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**“A STUDY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS IN CHENNAI CITY”**

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose;**The purpose of this study is to examine how consumers in Chennai City purchase organic food items, with an emphasis on identifying the variables that affect their choices, including price, availability, brand trust, awareness, and health consciousness.**Design / Methodology / Approach:** The study uses a quantitative technique and a descriptive research design. Convenience sampling was used to gather primary data from 284 respondents in various Chennai zones.Consumer attitudes and behaviour were assessed using a variety of statistical methods, such as correlation, chi-square testing, Likert scale analysis, and percentage analysis.**Findings:** The results show that consumers typically have a favourable attitude toward organic food, primarily due to perceived safety and health benefits; 53% of customers prefer organic products, and 64% think they are safer than conventional food.However, expensive prices stand out as a significant deterrent, deterring 58% of respondents from making frequent purchases. Other factors that influence purchasing decisions include restricted availability and a partial lack of faith in certifications.Overall, the study reveals a discrepancy between consumer intention and actual purchasing behaviour, indicating the need for increased accessibility, affordability, and trust in order to increase the consumption of organic food.

**Keywords:** Consumer Buying Behaviour , Organic Food Products , Consumer Preference , Purchase Intention , Health Consciousness

**Introduction**

Chennai's customer preferences have significantly changed in recent years, favouring more environmentally friendly and healthful food options. Growing knowledge of health, food safety, and environmental issues has led to a significant increase in interest in organic

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food items. Customers are become more aware of the negative consequences of chemical pesticides, fertilisers, and preservatives used in traditional food production. Demand for organic substitutes that are thought to be safe, nourishing, and environmentally beneficial has increased as a result of this understanding.

The idea of organic food places a strong emphasis on natural farming practices that avoid clear of artificial chemicals and support soil health and biodiversity. Organic food products are now more widely available in Chennai thanks to speciality shops, supermarkets, and internet resources. Customers are especially drawn to traditional and culturally significant foods like organic rice, especially native types like Seeraga Samba, which are prized for their flavour and nutritional worth. Due to their high fibre content and health benefits, millets including Thinai, Varagu, and Kambu have also seen a resurgence, especially among urban consumers. Cold-pressed oils, which preserve natural nutrients and are thought to be healthier than refined oils, are also in greater demand.

Natural sweeteners like jaggery and pure honey are favoured over refined sugar in regular meals. Additionally, organic spices and herbal tea are becoming more well-known for their therapeutic qualities and ability to strengthen immunity. The demand for organic food items has increased due to the rise in lifestyle-related health problems like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. However, customer purchasing behaviour is greatly influenced by elements including price, availability, brand trust, and awareness. Comprehending these facets will aid producers, marketers, and legislators in creating strategies that effectively encourage the consumption of organic food and guarantee sustainable development.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the fact that consumers in Chennai are becoming more conscious of and demanding for organic food products, their actual purchasing and consumption levels are still irregular and comparatively low. Although many consumers express interest in products like organic rice like Seeraga Samba, millets like Thinai, Varagu and Kambu, cold-pressed oils, organic honey, jaggery, herbal tea, and organic spices, their purchasing decisions are frequently impacted by things like high cost, scarcity, ignorance, and questions about authenticity. Consumer behaviour is also influenced by differences in lifestyle, economic levels, and confidence in organic certifications. Studying the major influencing factors and adoption barriers is crucial because there is a noticeable gap between customer attitudes and actual purchasing behaviour.

### **Scope of the Study**

The analysis of Chennai consumers' purchasing patterns for organic food items is the main goal of this study. It includes a variety of widely used organic items, including millets like Thinai, Varagu, and Kambu, organic rice (particularly Seeraga Samba), cold-pressed oils, organic honey, jaggery, herbal tea, and organic spices. The study looks at a number of important variables that affect consumer behaviour, such as brand trust, availability, price sensitivity, awareness, health consciousness, and lifestyle choices. Further, it studies customer attitudes, preferences, and satisfaction levels in regard to organic food items. Additionally, the survey is restricted to Chennai city's urban customers and takes into account their online and offline shopping choices from supermarkets and organic shops.

### Objective of the Study

1. To study the buying behaviour of consumers towards organic food products in Chennai.

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference between the Factors Consumer Attitudes Toward Organic Food Products and Gender

### Research Methodology

This study uses a descriptive research approach to investigate Chennai city consumers' purchasing habits about organic food items. Understanding customer preferences, awareness levels, and the major elements impacting purchase decisions such as cost, availability, brand trust, and health consciousness are the main goals of the study. To support the study's theoretical framework, secondary data has also been gathered from books, journals, research articles, and internet sources.

### Research Approach

A quantitative research approach is used, as the study involves numerical data analysis to identify patterns in consumer behaviour.

### Sample Design

Convenience sampling is used in the study, and respondents are chosen according to their accessibility within Chennai. Customers who are aware of or have purchased organic food items are represented in the sample.

S. No	Chennai Zone	No. of. Respondents
1	North Zone	95
2	Central Zone	94
3	South Zone	95

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Total	284
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Based on Primary Data

The total sample size consists of 284 respondents, representing consumers who are aware of or have experience purchasing organic food products. The distribution of respondents across different zones of Chennai is almost equal, ensuring balanced representation. The North Zone accounts for 95 respondents 33.5 Per cent, the Central Zone includes 94 respondents 33.1 Per cent, and the South Zone comprises 95 respondents 33.5 Per cent.

### Statistical Tools

The gathered data is analysed using the Chi-square test and correlation analysis to look at the relationship between variables like awareness, price, and purchasing behaviour; mean score and Likert scale analysis to assess consumer attitudes and preferences toward organic food products; and percentage analysis to describe demographic and purchasing patterns.

### Review Of Literature

**Singh, A., et. al., (2017)<sup>i</sup>** This study aims to investigate the variables that affect customers' actual purchasing decisions about organic foods. A systematic questionnaire was used to gather survey data from 611 Indian consumers for this purpose. The findings demonstrate that while attitude and purchase intention mediate the link, these five characteristics also affect actual purchasing activity. Additionally, it was discovered that sociodemographic characteristics including age, income, and education had an effect on real purchasing behaviour. This study sheds light on customers' attitudes, intentions, and actual purchasing behaviour in regard to organic food products. The results have consequences for retailers, market regulating bodies, and businesses in the organic food sector. Additionally, the report offers recommendations and instructions for marketers and retailers who deal with organic goods and want to grow the organic food sector.

**Dangi, N., et. al., (2020)<sup>ii</sup>** The purpose of the study is to examine current studies on the factors influencing the purchase of organic food, with a focus on eco-labels, and to determine the relative importance of different elements. After examining a sample of 154,072 consumers reported in 91 research papers from 2001 to 2020, a conceptual framework of organic food purchasing behaviour is provided. The findings indicate that the most significant reasons in the purchasing of organic food are price, eco-labels, health concerns, environmental concerns, education and awareness, and faith in organic food. According to the research, eco-labels boost consumer trust in organic products by lessening information

asymmetry. However, high-income economies and emerging economies differed in how important some elements were perceived.

**Roy, A., et. al., (2023)<sup>iii</sup>** In order to analyse and offer guidance for future research, the study attempts to critically review the literature using the factors that the authors have identified. This study aims to determine and examine the variables influencing customers' opinions about organic food items and their purchasing decisions. Fifty publications in all were acquired from various sources, including Google Scholar and Scopus. The articles were then selected according to their main topics and areas of expertise. The results show that consumers' acceptance of organic products is largely influenced by behavioural elements. Other factors that contribute to the endorsement of organic products include customer perspective, supply and demand, health aspects, cost-effectiveness, standard, and dependability. The absence of a supply chain market for organic products is the main reason for product unavailability, according to the authors.

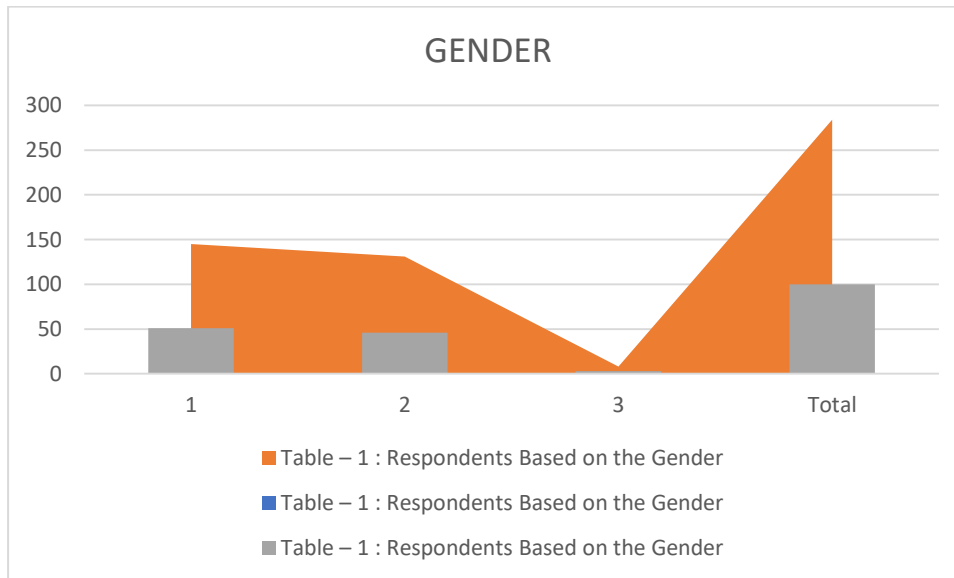
**Munaqib, P., et. al., (2025)<sup>iv</sup>** The purpose of this study is to investigate how people's desire to make green purchases, which in turn affects organic shopping behaviour, is influenced by health consciousness, social identification, self-identity, trust, and willingness to pay premium. The study also attempted to investigate the moderating influence of premium willingness. A questionnaire survey was utilised to collect data from 452 Indian clients using a purposeful sample technique. The study's findings demonstrated that consumers' health consciousness, social identity, and trust have a significant impact on their desire to make environmentally friendly purchases. Self-identity, however, had little effect on customers' intentions to make green purchases. Additionally, the association between health consciousness, readiness to pay premium, social identity, and trust and the intention to make green purchases was significantly moderated by willingness to pay premium, with the exception of self-identification.

**Table – 1 : Respondents Based on the Gender**

S.No	Genger	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	145	51
2	Female	131	46
3	Trigender	8	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>284</b>	<b>100</b>

Primary data Source:

From the table 1, gender distribution of study participants of the 284 responses are 51% men (145), 46% are women (131), and 3% are transgender (8). This indicates that the proportion of male respondents is marginally higher than that of female respondents. Transgender respondents make up a very small portion of the sample. Overall, the data shows low variety from other gender groups and a fairly balanced participation rate between male and female respondents.



**Table – 2: Likert Scale Analysis of Consumer Attitudes Toward Organic Food**

S. No	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	TOTAL
1	I prefer organic food products for health benefits	80	73	48	50	33	<b>284</b>
		28	25	17	18	12	<b>100</b>
2	Organic food products are safer than conventional food	88	93	51	31	21	<b>284</b>
		31	33	18	11	7	<b>100</b>
3	High price prevents me from buying organic food regularly	82	59	81	41	21	<b>284</b>
		34	24	33	17	8	<b>100</b>
4	Organic food products are easily available in Chennai	62	109	38	41	34	<b>284</b>
		25	38	13	14	10	<b>100</b>
5	I trust the authenticity of organic food labels and certifications	107	64	36	46	31	<b>284</b>
		38	22	13	16	11	<b>100</b>

Primary data Source:

From the Table 2, Although there are still a few objections the Likert scale analysis shows that respondents typically had favourable opinions on organic food. Consumer confidence in the health benefits of organic food is evident as a large majority of respondents agree that they prefer it for these reasons (53% combined SA and A) and believe it to be safer than conventional food (64% agreement). Price, on the other hand, stands out as a major obstacle, as 58% of respondents concur that high costs discourage frequent purchases. Although a sizable majority still disagrees, availability seems to be somewhat favourable, with 63% of respondents agreeing that organic items are available in Chennai. Although 60% of respondents say they are confident in credentials, a minor percentage are still dubious. Consumer uncertainty or ignorance may be shown by neutral reactions to various statements. Overall, even while favourable opinion predominates, issues with affordability and partial trust still have an impact on consumer behaviour

**Table 6**  
**Factors Consumer Attitudes Toward Organic Food Products and Gender**

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
I prefer organic food products for health benefits	Male	145	3.82	1.10	4.215	0.001*
	Female	131	3.75	1.08		
	Trigender	8	3.60	1.15		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	3.76	1.10		
Organic food products are safer than conventional food	Male	145	3.95	1.05	5.102	0.001*
	Female	131	3.88	1.07		
	Trigender	8	3.62	1.12		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	3.89	1.07		
High price prevents me from buying organic food regularly	Male	145	3.70	1.14	4.560	0.002*
	Female	131	3.62	1.10		
	Trigender	8	3.40	1.18		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	3.64	1.12		
Organic food products are easily available in Chennai	Male	145	3.58	1.08	3.890	0.003*
	Female	131	3.52	1.06		
	Trigender	8	3.30	1.11		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>		1.08		

			3.54			
I trust the authenticity of organic food labels and certifications	Male	145	3.90	1.09	5.330	0.001*
	Female	131	3.84	1.06		
	Trigender	8	3.55	1.13		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	3.86	1.08		

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 6 shows that the ANOVA analysis indicates variations in the mean scores of consumer attitudes toward organic food products across different gender groups. For preference toward organic food products for health benefits, the mean scores are 3.82, 3.75, and 3.60 with  $F = 4.215$  and  $p = 0.001$ . For the statement organic food products are safer than conventional food, the mean values are 3.95, 3.88, and 3.62 with  $F = 5.102$  and  $p = 0.000$ . The factor high price prevents me from buying organic food regularly shows mean scores of 3.70, 3.62, and 3.40 with  $F = 4.560$  and  $p = 0.002$ . For organic food products are easily available in Chennai, the mean values are 3.58, 3.52, and 3.30 with  $F = 3.890$  and  $p = 0.003$ . Finally, trust in the authenticity of organic food labels and certifications has mean scores of 3.90, 3.84, and 3.55 with  $F = 5.330$  and  $p = 0.001$ .

Since all p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected for all variables, indicating that there is a significant difference in consumer attitudes toward organic food products among different gender groups.

### Findings

1. Health consciousness is a major motivator, as evidenced by the fact that 53% of respondents (28% strongly agree and 25% agree) choose organic food for its health benefits, while just 30% (18% disagree and 12% strongly disagree) disagree.

2. With the maximum agreement of 64% (31% strongly agree and 33% agree) and only 18% disagreement, consumers clearly believe that organic food is safer than conventional food.

3. The largest obstacle is price, as 58% of respondents (34% strongly agree and 24% agree) believe that high costs discourage frequent purchases. This is far higher than the 25% disagreement, underscoring concerns about affordability.

4. There is a moderate level of acceptance about the availability of organic products in Chennai; 63% of respondents (25% strongly agree and 38% agree) believe that they are easily accessible, while 24% disagree, suggesting that accessibility is improving but is still not entirely sufficient.

5. Although 60% of respondents (38% strongly agree and 22% agree) express confidence in organic labels and certifications, 27% (16% disagree and 11% strongly disagree) express scepticism, indicating a partial lack of consumer trust.

### **Suggestions**

1. Efforts should be made to lower cost barriers since 58% of respondents believe that high costs discourage regular purchases. To make organic food items more easily accessible and cheap for middle-class and lower-class consumers, producers and marketers can implement smaller packaging, discounts, subsidies, or promotional offers.
2. Even though 60% of people accept organic labelling, a significant percentage still have questions about their legitimacy. In addition to ensuring correct labelling, transparency, and quality assurance, government agencies and marketers should raise knowledge of certification criteria. Stronger customer confidence in organic products can be achieved through educational programs and specific certification marks.

### **Conclusion**

According to the study's findings, people in Chennai have a favourable opinion of organic food items, primarily due to health concerns and the belief that organic food is safer than conventional options. Due to their nutritional and environmental advantages, a sizable percentage of respondents favour organic products, an indication of rising awareness and shifting lifestyle habits. However, despite this positive attitude, real purchase activity is constrained by significant obstacles such high cost, restricted availability, and a partial lack of confidence in certifications. The results show a significant discrepancy between customer intention and actual purchasing behaviour, with affordability emerging as the most important barrier. Even if supply has increased, it is still insufficient to keep up with rising demand. Trust in organic labeling exists but remains incomplete, suggesting the need for stronger regulatory assurance. Overall, the study highlights that increasing customer trust, availability, and price accessibility can greatly increase the uptake of organic food items.

### **References**

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