farm

	No. of .Respondents	Percentage (%)
Fruits	0	0
Vegetable	3	75
Grocery	1	25
Flowers	0	0
All of the Above	0	0
Total	4	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 75% respondents are producing organic vegetables and 25% respondents are producing organic Grocery.

Table 5: Willingness to Produce Organic Food in Future

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	66.67
Not At All	6	14.28
Not yet decided	8	19.05
Total	42	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 66% respondents are showing willingness to start organic farming in future &

19.05% respondents are still not yet decided about organic farming and remaining 14.28% respondents are not interested to move for organic farming in future

Table 6: Willingness to Produce Following Organic Food in Future

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Fruits	6	21.43
Vegetables	7	25
Grocery	4	14.28
Flowers	2	7.15
All of the above	9	32.14
Total	28	100

Interpretation: From the above table, out of interested respondents, 32.14% are interested to produce all kind of organic food and 21.43% are willing to produce organic fruits and 14.28% respondents are willing to produce organic grocery. Only 7.15% respondents are willing to produce organic flowers in future.

Table 7: Reason Behind Unwillingness of Organic Farming

Unwillingness of Organic Farming	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Not Interested	2	33.33
Costly	3	50
No demand	1	16.67
Other	0	0
Total	6	100

Interpretation: From the total unwillingness respondents, 33.33 % are not at all interested to move for organic farming and 50% respondents are not interested because of costly organic farming and 16.67 % respondents are unwillingness because of no demand in future.

Table 8: Positive Impacts on Rural Economy Through Organic Farming

Positive Impacts On Rural Economy Through Organic Farming	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	48
No	8	16
Can't say	18	36
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 48% are of the feeling that there lies positive impact on rural economy through organic farming and 36% respondents are unable to predict positive impact and 16% respondents not feel to affect on rural economy through organic farming.

Table 9: Great Potential Market in Sholapur City for Organic Food

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	25	50
No	13	26
Can't Say	12	24
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 50% of the respondents feel that organic farming have great potential market in Solapur city and 26% does not feel to have potential market and remaining 24% respondent unable to define potentiality in Solapur city.

REVIEW OF THE CUSTOMERS

Table 10: Awareness of Organic Food

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	42	84
No	7	14
Some Extent	1	2
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 84% are aware about organic food and 2% are some extent aware and remaining 14% are not at all aware of organic food.

Table 11: If Yes from which Source You Heard about Organic Food

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Media	15	30
Friend/Relative	32	64
Other	3	6
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 30% are aware through media and 64% are aware through their friends are relatives and remaining 6% are aware through other sources.

Table 12: If Yes What Do You Perceive about Organic Food

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Pesticides	9	18
Adulteration	8	16
Eco-friendly	9	18
Nutrition	7	14
Costly	3	6
All of the above	14	28
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 28% perceive that all the contents as a organic food and 18% are perceive as pesticides and eco-friendly and 16% are perceive as a adulteration of organic food .

Table 13: Do You Purchase Organic Food?

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	56
No	14	28
Sometimes	8	16
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 56% regularly purchase organic food and 16% often purchase and remaining 28% are not at all purchasing organic food.

Table 14: If Yes, which Organic Food You Consume or Prefer?

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Fruits	18	50
Vegetables	14	38.89

Grocery	2	5.55
Flowers	0	0
All of the above	2	5.56
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 50% prefer fruits, 38.89% prefer vegetables and remaining respondents prefer grocery and only 5.56% are purchasing all the organic food products.

Table 15: What is Motive Behind Purchasing Organic Food

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Food Fobic	10	27.78
Nutrition	8	22.22
Health Conscious	16	44.45
Recommended by others	2	5.55
Total	36	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 44.45% are health conscious, 22.22% feel that it has good nutrition and 27.78% are food fobic to purchase reason behind organic food.

Table 16: Reason Behind not Interested or Buying Organic Food

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
High price	10	71.43
Non Availability	3	21.43
Test	1	7.14
poor appearance	0	0
other	0	0
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 71.43% are not willing to purchase at the reason of High price, 21.43% because of non availability, 7.14% doesn't like taste of organic food.

Table 17: Offers More Employment Opportunities

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	32	64
No	12	24
Can't Say	6	12
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 64% felt that there is a scope of employment opportunities and 12% are unable to predict and 24% felt that it has no scope of employment opportunities.

Table 18: Positive Impact on Rural Economy

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	48
No	14	28
Can't Say	12	24
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 48% respondents are in favor of its positive impact on rural economy and 28% respondents feel that it has positive effect and 24% respondents are unable to predict impact on rural economy.

Table 19: Great Potential Market in Sholapur City to Organic Food

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	48
No	12	24
Can't Say	14	28
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 48% feel that it has great potential and 24% do not feel that it has potential market and remaining 28% were unable to predict about potentiality in Solapur city.

Table 20: What You Expect from Organic Food

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Best Quality	9	18
Variety of Organic Food	6	12
Affordable Price	8	16
Quality with Good price	11	22
All of above	16	32
Others	0	0
Total	50	100

Interpretation: From the total respondents, 32% require all contents in organic food and 22% respondents prefer quality with good price and 18% prefer good quality of food and 12% prefer variety of organic food in Solapur city.

Hypothesis Testing

- Organic farming and rural economy are significantly independent
 Rejection Region: Reject H₀ if $t > 1.85$ Test Statistic $t = 3.11$
 P Value = 0.0072
 Conclusion: $t = 3.11 > 1.85$ Reject H₀
- Hypothesis: H₀: Farmers attitude towards organic farming are significantly independent
 Rejection Region: Reject H₀ if $t > 1.9431$ Test Statistic: $t = 4.3232$
 P Value = 0.00248
 Conclusion: $t = 5.9786 > 1.85$ Reject H₀
- Hypothesis: H₀: Customer attitude towards organic food are significantly independent
 Rejection Region: Reject H₀ if $t > 1.75$ Test Statistic $t = 5.9786$
 P Value = 1.2642
 Conclusion: $t = 5.9786 > 1.75$ Reject H₀

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

- Awareness level:** From the above research, it is found that farmers and Common people/Customer from Solapur city are very well aware about the organic food and Farming.

- **Willing to purchase and Willingness for farming:** It was found that majority of the customers are willing to purchase organic food and farmers are willing to do organic farming in future as per the changing scenario.
- **Preferences:** Majority of the customers prefer to purchase organic fruits and vegetables and farmers are willing to make farming of fruits and vegetables rather than other foods.
- **Positive impact on rural economy and Employment opportunity:** It was observed that farmers and customer felt organic food and farming impacted positively on rural economy and have positive effect on employment opportunities.
- **Potentiality of Market:** It was found that majority of the farmers and customer does feel that it has potential of organic farming and organic food market in Solapur city.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Training sessions:** In future, the banking and financial institution should formulate the strategy and framework the training and development session for the farmers to identify the opportunities of organic farming in Solapur city.
- **Awareness level:** In future, need awareness programme should be conducted for organic farming and importance of organic food in Solapur city through various media sources
- **Availability of the food:** It has to be suggested that food market should make the maximum variety of the foods of organic in market so that customers will get maximum alternatives of fruits, vegetables and grocery.
- **Pricing and quality framework:** It has to be suggested that the farmers and retail outlets should focus more on quality control framework and effective pricing strategy to get good demand from the market.
- **Advertisement Strategies:** Farmers should create and develop the advertisement strategies to attract the customers towards organic food park. People should notice the advertisements through different medias and respond it accordingly related to the organic food park.
- **Tie up:** Farmers should tie up with different hotels/restaurants, parks, relative product sellers for the startup of organic food park. Farmers should attach with the government schemes for the financial and other types of support in organic food market and park.

CONCLUSIONS

The concept of organic food is gaining widespread acceptability and the market is growing rapidly in countries like India and China. The growth in the organic food market of India can be attributed to the radically increasing awareness regarding organically grown products which is free from pesticides. This research study conclude that Solapur city has the potential for organic food market and farmers shows interest to start organic farming and also customers carry positive attitude towards organic food consumption.

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