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A Study on the Key Determinants of Consumer Buying Motives and Behaviour - With Special Reference to Organic Foods in India

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Abstract

Nowadays food safety is considered to be the predominant, imperative and absolute need of the hour. Today's consumers are more concerned over the quality, safety and integrity of the produce as they strongly believe that organic foods are more safer and healthier than conventional food. The market for organic food products in India has been growing at a rapid pace. Changing lifestyle of today's consumers, rising health awareness, higher disposable income and increasing number of modern retail outlets across the country are the major growth drivers for the organic food segment. India is witnessing growth in terms of both the customer base and the consumption trends.

At this instance it becomes imperative to study the key factors influencing the awareness and knowledge of consumers and thereby to examine consumer's preferences, motives and attitude in purchasing organic food products. Exploratory Research Design was adopted and the data needed for the study was collected from primary source using self-structured questionnaires. The collected data was analysed using Likert's Five point scaling technique, Summary Statistics that includes Simple Percentage analysis, Mean, Standard deviation and Variance, Chi square analysis, Correlation and Path Coefficient Analysis and the research implications were duly drawn out . Bar charts were also used to impart visual clarity.

Key words: Organic , Organic food, Consumer's Attitude , Buying Motives, Consumer Behaviour

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1. Introduction:

Nowadays food safety is considered to be the predominant, imperative and absolute need of the hour and is being received significant attention by the governments, policy makers, health professionals, the food industry, biomedical community, and the public. (Crutchfield, Roberts and Weimer 2000; Kaferstein and Abdussalam, 1999). Today's consumers are more concerned over the quality , safety and integrity of the produce as they strongly believe that organic foods are more safer and healthier than conventional food. In addition quite a lot of food scares along with political arena, international trade, and the farming industry started to influence the food purchasing patterns of the consumer. (Buzby, 2001).

The market for organic food products in India has been growing at a rapid pace and is expected to grow from 675 crore in 2010 to 7,000 crore by 2015 with a CAGR of 60 per cent. According to "India Organic Food Market Forecast and Opportunities, 2020", the market for organic food in India is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of over 25% during 2015-20. Changing lifestyle of today's consumers, rising health awareness, higher disposable income and increasing number of modern retail outlets across the country are the major growth drivers for the organic food segment. According to Ashima Agarwal, Category Head – Organic Foods, FabIndia, India is witnessing growth in terms of both the customer base and the consumption trends. The country is constantly working towards bringing a greater variety to the market. It started with 70 products in the range in 2004 and today, there are more than 300 products and is still growing.

Consumers are willing to pay significant price premiums to obtain organic produce (Beharrell and MacFie,1991;Collins et al.,1992;Hammitt, 1990, Hutchins and Greenhalag, 1997 as these are not negatively influencing the different vitamins, minerals, and organic compounds that are essential for the prevention of things like cancer, heart disease, premature aging, vision problems, and cognitive malfunction.(Gil et al., 2000; Piyasiri and Ariyawardana,2002)

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The producers and environmental groups who don't want pesticides and fertilizers to do any more damages to the environment promote organic food and act as very strong contributors to the idea that organic food is superior to other types. As chemicals that are unsafe are not used in organic farming, the chances for soil, air and water pollution is minimal, thus ensuring a safer and healthier world for future generations to live in (Zehnder et al., 2003). With all these implications it becomes necessary to study the key determinants influencing the consumers buying behaviour and motives towards organic food products. At this instance it is obligatory to understand the right meaning of the term **'Organic'** and '**Organic food** '.

Organic is primarily a labelling term that is used on a wide variety of foods that have been produced through methods and practices approved by The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority which was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the Parliament in December, 1985.

Organically grown and processed food does not use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms, or ionizing radiation. Animals that produce meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products in this category do not take antibiotics or growth hormones. (Report of APEDA, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India)

2. Review of Literature:

Though a number of academics have conducted research in the related area, comprehensive study, analysing the purchase motives and buying behaviour of the organic consumers are minimal and few notable and worthy research literatures were reviewed in this paper.

(a) Reviews on Purchase motives of Organic food: Raghavan and Megeh (2013) in their research found out that perceptions towards organic food product had the strongest relationship with the buyer's intention to buy organic food product. Balaji and Bhama (2012)

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critically analyzed the consumer perception towards organic food products in India. The findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between various psychographic factors on the overall satisfaction of consumers towards organic food products. Sakthirama and Venkatram (2012) analysed the purchase intention of organic Tea in Coimbatore city, India and the findings revealed that purchase intention of consumers towards organic food products was influenced by attitude and knowledge and familiarity to consumers. Voon et al. (2011) in their study examined the determinants of willingness to purchase organic food among consumers in a Malaysian city, using a questionnaire survey. The results indicated that efforts to promote consumption growth should focus on influencing consumer attitudes. Gracia and Magistris,2007;Lockie et al., 2004;Millock et al.,2004;Briz and Ward 2009 , in their study empirically investigated that socio-demographic profiles, nutritional knowledge of the consumers are most likely to affect the purchase decisions of organic foods. Tsarkiridou et al. (2006) in their study listed two worthy findings: (a) organic food products are believed to be healthier and higher quality than conventional food products, (b) care for the environment and health were the important factors in the purchase of organic food products. Lea & Worsley (2005) found out that majority of the participants in the study believed organic food to be healthier, tastier and better for the environment than conventional food. But high price and lack of availability were strong barriers to the purchasing of organic foods. The study concluded that, women were more positive about organic food than men and the personal value factor related to nature, environment and equality were the dominant predictor of positive organic food beliefs. A study by Fillion and Arazi (2002), found that organic orange juice was perceived as tasting better than conventional orange juice.

(b) Reviews on Purchase Behavior Towards Organic Food: A study carried out by Padiya and Vala (2012) in Ahmedabad city, illustrated the organic food consumers as less price sensitive, believers in quality and information; generally seek information from newspaper, magazines and at the point of purchase. Shafie and Rennie (2012) study found that price was the obstacle factor towards organic food consumption. Sangkumchaliang and Huang (2012) their study results

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indicated that the main reasons for purchasing organic food products are expectations of a healthy and environmentally friendly means of production and mostly older educated buyers tend to buy organic foods. Saleki et al. (2012) in their study in Iran, determined the influence of organic knowledge, quality, price consciousness, subjective norms and familiarity on attitude and organic buying behavior. Vlahovic et al. (2011), examined a study in Serbia and found out that most of the consumers were not adequately informed about the importance of organic food consumption; high price was found to be a limiting factor and fruits and vegetables were the mostly preferred and purchased organic products. Chakrabarti (2010), in a study results indicated that the influence of customer value towards organic food products had a significant influence to the customer loyalty for the organic food products. Gupta (2009) explored that though quality of food products was one of the most important parameters for food product purchase decision, people did not see much improvement in the quality related parameters for food items during the last ten years. He found out that cleanliness and free from pesticides were the most important criteria for products like food grains, pulses; store quality, marketing mix and taste, flavour explained the maximum variance in the purchase decision of fruit and vegetables. Choo et al. (2004) studied purchasing behaviour of new food product among innovator groups in India. They have found that consumers' attitudes will positively affect Indian consumers' intention to buy new processed foods. Ajzen (2002) indicated that the more favourable the attitude with respect to behaviour, the stronger is the individual's intention to perform the behaviour. The result of researches shows that there is a positive relation between attitude toward organic food and buying intention of organic food (Chan & Lau, 2000; Aertsens et al., 2009; Gracia & Magistris, 2007).

3. Objectives of the study:

The Following objectives are defined on the basis of the core values that the more consumers are aware, the more knowledge they gain and develop attitude. The attitude influences the preferences, creates motives or intentions to buy or not to buy the product. This is illustrated as the framework of the present research in the Fig. No. 3.1.

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a) To identify the key factors influencing the awareness and knowledge of consumers towards organic food.
b) To examine consumers preferences, motives and attitude in purchasing organic food products.

4. Methodology of the Study :

The research design for the present study is exploratory, as it aims to analyse the factors influencing the awareness and knowledge of consumers and to examine the consumer's preferences, motives and attitude in purchasing organic food products. Data needed for the study was collected from primary source using self-structured questionnaires. The population being infinite and undefined, the number of samples was limited to 300 in number. The study was conducted in Coimbatore district, one of the more affluent and industrially advanced districts of the state of Tamil Nadu in India and is known as the Manchester of South India holding the highest GDP among the districts of Tamil Nadu and highest revenue yielding district in the state. Area sampling was adopted wherein the entire Coimbatore District was divided into east, west, north and south to get a representative sample and from each segment the sample units were selected on the basis of convenience.

Out of the total 300 samples collected only 230 responses were found to be valid on the basis of consistency of responses and therefore taken fit for analysis. The data collected through the tools was subjected to statistical analysis and results were drawn out. **Likert's Five point scaling technique** was used on the basis of which Summary Statistics using **Simple Percentage analysis**, M**ean, Standard deviation and Variance** were calculated on the total sample. Relevant sub samples were grouped on the basis of demographic profiles of the respondents, namely gender, age, education, stream of education, occupation and monthly income and comparisons were made to test the level of awareness using **Chi square analysis. Correlation and Path Coefficient Analysis** was applied to find whether awareness, knowledge, buying motives and intentions have relation with Consumer buying behaviour towards organic food. Bar charts were also used to impart visual clarity.

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Research Frame work:

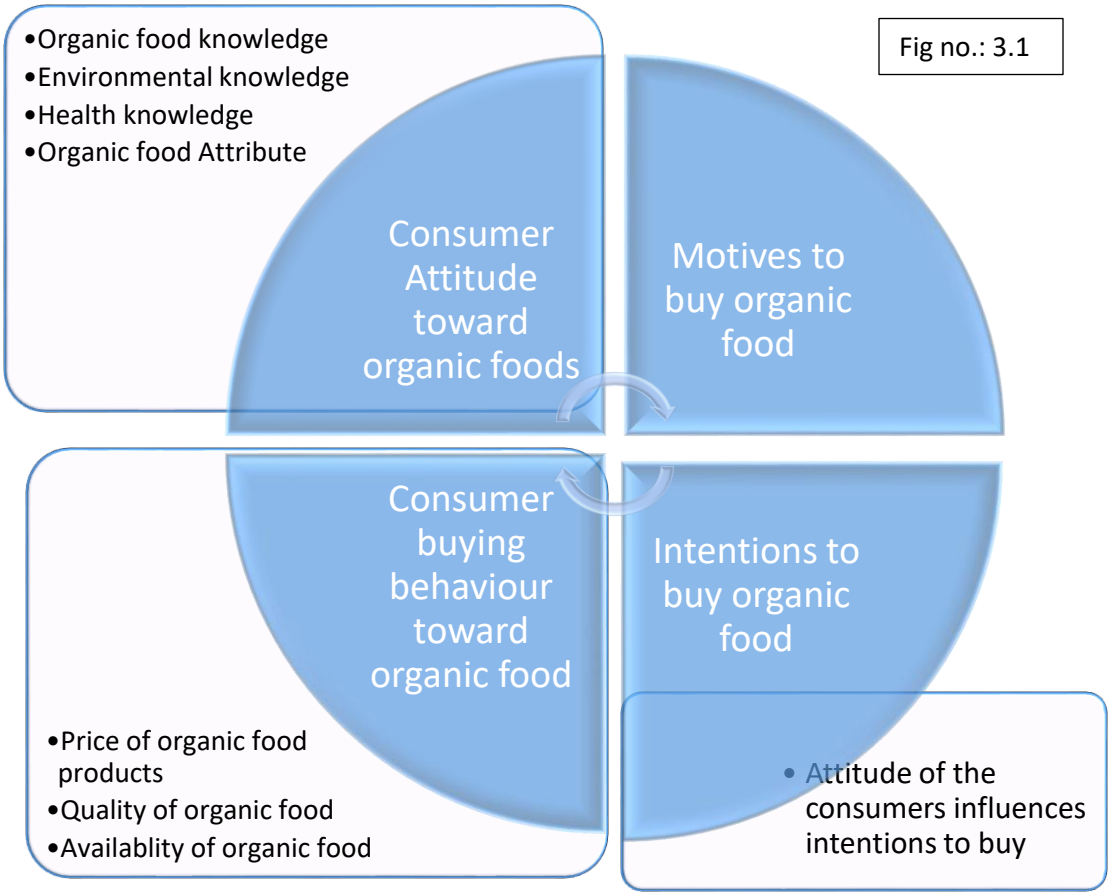

Fig no.: 3.1

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5. Results and Its Implication:

5.1 Testing the significant differences in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to their Demographic profile :

Table No: 6.1 Table Showing the Demographic profile of the consumers and the Level of Awareness towards organic food

Demographic profile	Aware		Unaware		Total		Chi Square Value	p value (0.01 level of significance)
	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%		
Gender								
Male	76	57.14	60	61.86	136	59.13	0.5155	0.472 Not Significant
Female	57	42.86	37	38.14	94	40.87		
Total	133	100.00	97	100.00	230	100		
Age								
< 25	42	30.62	9	9.95	51	22.17	51.875	0.00001 Significant
25 - 35	46	33.74	13	13.95	59	25.65		
36 - 45	30	22.1	26	27.60	56	24.35		
46 -55	17	12.2	22	23.84	39	16.96		
> 55	2	1.34	23	24.66	25	10.87		
Total	136	100	94	100	230	100		
Educational qualification								
Below secondary	0	0	4	3.68	4	1.63	28.561	0.00001 Significant
Secondary/ Higher secondary	7	5.32	21	21.06	28	12.3		
Graduate	42	32.6	41	40.20	87	37.9		
Post graduate	52	45	39	38.31	91	39.6		
Professional qualification	22	17.08	2	1.96	20	8.57		
Total	123	100	107	100.00	230	100		
Educational Stream								
Arts / Social/ Economics	26	22.34	67	58.43	93	40.23	53.1057	0.00001 Significant

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Management / Commerce/ Finance	34	28.97	16	14.34	50	21.72		
Science / Medical	41	35.42	6	5.68	48	20.68		
Engineering	15	13.27	25	21.54	40	17.37		
Total	116	100	114	100	230	100		
Occupation								
Service	38	28.2	19	20.40	57	24.98	14.666	0.002125 Significant
Business	75	55.62	42	43.73	117	50.71		
Housewife	15	10.7	14	14.79	29	12.63		
Student	7	5.48	19	20.49	27	11.68		
Total	136	100	94	99.42	230	100		
Monthly income (Rs.)								
< 250000	22	15.73	16	18.26	38	16.72	8.2998	0.08119 Significant
250000 - 500000	47	33.56	31	34.44	88	38.32		
500001- 750000	41	29.54	30	33.33	83	35.89		
750001 - 1000000	18	12.72	2	2.55	20	8.74		
> 1000000	12	8.45	11	12.22	1	0.33		
Total	140	100	90	100.00	230	100		

There are several factors which affects the level of awareness on organic foods among the consumers. It was empirically tested with the formulation of following hypothesis whether the demographic profiles of the consumers have a relation to their level of awareness towards organic foods.

H_O - There is no significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Gender.

H_a - There is significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Gender.

H_O - There is no significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Age.

H_a - There is significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Age.

H_O - There is no significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Educational Qualification.

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H_a - There is significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Educational Qualification.

Ho - There is no significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in Relation to Educational Stream.

H_a - There is significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Educational Stream.

Ho - There is no significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Occupation.

H_a - There is significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Occupation.

Ho - There is no significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Monthly Income.

H_a - There is significant difference in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to Monthly Income.

The results depicted in the Table no. 6.1 shows that there is no significant differences in customer's attitude toward organic food in relation to their Gender, as the chi square value is 0.5155 which is less than the p value 0.472 at 1 percent level of significance so the Null hypothesis is accepted. But there is significant differences in customer's attitude towards organic food in relation to their age ($\chi 2$ = 51.875 > p value :0.00001) , Educational Qualification ($\chi 2$ = 28.561 > p value :0.00001), Educational Stream ($\chi 2$ = 53.1057 > p value :0.00001), Occupation ($\chi 2$ = 14. 666 > p value : 0. 002125) and Monthly income ($\chi 2$ = 8. 2998 > p value : 0.08119) as the chi square value is more than the p value at 1 percent level of significance . Hence the Null hypothesis is rejected.

The table provides awareness of organic food across demographics of sample respondents. Out of the total 230 respondents surveyed, 133 respondents have reported awareness on organic foods i.e 57.83 percent of respondents. Male respondents are comparatively more aware than females. Nearly 63 percent of the respondents, below 35 years of age are aware of the organic food. The younger generations are more aware of and concerned about food safety and environmental issues. Education plays a vital role in creating awareness and this is clear from the table that 77 percent

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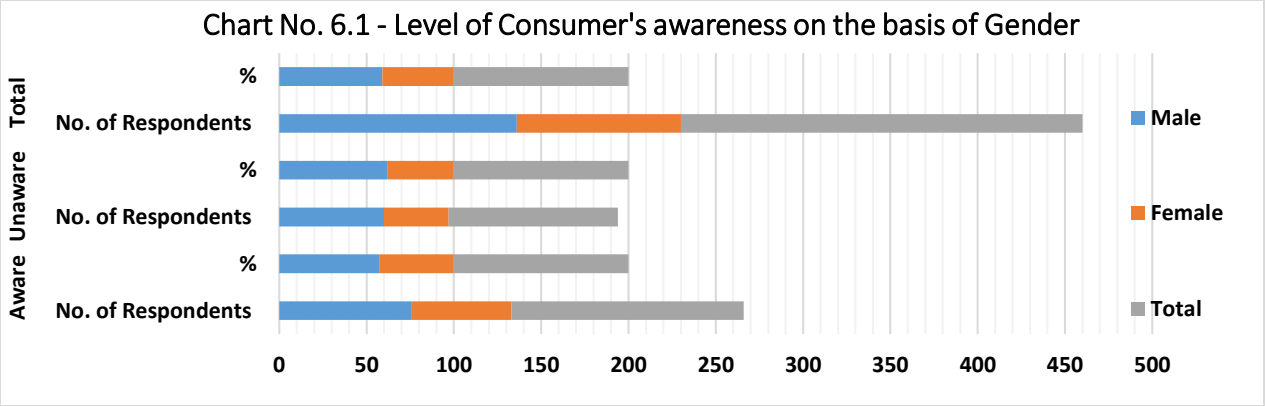
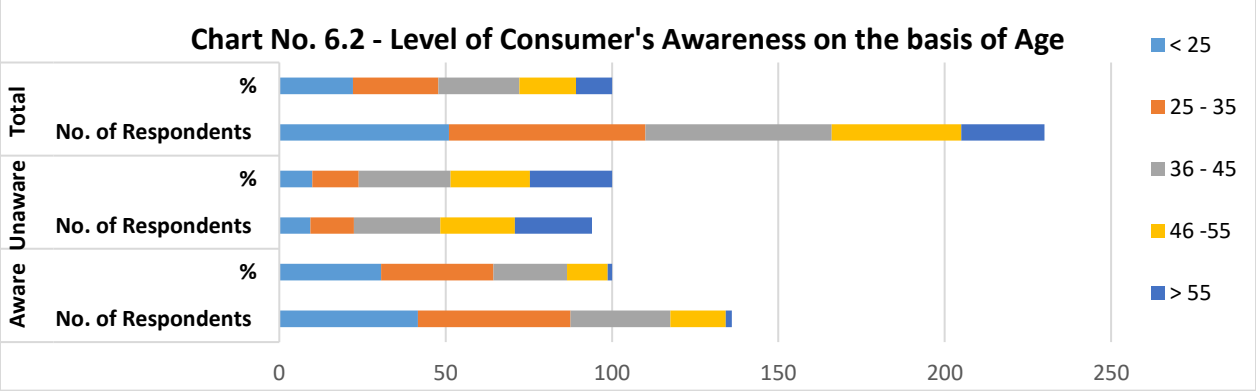
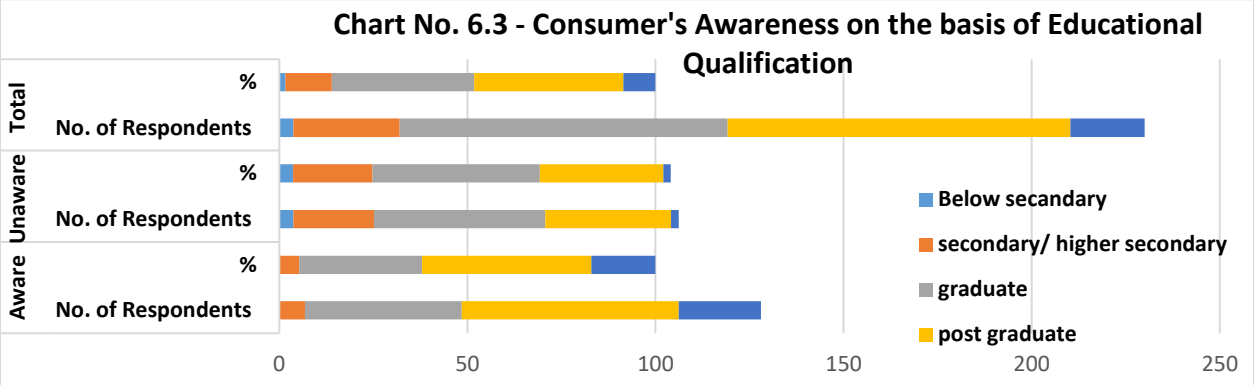
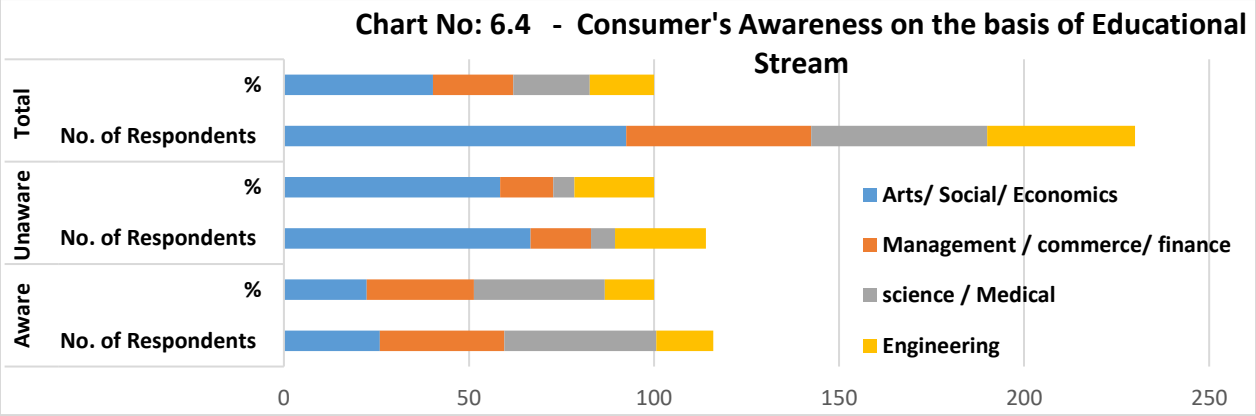
of the respondents qualified up to graduate and post graduate level are more aware of organic food. Again the stream of education has a major influence in which respondents under the stream of Science and Medicine (35 %) scores well. Majority of the respondents belonging to Business class(55 %), with higher income levels(64 %), are more aware of organic food than their respective

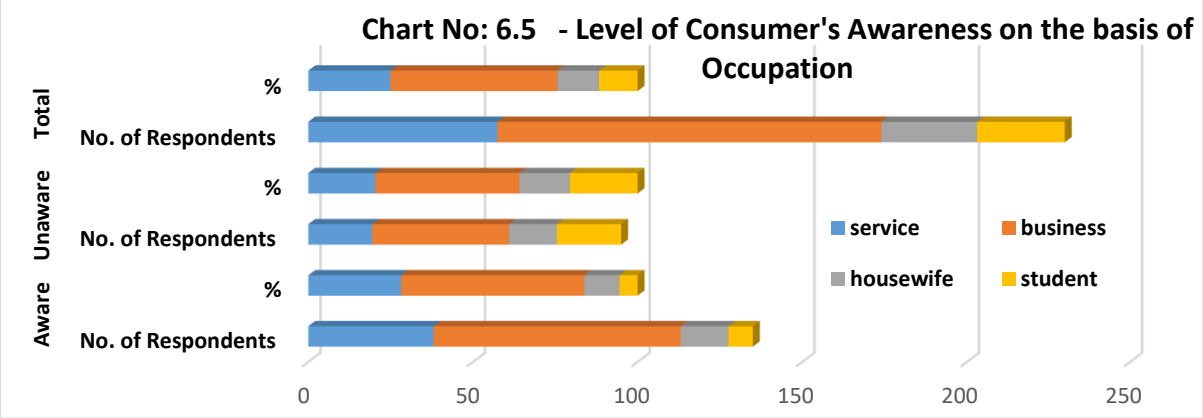
counterparts. All the above discussions are shown clearly in the following charts No. 6.1, 6.2 , 6.3 , 6.4 , 6.5, 6.6 .











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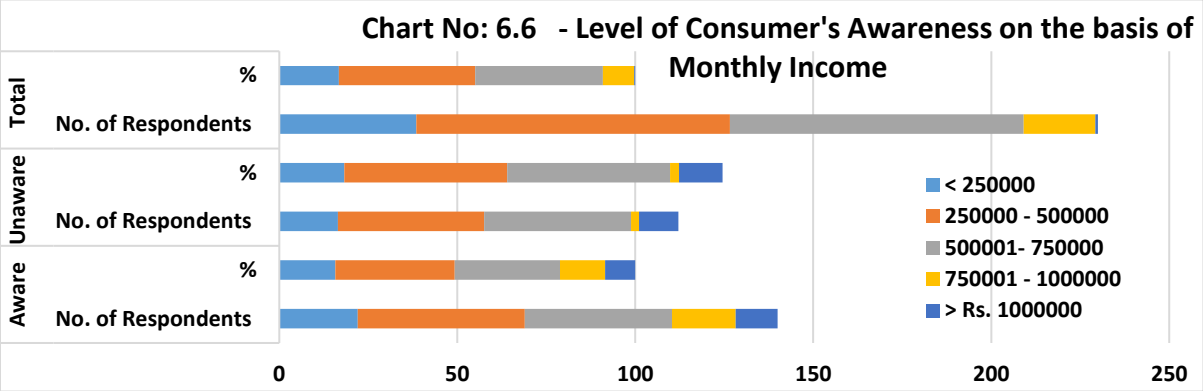

6.2 Testing the factors influencing the Consumer buying behaviour towards organic foods:

Attitude and knowledge plays an important role in influencing the intentions of the customers in making a purchase of the product. Hence various factors influencing the awareness, knowledge and attitude of the potential customers towards organic food was analysed and thereby their buying behaviour was studied. To do so, consumers were asked to state their agreement and disagreement on five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree-1, disagree-2, neutral-3, agree-4, strongly agree-5) on a set of statements related to various aspects of organic food. The results are shown in Table No: 6.2 and are depicted in charts No: 6.7, 6.8, 6.9.

Table No: 6.2 Table showing the factors Influencing Consumers buying behaviour towards organic foods.

	Determinants	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	TOTAL (N)	Mean	SD	Variance
I	**Organic food awareness and knowledge**									
1	Organic products do not carry pesticide residues	112	80	6	18	14	230	4.122	1.318	1.737
2	Consumption of organic food decreases the risk of chronic diseases	104	78	11	18	19	230	4	1.178	1.388
3	Organic products are produced without using chemical fertilizers	75	63	42	38	12	230	3.657	1.241	1.539

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4	Organic food products never contain GMOs	32	30	30	85	53	230	2.578	1.362	1.856
5	No growth promoting antibiotics are used in organic products	150	45	15	12	8	230	4.378	1.027	1.054
II	**Environmental Knowledge**									
6	Buying organic aids better wildlife	32	30	30	85	53	230	2.578	1.362	1.856
7	Organic farming is good for the environment	86	62	33	25	24	230	3.7	1.301	1.692
8	Organic farming leads towards hunger & poverty alleviation	22	35	35	70	68	230	2.448	1.353	1.83
9	Organic farming offers more employment opportunities	104	78	11	18	19	230	4	1.178	1.388
10	Market demand for organic food has positive impacts on rural economy	110	78	10	22	10	230	4.113	1.305	1.702
11	Organic farming leads towards food security	120	72	7	19	14	230	4.178	1.266	1.603
III	**Health Knowledge**									
12	Organic food richer in vitamins	146	56	32	2	2	230	4.591	1.011	1.023
13	Organic food contains more nutrients	104	78	11	18	19	230	4	1.178	1.388
I V	**Price Factor**									
14	High prices of organic food signals better products	118	76	5	17	14	230	4.13	1.284	1.648

The above table shows that the consumers are more aware that organic products do not carry pesticide residues (4.122), Consumption of organic food decreases the risk of chronic diseases (4), Organic products are produced without using chemical fertilizers (3.657) and no growth promoting antibiotics are used in organic products (4.378) as the mean values are more than the average mean value(3) under Likert's Scaling Technique. But the consumer's response is unfavourable towards Organic food products never contain GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) as their Mean score is 2.578 which is less than the average mean score.

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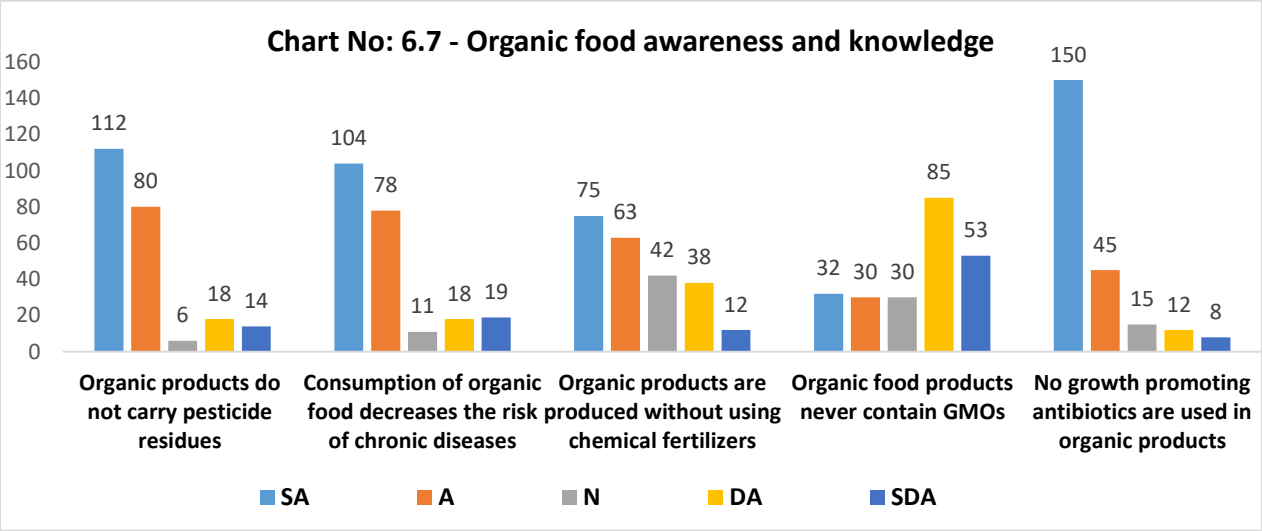

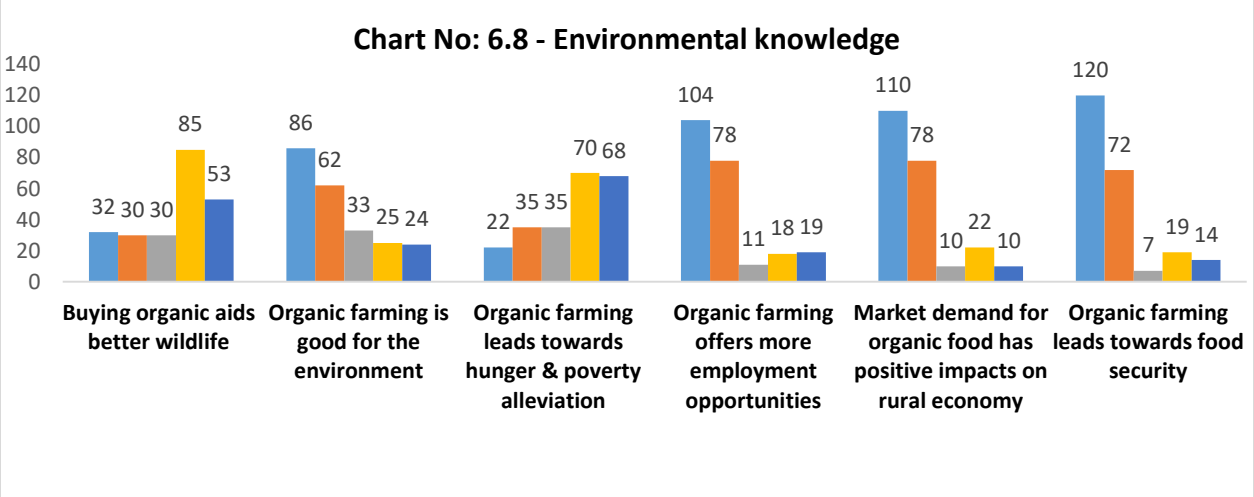

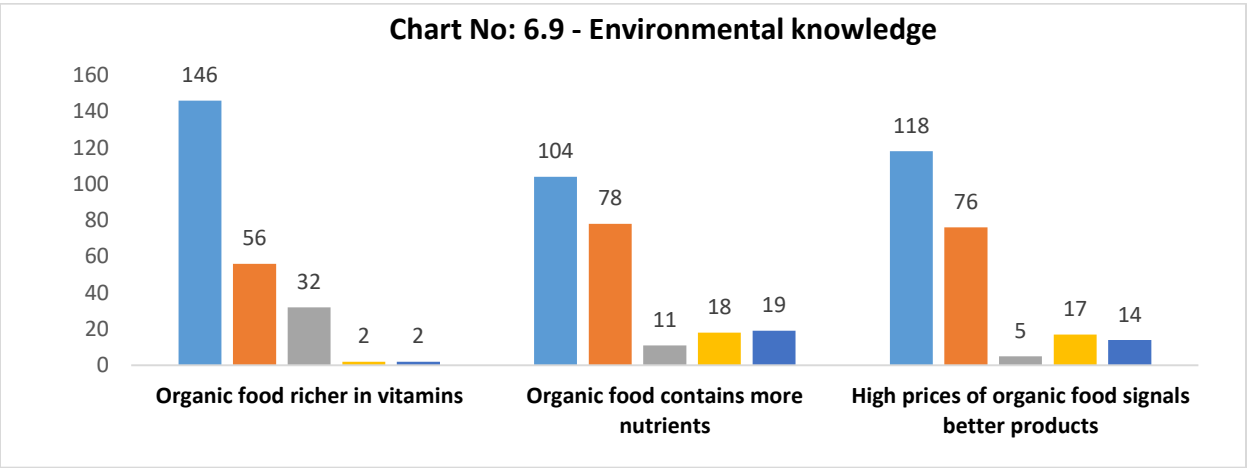

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Among the Environmental knowledge factors, consumers are more aware of and are influenced by factors like: Organic farming offers more employment opportunities (4), Market demand for organic food have positive impacts on rural economy (4.113) and Organic farming leads to food security (4.178). Around 145 respondents agreed that Organic farming is good for the environment as their mean score is 3.7. But consumer's responses are unfavourable towards the following factors: buying organic aids better wildlife (2.578) and Organic farming leads towards hunger and poverty alleviation (2.448)

About 202 respondent's(88 %) have agreed that Organic foods are richer in vitamins as their mean score is 4.591 and Organic food contains more nutrients (4). Nearly 194 (84.3 %) Respondents agreed to the fact that high prices of organic food signals better products.

6.3 Testing the relationship between influencing factors and the Consumer buying behaviour towards organic foods:

In testing the relationship among influencing factors the following null hypothesis were formulated and were duly tested using Correlation and Path Coefficient Analysis:

H_o : The awareness and knowledge does not influences the consumer's Buying behaviour towards organic food.

H_o : Attitude does not influences the consumer's buying behaviour towards organic food

H_o : Food attribute does not influences the consumer's buying behaviour towards organic food.

H_o : The price of organic food does not influences the consumer's buying behaviour towards organic food.

H_o : The buying motives and intentions of organic food has no significant impact on buying behaviour of consumers.

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Following relationship was considered in this case:

Y = f (x1, x2, x3, x4, x5)

Where Y = Consumer buying behaviour towards organic foods
X1 = Awareness and knowledge of consumers
X2 = Attitude of consumers
X3 = Food attribute of organic products
X4 = Price of organic food
X5 = Buying motives and intentions of consumers

The inter-correlation matrix of explanatory variables namely X1 = Awareness and knowledge, X2 = Attitude, X3 = Food attribute, X4 = Price, X5 = Buying motives and intentions with dependent variable Y = Consumer buying behaviour towards organic food is furnished in the following table no. 6.3.

TABLE No: 6.3
INTER-CORRELATION MATRIX

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	Y
X1	1.000					
X2	0.944**	1.000				
X3	0.955**	0.952**	1.000			
X4	0.812**	0.813**	0.884**	1.000		
X5	0.540**	0.521**	0.708**	0.851**	1.000	
y	0.690**	0.639**	0.797**	0.942**	0.951**	1.000

** Significant at one percent level

It is seen from the above table the correlation between all the explanatory variables are significant at one percent level and was positive. Further it is also seen that all these explanatory variables are, significantly and positively correlated with the dependent variable connected. This indicates strong relationship between Awareness and knowledge of consumers, Attitude of consumers, Food attribute of organic products, Price of organic food, Buying motives and intentions of consumers and the consumer buying behaviour towards organic foods .

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Path Coefficient Analysis:

The direct effect of each of the explanatory variables on the dependent variable and the indirect effect of each explanatory variables on the dependent variable through other explanatory variables are explained by path coefficient analysis and the results are furnished in the table no: 6.4

TABLE No: 6.4
Table showing the Direct & Indirect Effect of Explanatory Variables

	X1 (Awareness and knowledge)	X2 (Attitude of consumers)	X3 (Food attribute)	X4 (Price)	X5 (Buying motives and intentions)	Y (consumer buying behaviour)
X1	0.187	-0.573	0.332	0.570	0.175	0.690**
X2	0.176	-0.607	0.331	0.570	0.169	0.639**
X3	0.179	-0.578	**0.348**	0.620	0.229	0.797**
X4	0.152	-0.494	**0.307**	**0.701**	0.275	0.942**
X5	0.101	-0.317	0.246	0.597	**0.323**	0.951**

It was seen from the above table that among the five explanatory variables namely X1 = Awareness and knowledge, X2 = Attitude, X3 = Food attribute , X4 = Price, X5 = Buying motives and intentions with dependent variable Y = Consumer buying behaviour towards organic foods, three explanatory variables, X3, X4 and X5 have higher positive direct effect on the dependent variable Y – Consumer Buying Behaviour. The variable X3 (Food Attribute) also has a higher positive indirect effect on Y through X4 (Price). Similarly the variable X4(Price) also had positive indirect effect on the dependent variable Y through X3 (Food Attribute). The variable X5 (Buying motives and intentions) also had higher positive indirect effect on the dependent variable Y through X4(Price). Hence the three explanatory variables, X3- Product Attribute, X4- Price and X5- Buying motives and Intentions were substantially important as they contributes to variable Y (Consumer Buying Behaviour).

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7. Conclusion:

Today consumers started to have concern towards the purchase of environmentally-friendly and organic products, due to awareness of environmental degradation and the related social, personal and health problems. The consumers' initiated to rethink on food safety, quality and nutrition, which has provided growing opportunities for organic foods in the recent years. India has 4.43 million hectare under organic cultivation with a total organic certified production of 171,100 tons. (YES Bank report). Thus the demand for organic food is steadily increasing in the developed countries, while developing countries still need to go a long way. The untapped potential markets for organic foods in the countries like India need to be realised which require a better understanding of the consumers' preference on food. Therefore, an analysis was conducted to identify the key factors influencing the awareness and knowledge of consumers towards organic food and to examine consumer's preferences, motives and attitude in purchasing organic food products.

The study highlights the fact that consumer's buying behaviour of organic food is backed by attitude of the consumer's in the forefront supported by the intention to purchase, which in turn is influenced by many factors like health, environment, food safety, product attribute, availability, price etc., This study goes in hand with the previous studies in proving knowledge as an important variable in shaping attitudes on organic food. Hence knowledge supported by attitude facilitates the purchasing of organic food.

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