

# Promotion of Organic Food Products in the City of Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR)

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## **Abstract:**

Organic agriculture is the way of farming where the production of farm products is free from the usage of chemical pesticides, fertilizers and growth hormones. In this farming, cultivation of land and growth of crops happens in a manner that promotes and improves the agricultural ecosystem and biodiversity. It is made of organic waste like animal and farm waste, aquatic waste, crop waste and other bio fertilizers for sustainable agricultural production. The method followed in this type of farming results in less input costs to the respective farmer/s & the consequent produce out of this method is not only good for the soil sustainability but also good for the wellbeing and immunity building of the consumers at large. Considering this in mind that such agricultural produce keeps intact the soil fertility, and has long term positive implication for farmers, consumers and the environment at large, the author attempts to explore:

- i) the basic understanding of organic food products among the citizens of Mumbai Metropolitan region (MMR)
- ii) consumption levels and patterns of the given food products in MMR region
- iii) Ways of promoting and enhancing use of such products in this region.

**Keywords:** Organic food products, Organic farming, Promotion of Organic food products, Organic produce, Awareness

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## **OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH**

- i) To emphasize the importance of creating awareness regarding consuming organic food as compared to non organic food.
- ii) To study the different components used in the process for making of these products & ways in which these health friendly products can be promoted in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

## **INTRODUCTION**

Organic food products are those products which are produced by way of Organic farming techniques. The next question comes to our mind is: what is Organic farming then?

Farming organically goes with the nature. In this farming, natural environment is kept intact in order to enhance soil fertility. It gives due consideration to the health of the people who work on the soil. The International Federation for Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) defines Organic agriculture based on: The proposition of wellbeing,

environmentalism, fairness & care.

## **RATIONALE TO CHOOSE ORGANIC FARMING <sup>^3</sup>**

Organic agriculture gives advantage in the long run to the soil, environment and to the people at large as:

- It enhances fertility of the relevant soil.
- It puts diseases and pests in control that too without risking the environment
- It saves farmers from the trap of taking high interest loans as the farms inputs used in this farming are in-house in nature thus it decreases the overall cost of production.
- It produces crops which are free from synthetic components and are safe for consumption. It provides feed for animals naturally and also provide crops which are good in quality & can be sold at a better price in the market.

## **ORGANIC FARMING IN INDIA**

India has its own inherent strength as for as Organic

agriculture is concerned more so due to increasing health awareness & also the importance of sustainability in farming has given more importance to organic farming internationally as well as domestically. Govt. of India is encouraging Organic farming tremendously <sup>^4</sup>. <sup>^5</sup>Among the 172 countries practicing organic farming, India too have carved its position. India has taken the credit of having as high as 6,50,000 organic producers, 699 processors and 669 exporters. Out of the total agricultural land, only 0.4% is under organic cultivation in India as per Bordolo 2016. India has produced approximately 1.35 million metric tonnes of certified organic products in the year 2015-16 comprising of Tea, coffee, Vegetables, fruits, spices, Cotton, Cereals & Millets & other food products etc.

<sup>^5</sup>Indian organic produce market is majorly exported to developed nations & the exports were as follows in the year 2016-2017.

Organic products exports from India in the year 2016-17		
S No.	Product Name	Exports in Crores
1	Fruits & Vegetables	16138.49
2	Basmati Rice	21605.13
3	Non-Basmati Rice	17121.08
4	Other Cereals	1868.49
5	Pulses	1281.63
6	Processed Items	13121.44
7	Fruits / Vegetables Seeds	116.8
	Total	71253.06

Still the market remains largely untapped & that is why it needs to be built & strengthened by:

- By having robust Organic agriculture supply chain.
- Increasing awareness among farmers, consumers & consumptions patterns here in India.

#### <sup>^6</sup>**KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE GROWTH OF INDIAN ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS / ORGANIC SECTOR ARE:**

- Reviving the soil with organic content.
- Capacity building among farmers in India.
- Uninterrupted supply of Organic inputs.
- Bulletproof certification standards.
- Integrating farmers with coherent market value chain.
- Skill building & awareness on organic farming.

- Accelerating regulatory requirement with minimal obstructions
- <sup>^7</sup>Irregular domestic unregulated uncertified, non-monitored market: 300 crores estimated.

#### **SUMMARY ON INDIAN ORGANIC SECTOR<sup>^8</sup>:**

- Organic cultivation area including wild area in year 2014-15 = 4.9 million hectares.
- Certified farm area in the year 2014-15 = 1.18 million hectares = 24% of total organic area.
- Organic cultivation area including wild area in year 2003-04: 42000 hectares.
- The world's largest numbers of Organic cultivators are in India: 650000 Numbers.

#### **MAJOR ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCING STATES OF INDIA ARE AS FOLLOWS**

Top States	Total (MT) : Farm & Wild Area	% Share
Madhya Pradesh	321964	29
Karnataka	254761	23
Maharashtra	217323	20
Gujarat	60626	5
Rajasthan	60117	5
Uttar Pradesh	50299	5
Odisha	28972	3

#### **SNAPSHOT OF AWARENESS IN MUMBAI**

As per the primary research survey done by the author for the period July 2019 to Dec 2019, the details obtained are as follow:

Total Sample Size: 500 Nos.

Number of people who were aware & were users were: 240 = 48%

Number of Regular users of the organic food products were = 78 = 15.6%

It was found that in a progressive city like Mumbai, there were only 48% respondents had awareness about organic food & were its actual consumers, this 48% includes respondents who were infrequent users, though they were aware about the benefit of using such health friendly products. Reasons for infrequent use can be attributed to:

- a) Non availability of these products

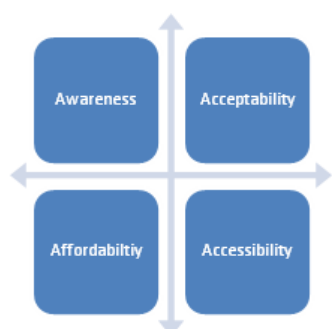
- b) Preference towards on certified brands only due to its authenticity
- c) Premium pricing of such products in the market as compared to the non organic counterparts
- d) Lastly, the unwillingness to travel long distance (2km to 30km)for purchasing these products due to poor proximity

<sup>9</sup> Applying the thoughts which Management Guru Prof. (Dr) Jagdish Sheth from Emory University, shared in his discussion that a company's efforts on marketing will get breakthrough success if it provides to the markets what the market lacks especially on emerging markets. Applying these notes of his on the promotion of organic food products will yield results if we are able to streamline availability of these products in the neighborhood, providing certified organic food products so that consumer should not have any doubts on the authenticity when they purchase & premium pricing can be addressed by directly sourcing from farmers and with economies of scale.

Management Guru further says that journey of growth can be achieved by Focusing on:

- Servicing as it is crucial factors in growth.
- Converting the buyers who are involved & use products at a low level & convert them to high degree of users.
- Leveraging the usage of the Technology.

Dr Jagdish Sheth gave the structure about what is being desired by the potential customer in the form of 4A's framework is as:



- <sup>10</sup> Prof Jagdish Sheth says that we as a marketer need to fulfill the inclination of stakeholder such as society as against customer inclination which is generally being followed. As customer is a part of the society and the society expect that the organization or the marketer must contribute to

the environment at large. The finding of the survey suggest the same inclination as 95% of the respondent said that they are buying organic food products as these products are produced by organic farming methods which are good for soil, good for environment as these product are produced by not using harmful chemical pesticides for these as well as they are good as immunity boosters for the people who consume these products <sup>11</sup>Michal Porter another management guru is also of the opinion & believes in shared value of the company's product for the society at large and not only focusing on shareholder's value.

There is a theory of Social Proof as explained by the author<sup>10</sup>, he says that people in general are looking for social proof for the work or the action they do or what they say. This is explained with the help of the example like in canned laughter in the comedy show, we find that there are laughter tracks which are tapped and embedded, we also find them boring and sometimes irritating but actually if you see people tend to laugh more when these tracks are on run in the comedy show and why we laugh more due to adhering with the theory of "Social Proof" and also same is repeated in social media discussion as we notice in Whatsapp discussion that whenever we discuss about some socially responsible behavior like organic food is good for soil fertility, sustainability as well as food produced without the harmful chemical , fertilizers. We also revert that this is the way that one is expected to behave socially for the benefit of all stakeholders and finally we are convinced to buy such products in the interest of all stakeholders.

### **AWARENESS = PROMOTION OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS IN MUMBAI CAN BE DONE THROUGH**

- Advertising on the value of organic foods with the help of FM Radio can give a significant boost to its use in the city of Mumbai where citizens resort to listening to music on FM radio while they commute to and fro for work for three to four hours per day in Mumbai local / Metro or via bus. The survey supports this finding as it was found that 21% respondents achieved awareness regarding organic foods through Radio.

- Reading is another way through which Mumbai citizens pass their commute time for work. Promoting organic food in widely read newspapers & magazines can be another channel through which awareness can be built. As per the survey conducted, 48% respondents got aware about these products through reading material like newspapers and magazines. The data clearly builds confidence in terms of utility of these media as far as awareness is concerned.
- The usage of food delivery trucks of companies like Force with the appealing cut out of fresh organic fruit or vegetable or both can be put while delivering the products in the lanes & by lanes of densely populated Mumbai, which will not only deliver the product but also can educate the prospective potential clients on the products through delivery of information broacher to the people concerned. Beside that 2 or 3 attributes describing lines in brief neatly written on the truck can do wonders.
- The other effective way of creating the awareness is through stalls at influential places like D-Mart, In orbit Mall, Bombay Exhibition centre, farmer's organic Farmers market, Big bazaar, Godrej nature basket, Shoppers stop, Phoenix Mall and Infinity mall reason being 80% respondents came to know about these products through all these places.
- Promoting through digital footprint: India is changing in digital space at very rapid speed & so is the Mumbai city. As per data India had 40 Core internet users & it is expected that by 2022 it will reach 100crore users. The kind of Pricing on data is also facilitating the growth of internet user as in the year 2016, we had 1GB data per month was available at Rs250, now we have it @ Rs250 for 1GB per day for entire month. Blog & You tube content on the facts & utility of organic products can be made & broadcasted in the digital space. The positive message like:
  - a) Organically produced food is away from chemical fertilizers and synthetics' pesticides.
  - b) We can keep 2 pictures of food, one produced by conventional farming & having pesticides level as per ministry of agriculture report & the other picture showing organically produced food which is chemical & pesticides free. This is also

explained by the author Robert Cialdini as "Contrast Principle"<sup>11</sup> as per this Principle, if you are in a conversation with a pretty lady in a social gathering and if an unappealing women joins in, the other lady will be perceived as less attractive than what she actually is due this Principle. In our case the pretty lady is organically produced products and the other one is conventionally grown food products.

- Psychologist <sup>12</sup>Daniel Kahneman says that whenever we communicate a sentence, the information that is retained in the minds of a person for a long time is what is heard first than what is heard later with regards to the identical topic such as:

**Statement 1:** "Organic farming produces products which are chemical pesticides free but these products are on premium price than traditional food products"

**Statement 2:** "Organic farming produces products which are at premium price but they are free from chemical pesticides.

As we analyze the above two statements, though the meaning of the above two statements is same but the impact of the statement No 1 is very positive than the 2<sup>nd</sup> one. We can use this first statement due to strong perception in Whatapp communication, while blogging & in YouTube & other social media platforms.

Another theory cited by Robert Cialdini in the book <sup>13</sup>"Power of Influence" is that people have the tendency to believe that higher the price the product commands, the better the quality of the products, this is known as automatic stereotyped behavior. This will go positively in favour of organic food products.

These all theories will go in favor of promoting organic products as another theory mentioned by the author as "Mindless Automatic consistency" which says that whenever we talk about attributes & characteristics of a product (Organic) in social media platforms, some people also want to show that they like these products & eat these products due to production of these products being environmental friendly and also they are good for the soil also, there sole reason is to impress other people in the group specially of opposite sex. The moment they board the exaggeration train & in order to take the



discussion further, they start trying these products.

## CONCLUSION

As per Govt. press release by PTI dated 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 & a joint study conducted by ASSOCHAM-TechSci Research; while the Indian organic food market is increasing at the rate of 25-30%, awareness relating to organic farming is nascent in spite of the heavy expenditure by the Government for the same. Even our research states that the awareness level about organic food among the people of Mumbai Metro-Politan Region is lower at 48%. The size of the organic food sector was at \$0.36 billion in the year 2014 & India had produced 731 Million US\$ worth of organic food products in the year 2019. India had the highest number of organic food producers all over the world as high as 11, 49371 in the year 2018 as per FIBL 2020 statistics. This study also highlights that the corporate and Government in partnership must organize training programs for farmers as well as for consumers to create awareness on organic farming and organic food. Such awareness will lead to higher demand for organic food products. The organic producers would try to match up with the supply by increasing production leading to economies of scale and eventually being able to bring down the prices of such products.

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