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Purchase Behaviour of Urban Residents Towards Organic Food Products

P. SANTHI AND U. JERINABI

An empirical study has been carried out with the objectives to find out the quantum of purchase of Organic food products by the respondents, purchase behavior of the respondents and willingness to purchase of Organic food products, Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural aspects of attitude of respondents to Organic Food Products. The study was carried out in Coimbatore City with the sample size of 200 household respondents who reside close to the Organic Food Store Sreevatsa Organic Farm Products and familiar with Organic Food Products by adopting multistage sampling technique. The null-hypothesis was tested for the socio-economic factors and willingness to purchase organic food products.

Introduction

The growth of competition amongst the producers of organic food products in the market has resulted in the invention of almost all kinds of organic food products. Effective awareness has become more indispensable. In the modern commercial world all kinds of organic institutions find awareness as a suitable means of publicity. Whether the attitude towards organic food products is positive and influences to buy organic food products and whether the socio-economic profile helps the residents to buy organic food products.

Objectives of The Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the social economic profile and organic food purchase behaviour of by the respondents,
2. To determine the quantum of organic food products purchased by the respondents,
3. To analyse respondents attitude towards organic food products, and
4. To suggest suitable measurement for improving the marketability of organic food products.

P. Santhi is Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, Avinashilingam Deemed University for Women, Coimbatore-641043, Tamil Nadu and Dr. U. Jerinabi is Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, Avinashilingam Deemed University for Women, Coimbatore-641043, Tamil Nadu.

Research Methodology

Coimbatore city was selected as the area of the study owing to the reason that, it is the second biggest city in Tamil Nadu. It is an industrial hub with an educated population, middle class, active environmental organizations spreading awareness on environmental degradation at the pioneer stage, guiding towards organic food consumption. More than 50,000 acres across the state have been brought under organic certification programmes by Tamilnadu Organic Certification Department's efforts. It has head office in Coimbatore and branches in Tiruchi, Madurai and Vellore. The study covers the period of three months from January to March -2010. The study was mainly based on primary data first hand information was collected and used in the study. A structured interview schedule was used for the collection of data from the samples selected. The Secondary data collected from government reports, publication, research reports, and books.

For this study, multistage random sampling techniques is used for the selection of the sample. The sample is drawn from the sample unit namely the members of household drawn from the residential area located in ward number 34 of North zone of Coimbatore Municipal Corporation where The Sreevatsa Organic Farm Products is located. The Sreevatsa Organic Farm Products a speciality shop which deals with organically cultivated grains, pulses, edible oil, fruits, vegetables milk and milk products from organically fed cattles and also Organic manures. The collected data is analyzed with the help of statistical tools like Percentage analysis, Chi-square test, Scaling techniques, and Factor analysis.

The study is confined to the selected area and hence no generalization can be made. The accuracy depends upon the respondents' information.

Results and Discussion

Distribution of Respondents Based on Socio Economic Status

The socio economic profile of the respondents is presented in the Table 1.

The majority of the respondents (68.50percent) belong to the age group between 20 and 40 years, female respondents constitutes (55 percent) and remaining (45 percent) were male (Table 1). Majority of the respondents (66.50 percent) were married and 33.50 percent were Unmarried. As far as the occupation is concerned 39.50 percent of the respondents with full time employment, 28.50 percent of the respondents were Homemakers, and 19.50 percent were casual Labourers. The classification of the respondents based on education showed that 39.50 percent were Graduates, 29.50 percent were post graduates and remaining 31 percent of respondents had education up to higher secondary level.

The respondents were classified based on their monthly income. About 33 percent of the respondents have monthly income be low Rs.10, 000, 24.50 percent of the respondents belong to the income level of Rs.10,000 to Rs.20,000, 19 percent of the respondents belong to the income level of above Rs.30,000, 12.50 percent of the respondents do not have income, as they were students and depend on their parents to meet with their needs, and 11

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on socio economic status

	Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage
Age (in years)	20-30	78	39.00
	30-40	59	29.50
	40-50	30	15.00
	50-60	33	16.50
Gender	Male	90	45.00
	Female	110	55.00
Marital Status	Married	133	66.50
	Unmarried	67	33.50
Education	Primary	42	21.00
	Higher secondary	20	10.00
	Graduate	79	39.50
	Post Graduate	59	29.50
Occupation	Self employed	34	17.00
	Employed	45	22.50
	Casual Labour	39	19.50
	Students	25	12.50
	Homemakers	57	28.50
Monthly income (in Rs)	Below 10,000	66	33.00
	10,000-20,000	49	24.50
	20,000-30,000	22	11.00
	Above 30,000	38	19.00
	Nil	25	12.50
Number of family members Below 18 years	Upto 2	136	68.00
	2 to 4	1	0.50
19 – 40 years	Upto 2	183	91.50
	2 to 5	17	8.50
40 – 65 years	Upto 2	191	95.50
	2 to 4	9	4.50
Above 65 years	Upto 1	195	97.50
	1 to 2	5	2.50
Food Habit	Vegetarian	80	40.00
	Mostly Vegetarian	60	30.00
	Not Vegetarian	60	30.00

Source: Primary Data

percent of the respondents belongs to the income level of Rs.20, 000 to 30,000. With regard to food habit, most (40 percent) of the respondents were vegetarian and 30 percent of the respondents were mostly Vegetarian and remaining 30 percent of the respondents were Not Vegetarian.

Distribution of Respondents Based on Purchase Behaviour

Purchase is a consumer commitment for the product. The respondents purchase behaviour of organic food products and their Pattern of purchase are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on purchase behaviour

	Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Ever buy organic food products	Yes	136	65.70
	No	64	32.00
Purchase when organic and non-organic food products are available	Always	55	27.50
	Frequently	48	24.00
	Sometimes	69	34.50
	Never	28	14.00
Frequency of purchase	Daily	29	14.50
	Weekly	32	16.00
	Monthly	22	11.00
	2-3 times per month	40	20.00
	Once a year	13	6.50
Willingness to pay price premium	Upto 5%	123	61.50
	5% - 15%	38	19.00
	15% - 30%	17	8.50
	Unwilling	32	16.00
Quantum of purchase in rise in price	Buy more	26	13.00
	Buy less	91	45.50
	Not at all	83	41.50
Familiarity through	TV	20	10.00
	Radio	11	5.50
	Magazines	12	6.00
	Newspaper	26	13.00
	Internet	15	7.50
	Friend/relative/associate	40	20.00
	In store	37	18.50
Sources of Influence	Not sure	39	19.50
	Advertisement	30	15.00
	Personal reference	10	5.00
	Peer groups	35	17.50
	Parents	28	14.00
	Reference groups	23	11.50
	Culture	32	16.00
	Religion	21	10.50
	Environmentalist	21	10.50
	More than 3 years	32	16.00
Duration of purchase	1-3 years	48	24.00
	6-12 months	47	23.50
	0-6 months	38	19.00
	Never	35	17.50
Place of purchase	Super market	45	22.50
	Grocery shop	50	25.00
	Processing center	45	22.50
	Organic food stores	60	30.00
	Public distribution system	Nil	Nil
Recognition of organic food as a "product"	Labeling	62	31.00
	Marketing	59	29.50
	Promotion	41	20.50
	Stamp	38	19.00
Recommending organic foods to others	Yes	119	59.50
	No	81	40.50

Source: Primary Data

Consumer behaviour is shaped to the large extent by external or social factors such as family relationship, Cultural and other aspects of external environment. Awareness of these influences can help marketers to think, feel or act similarly and separate them into unique market segments.

It is noted that when both organic and non-organic food products are available 35 percent of the respondents choose to buy organic products Sometimes, 28 percent of the respondents choose always, and 24 percent of the respondents choose frequently whereas 14 percent of the respondents expressed their unwillingness to buy organic food products.

With regard to frequency of purchase of product, 20 percent of the respondents purchased organic food products 2 to 3 times per month, 16 percent purchased once in a week and about 14 percent of the respondents daily, 11 percent respondents once in a month and about 6 percent of the respondents once a year.

Majority of the respondents (61.50 percent) were willing to pay price premium upto 5percent above the price of conventional food products, 19 percent of the respondents were willing to pay price premium of 5percent to 15percent and 8.5 percent were willing to pay above 15percent. About 16percent of the respondents were unwilling to pay any price premium.

With regard to quantum of purchase of organic food products in the year of increasing price, majority (45.50 percent) of respondents purchased less quantity of organic food products, 41.50 percent of the respondents were not buying the organic food products and remaining 13 percent of the respondents continuing their purchase with high quantity of organic food products even with the rise in price level.

Awareness is a major promotion tool. The awareness facilitate the viewers to understand the message by visual, aural and both aural and visual. It is useful to create maximum interest and offered adequate knowledge of the product. About 20 percent of the respondents first time heard about organic food products from friends, relatives, and their associates 18.50 percent of the respondents were from in store, 23 percent of the respondents from Newspaper, and Television and remaining 19 percent of the respondents were familiar organic food products through Radio, Magazines and Internet and then remaining 19.50 percent of the respondents were not familiar about organic food before and were not sure of about the sources which provided awareness about organic food products.

It is understood that the peer groups (17.50 percent) were the major influencing factors in purchase of organic food products, Culture influenced 16 percent of the respondents and advertisement influenced 15 percent of the respondents to purchase organic food products, whereas parents, Reference groups, Religion, Environmentalist, and Personal reference had considerable influence in purchase of organic food products.

Majority of the respondents (24 percent) purchasing the organic food products for about 1 to 3 years and 23.50 percent of the respondents were purchasing for about 6 to 12 months and 16 percent of the respondents purchased for more than 3 years and remaining 17.50 percent of the respondents never bought organic food products.

With regard to place of shopping for organic food products (Exhibit 6), majority of the respondents (30 percent) bought from organic food store and 25 percent from Grocery shop, 22.50 percent respectively from super market and processing center.

The organic certification, granted by agencies such as the soil association, can play a crucial part in the choices made by the consumers. Indeed, and even though these labels are rarely understood, they ensure that consumers recognize which products has been produced according to the regulated practices of organic farming.

The supermarket, however, where food display is regulated the absence of stamp is clearly considered as an accurate indicators that the product is not organic. Organic food has been sold as a way of marketing to people who are not actually interested in the environmental aspects and just want the lifestyle or the luxury.

In order market the organic food products, as Products. About 31 percent of the respondents expressed that Labeling is essential, about 30 percent of the respondents expressed that it is required for Wide marketing, 19 percent expressed the necessity for Stamping, 20 percent of the respondents considered organic food products as equivalent to conventional or local food.

Majority (59 percent) of the respondents for recommended organic foods to others.

Quantum of Purchase and Usage of Organic Food Products by the Respondents

The product usage reflects the purchase propensity indicating customer behaviour and the pattern of demand. The Table 3 shows the purchase and usage of organic food products.

Table 3 shows the quantity of organic food products purchased by the respondents. It is revealed that, 2 to 4 litres of Milk were purchased every day by majority of the respondents. Majority of respondents bought weekly once, Meat about 1 kgs, 1 dozen of eggs, 8 to 12 kgs of Vegetables and up to 3 kgs of Fruits. The monthly purchase of organic food products by majority of the respondents consisted of about 75 kgs Rice, 2 kgs of Dhal, about 300 to 600 gms of Masala powder, Pickel, jam and Candy, Beverage, Honey, cosmetics and other provision.

Analysis of Attitude of Respondents towards Organic food products

Positive attitude towards a product does not necessarily mean that a consumer will buy. The attitude which leads to purchase is determined by consumer characteristics, situational characteristics and measurement characteristics and it has implications for marketers.

Affective component of purchase behaviour of Organic food products among respondents

Feelings or emotional reactions to an object represent the affective component of an attitude. Affect is the way in which the customers feel in response to market place stimuli. The affect response of the customers can be very general

Table 3: Quantum of purchase and usage of organic food products by the respondents

Products	Quantity purchased	No. of respondents	Percentage
Milk (litre.per day)	Up to 2	98	49.00
	2 to 4	99	49.50
	Above 4	3	1.50
Meats, poultry, seafood (kgs.per week)	Up to 1	124	62.00
	1 to 2	58	29.00
	Above 2	18	9.00
Eggs (dozen per week)	Up to 1	176	88.00
	1 to 2	24	12.00
Vegetables (kgs. Per week)	Up to 4	46	23.00
	4 to 8	57	28.50
	8 to 12	65	32.50
	Above 12	32	16.00
Fruits (kgs. Per week)	Up to 3	98	49.00
	3 to 6	94	47.00
	Above 6	8	4.00
Rice (kgs.per month)	Up to 25	54	27.00
	25 to 50	22	11.00
	50 to 75	45	22.50
	Above75	79	39.00
Dhal (kgs.per month)	Up to 2	108	54.00
	2 to 4	85	42.50
	Above	7	3.50
Millets (gms.occasionally)	Up to .30	92	46.00
	.30 to .60	90	45.00
	Above .60	18	9.00
Flour (kgs.occasionally)	Up to 4	185	92.50
	4 to 8	11	5.50
	Above 8	4	2.00
Pickel, Jam and candy (gms .per month)	Up to .30	140	70.00
	.30 to .60	49	24.50
	Above .60	11	5.50
Masala powder (gms.per month)	Up to .30	92	46.00
	.30 to .60	102	51.00
	Above .60	6	3.00
Beverage (gms.per month)	Up to .40	184	92.00
	.40 to 80	15	7.00
	Above .80	1	0.50
Other provision (gms.per month)	Up to .25	162	81.00
	.25 to.50	23	11.50
	Above .50	15	7.50
Honey (gms occasionally)	Up to .25	78	39.00
	.25 to.50	80	40.00
	Above .50	42	21.00
Cosmetics (gms per month)	Up to .25	137	68.50
	.25 to.50	31	15.50
	Above .50	32	16.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 4: Ranking of affective component of the respondents attitude towards organic food products (percentage analysis)

Elements	Ranks												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Percentage of the respondents													
Better Taste	38.00	31.00	0.50	2.50	2.00	2.50	10.50	2.00	2.00	0.50	1.50	5.50	2.00
Better for health	29.50	22.00	8.50	10.50	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	1.00	6.00	7.00	1.50	0.00
Better for animal	11.50	11.50	7.00	19.50	4.50	2.50	7.50	4.00	0.00	3.50	20.50	1.00	7.00
Contains no dirt and bugs	3.00	9.50	5.50	19.50	8.00	2.00	8.00	2.50	1.00	2.50	22.50	6.50	10.50
Better for the environment	6.50	6.00	6.00	8.00	4.00	5.00	9.00	4.00	4.00	6.00	12.00	14.50	15.00
Expensive	3.00	6.50	5.50	9.00	10.50	7.50	6.00	6.50	4.00	13.00	7.50	14.00	7.00
Better for farmers	2.50	6.00	5.00	5.50	8.50	13.50	18.00	7.00	4.50	10.50	5.00	7.50	6.50
Very low yield	1.00	1.00	8.00	5.00	11.00	18.00	7.50	15.00	3.50	10.50	2.50	8.00	9.50
Ecological	0.50	1.00	12.50	5.50	6.50	12.50	11.00	13.00	8.00	8.00	3.00	12.00	6.50
Free from harmful substances	2.00	0.50	8.50	3.50	12.50	12.00	3.00	14.00	11.00	9.50	6.50	11.50	5.50
Better quality	1.00	2.00	9.50	5.00	8.00	9.50	6.50	10.00	14.00	11.00	4.50	9.00	9.50
Low Calories	1.50	1.00	11.50	3.50	11.50	5.50	4.50	13.50	24.50	11.00	5.50	2.00	4.50
Certification	0.00	2.00	12.00	3.50	9.00	6.50	5.50	4.50	22.50	8.00	2.50	7.00	17.00

Source: Primary data

or very specific. Since the affect component leads action, marketers are concerned with understanding affective component in purchase behaviour and is presented in Table 4.

It is inferred from Table 4 that, the respondents ranked the elements associated with organic food products most liked by the respondents, majority of the respondents assigned first rank to "Better for health" (29.50 percent) "Better taste" (38 percent) and the sixth rank to "Very low yield" (18 percent) the seventh rank to "Better for farmers"(18 percent) and eighth rank to "Ecological" and "Free from harmful substances" (14 percent) the ninth rank to "Better quality" (14 percent) "Low calories" (24.50 percent) and "Certification" (22.50 percent) and eleventh rank to "Better for animal" (20.50 percent) and "contains no dirt and bugs" (22 percent) and twelfth rank to "Expensive" (14 percent) the last rank to "Better for the environment" (15 percent). It is understood that, the elements of organic food products most liked by the respondents where better taste, better for health, very low yield and better for farmers.

Cognitive Component in Purchase Behaviour of Organic Food Products by the Respondents

A consumer belief is a psychological association between a product, attribute or feature of that product. Beliefs or cognitive, that is based on knowledge.

Table 5: Cognitive component in purchase behaviour

Reasons	(%age)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis agree	Strongly Dis agree
Perishables nature of food	16.00	24.00	26.50	21.50	24.50
Absence of food additives (less flavour)	16.50	26.50	21.00	21.00	29.50
Not much difference on the taste	27.00	24.50	25.50	12.50	17.50
Not much difference on the health issue	18.00	18.50	26.50	23.50	18.50
Not much difference on the preparation and consumption	27.00	25.00	20.50	18.50	13.00
Don't care about organic	13.00	27.00	15.50	20.00	18.50
Prefer other cereals	18.00	30.00	25.00	23.50	20.00
Not enough choice	23.00	28.50	22.00	20.00	19.50
Don't eat organic cereals	19.00	16.00	20.00	29.00	25.00
Mood	23.50	38.00	23.00	21.00	17.00
Time constraints	62.00	21.00	14.00	13.00	13.00
Inconvenient to get organic food	31.00	28.00	20.00	13.00	20.00
Too expensive	20.00	32.00	28.00	25.00	19.00
Not available where I shop	17.00	20.00	13.00	18.00	14.00
Haven't noticed them	19.00	18.00	25.00	22.50	21.50
Don't like the image	15.00	25.00	28.00	13.00	20.00

Source: Primary data

The Table 5 shows cognitive components in purchase behaviour of organic food products by respondents. Cognitive aspect of attitude is analysed as the reason for not buying organic food products. The purchase of organic food product was restricted mainly due to Time constraints and convenience to get Organic food.

Behavioural Component of Respondents Attitude

The behavioural component of an attitude is one's tendency to respond in a certain manner towards a object or activity. A series of decision to purchase would reflect the behavioural component of attitude. Actual behaviours reflect these intentions as they are modified by the situation in which the behaviour will occur.

Factors Influencing Purchase Decision of Organic Food Products

To know about the agreement or disagreement about the purchase of organic food instead of conventional food by the respondents twenty seven variables were included and the respondents were asked to give their opinion on the Likert five point scale. Data so collected were subjected to factor analysis to bring out the underlying factor.

Varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalization was used for the Factor Analysis. The principal component analysis was used for extraction purpose. The criterion for selecting number of factor was based on Eigen value. All three factors which had Eigen value more than one was included. On applying Varimax Rotation, six factors had Eigen value of more than one. The rotation resulted in whose value of eight factor are presented in Table 6.

From the above Table 6 a loading of 0.7 and above was considered to be significant for grouping the variables. In factor one, the variables Food neophobia (.749), food involve a vegetarian had the loadings of 0.7 and above, and hence these two variables forms first factor. Factor four was named as "Social interaction", as social desirability (.773) and food ideology (.716) had the loadings of 0.7 and above, and hence these two variables forms fourth factor. Fifth factor was with respect to supporting organic farming (.703). Factor seven with the variable "Conscience" (.762). factor eight with monetary cost (.807). All these eight factors taken together explained a total variance of 58.815. The communality value represents the variation explained by the selected eight factors for each variable. The variance explained by food habit is 78.4 percent and monetary cost is 71 percent.

It is inferred from the factor analysis that food habit, Food involvement and vegetarianism, food ideology and social interaction were prime factors influencing decision about the purchase of organic food products. The price of Organic food products also resulted as an important factor.

Suggestions to Marketers

The following are the suggestion for the marketers of Organic food products.

- Sustained improvement in product features.
- The increase frequency of viewing the advertisement of organic food products and better taste would influence the purchase of organic food products.

Table 6: Factors influencing purchase decision of organic food products (factor analysis)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Communality Value
Sensory appeal => Taste	.035	.089	.035	.059	.452	.556	.032	.039	.529
Texture	.693	.046	.260	.130	.054	.140	.068	.044	.596
Smell	.540	.090	.023	.011	.419	.176	.072	.168	.541
Familiarity => Habits	.151	.575	.039	.084	.435	.080	.357	.315	.784
Culture and tradition	.231	.582	.146	.202	.253	.072	.317	.060	.628
Food safety	.366	.134	.607	.018	.148	.012	.022	.158	.569
Food neo phobia	.749	.132	.039	.190	.102	.003	.031	.116	.641
Availability/ convenience => Shopping facilities	.007	.093	.152	.222	.666	.093	.126	.029	.551
Eating out	.600	.153	.179	.024	.178	.267	.045	.053	.524
High Monetary cost	.085	.094	.086	.031	.141	.010	.121	.807	.710
Social interactions=> Social desirability	.034	.059	.053	.773	.223	.012	.021	.067	.660
Food ideology	.178	.008	.064	.716	.006	.033	.229	.028	.603
Animal welfare	.454	.002	.081	.261	.407	.056	.177	.281	.560
Supporting organic farming	.099	.029	.130	.073	.702	.007	.102	.124	.551
It is special – Go for it	.205	.021	.007	.324	.202	.069	.555	.015	.501
Personal Ideology => It is life style	.085	.180	.188	.306	.197	.138	.561	.027	.542

contd.

Conscience	.056	.073	.094	.176	.033	.020	.762	.126	.646
Trade policies	.729	.140	.092	.071	.041	.182	.073	.069	.610
Food involvement and vegetarianism	.026	.118	.180	.011	.018	.653	.003	.091	.482
Political beliefs	.515	.240	.172	.094	.188	.272	.356	.027	.598
Environmental concern	.078	.493	.030	.012	.107	.473	.048	.254	.552
Free from pesticides/ Fertilizers	.418	.551	.065	.181	.000	.160	.053	.118	.558
Media and advertising=> Visual attractiveness	.181	.145	.596	.112	.217	.017	.078	.027	.475
Health => Knowledge	.157	.004	.165	.104	.142	.577	.459	.061	.630
Optimistic bias	.521	.202	.163	.330	.182	.075	.293	.019	.573
Family health	.319	.149	.607	.124	.130	.366	.146	.079	.687
Children's health	.220	.515	.316	.208	.109	.248	.035	.220	.580
Eigen Values	3.982	3.539	1.992	1.449	1.399	1.313	1.173	1.034	
Proportion of total variance	13.596	6.639	5.752	6.692	7.891	6.658	7.528	4.059	
Cumulative percentage	13.596	20.235	25.987	32.679	40.57	47.228	54.756	58.815	

Sources: Primary data

- To persuade to buy organic good products, the variables like familiarity, personal ideology, social interaction and monetary cost and habits had greater influence in buying organic food products.
- The familiarity of the organic food products among customers depends on the promotional efforts of the marketers.
- Allocation of separate shares for organic food products in departmental stores
- Positioning organic food products by their specific attributes
- Positioning organic food products by influencing consumer beliefs about the benefits they derive on consuming.
- Positioning by reputation for quality “only organic”.
- The attitudes of never buying could be modified by educating consumers on the benefits of organic food products.
- The price premium is the major hindrance for non-buying of organic food products. The customers need motivation to buy even with a small price premium than to just avoid on one hand and the cost of cultivation and cost of marketing to be brought under check on the other hand.
- The products initially should be made available in prominent market places and also gradually, in all the shops.
- Education programme on Environment and the benefits of organic farming and consumption of organic food products will make the consumers more environmentally conscious Green Consumer.
- “organic” to be promoted as “the way of life” than considering it as “product”.
- The agriculture marketing and co-operative departments to help farmers get a good price for organic produce.
- Ensuring quality of organic by farmers through certification by the Government Department.
- Demand creation large-scale production and availability of organic food products should go hand in hand.

Conclusion

Consumer behaviour plays a major role in Organic food products segment. The marketers of organic foods need to be innovative and dynamic in order to compete with the changing purchase behaviour in the Organic food products market among urban residents. The importance of organic food products was ignored for quite a long period. As a result of environmental sustainability, importance is shifted towards Organic food products rather than conventional farming. The study brought out the fact that the people were well aware of images and availability, but not loyal entirely to organic food products. So the marketers must create realistic promotions which are both realistic and moral and the product availability in terms of volume and variety are required to become successful in marketing organic food products.