

Going Green - Organic Food for Sustainable Growth and Healthy Life

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Abstract

The industrial revolution and modernization are at the cost of Mother Nature. The consumption of organic foods started in the developed nations. However, the practice of organic farming has been prevalent from the time of agriculture was first conceived. The organic practices have continued to expand during the last few years and the industry experts are forecasting steady growth. However the trend is gaining importance in the developing countries and the organic food market is in nascent stage in India. The increasing export market and government's support also will further boost the demand for organic foods in the country.

Key Words : Organic foods, Health consciousness, consuming pattern etc...

Introduction

India has been an agricultural country, but the scarcity of food crops is the result of growing population which changed the fundamentals. The green revolution program came into existence and saved the country from the scarcity of crops. The organic agriculture has attained a worldwide growth and it is a profitable and sustainable business for agricultural producers. Many marketers have obtained proper certification to produce healthy organic products in our country. India is one of the largest exporters of organic foods and it is fast becoming a big consumer as well.

Significance of the Study

India has emerged as one of the largest potential markets. Organic food consumption is owing to the fact that organic foods and products are healthy and it contains no chemicals or preservative and are completely natural. Organic food / products are easily available in the market and it is expected to witness remarkable growth over the forecast period.

Statement of the Problem

India is on the threshold of organic food industry and it's at the nascent stage, has experienced steady fast growth in past few years. The country is budding in the organic food market and is transforming into world's fastest growing market. The study explores the growth of organic food market and also states the consumers' preferences towards organic foods.

Research Methodology

Exploratory study is adopted and secondary data was used for this study. The data which has been collected from Books, Magazines, websites etc are used for this study.

Objectives of the Study

- To know about the origin, advantages and disadvantages of organic foods.
- To analyze the reasons for consuming organic foods.

Origin of Organic Foods

Lord Northbourne was the first person to introduce the word organic farming. It is the natural way of growing crops and it started becoming popular and economically less feasible. The farmers earn higher profits by yielding more crops for better utilization of the land. Organic food farming continued as a small size business, mostly family-run business farms or kitchen gardens. Now, organic foods are widely available and have become very popular, with soaring sales.

Types of Organic Foods

Based on the production, organic foods may be available in the market as fresh as processed.

- **Fresh organic foods**

Most of the organic foods sold in the markets and various outlets are in the fresh form like Fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs and dairy products.

- **Processed organic foods**

Processed foods are popular worldwide and cover a huge range in the super markets and those products are canned foods, frozen vegetables, ready-to-eat foods that are labeled as “Organic”. If the processing of these foods has not involved the use of any chemicals and confirm to the required standards, as needless to say that foods are usually more expensive. Consumers should check for the Government certification and labeling before buying any food that claims to be “Organic”.

Reasons to Choose Organic Foods

- **Avoid chemicals**

Eating organic foods is the best way to avoid the chemical added foods.

The National Academy of Sciences reports stated that the 90 percent of the chemicals applied to foods have not been tested for long-term health effects before being said it is “safe”.

- **Nutrients factor**

Organically grown foods have more nutrients than non organically grown foods. The soil is best managed and nourished with sustainable practices by setting up responsible standards.

- **Better taste**

Organically grown foods generally taste better because they are well nourished and also balanced soil produces healthy and strong plants.

- **Avoid GMO**

Genetically modified organisms (GMO) are contaminating food supply at an alarming rate, with repercussions beyond understanding. Organically grown foods cannot be genetically

modified in anyway. Choosing organic foods is the best way that gives us balanced diet and complete nourishment.

Improvisation Soil Quality

Many do not realize that our soils are so depleted and we no longer get the nutrients from our foods as a few decades ago. To obtain the certified organic label from the US Department of Agriculture, the soil must be free of prohibited chemicals for three years only then the soil quality will increase in a necessary way for organic farmers.

- **Support economy and farmers**

Organic food products are provided in fresh form every day as they are more nutritious and tasty, it will also reduce the pollution that results from food transport. Local farmers are highly benefitted as they earn a standard amount of profit out of selling these products to their regular customers.

Advantages of Consuming Organic Foods

Organic foods benefit the environment, the producers / farmers and the consumers. Extolling of organic foods has largely been by way of word of mouth. Most health experts say that organic food is natural / pure, highly nutritious, superior taste and is entirely safe. It lays claim to several health benefits and it contains more amount of vitamin C that the conventional food cannot lay claim too.

- **Environment- friendly**

The long-term effects of soil contamination are likely to be disastrous to the future. Today’s mantra is destroy all, consume all. It means there is unlikely to be a living planet, we mean it for millions of years. The large-scale production and usage of organic foods will definitely go a long way by sustaining and preserving the ecological balance of our bio-system.

- Local wildlife is not harmed.

- Less energy is consumed during farming.
- Waste production is also minimized.
- It is free from pollution.

- **Farmer- friendly**

Constant exposure to chemicals such as organophosphate pesticides and also fertilizers can be detrimental to the health of farmers and consumers leading to a wide variety of serious health conditions like gastrointestinal system, eye, skin, respiratory system that will ultimately affect the nervous system.

- **Consumer-friendly**

The European Union funded study found that organic fruits and vegetables have up to 50 percent more antioxidants, which scientists believe can cut the risks of cancer and heart disease, as it contains more vitamins, minerals such as iron and zinc. Organic foods are better in fighting cancer and people consuming organic foods have improved immune system and better sleeping habits.

Disadvantages of Organic Foods

There are some downsides to the use of organic foods. Few of these are as follows :

- **Cost Factor**

Organic foods are approximately 40 percent more expensive than conventional food, making it a luxury for the common man.

- **Food Quality**

The critics claim that the soil and water are already contaminated through years of manipulated farming and organic foods grown on these soils are likely to be contaminated as well.

- Organic farming avoids the usage of synthetic pesticides, but also allows the use of pesticides derived from certain plants which comprises of “questionable” chemicals.

- Several organic products are used as manure that are derived from animals, raised to feed in a non-organic fashion, besides, manure is also a rich source of biological contaminants.

- Controversies include that “organic” products are from cloned animals and majority of these animals have been derived from the animals raised through non-organically.

- **Low production**

Most of the organic foods are sold out soon as it reaches the market. The production of these foods are insufficient to meet the growing demand. The yield of organic foods is too low compared to the conventional yield method.

Limitation of the Study

Only secondary data has been used in this study.

Findings of the Study

Growing health consciousness is the key factor surging the demand for organic food products in India with all other factors that provides improved living standards and consumption patterns.

Conclusion

In the current scenario, the market for organic food products has been growing at a rapid rate over the last few years. The country witnesses increased health consciousness among consumers in major cities across India. It has been the key factor for the growth of organic products in the conventional market. Organic food products include diverse categories ranging from fruits and vegetables, dairy products, processed foods, pulses and food grains to other products such as beverages and confectionaries etc. Various standards are implemented to improve the quality of organic foods produced in the country. It is expected that India’s organic food market will witness a promised growth over the next five to ten years.

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