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Consumers Perception towards Organic Products - A Study in Mysore City

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1. Introduction

There is no common definition of “organic” due to the fact that different countries have different standard for products to be certified “organic”. In simplest words organic foods are minimally processed to maintain the integrity of the food without artificial ingredients, preservatives or irradiation. Organic products are obtained by processes friendly to the environment, by cultivation techniques that consider both the attributes of the final product and the production methods.

A wide range of consumers of organic food and non organic food were addressed and scrutinized to obtain their observations and visions towards organic food. All organic food consumers are not having the same method of approach towards organic food. Subsequently the statistical process guides us to comprehend the relation and the model of the consumer behavior trends in organic food in India.

The Definition of the word “Organic”, an ecological management production system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It is based on the minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance “ecological harmony” (National Standards Board of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)).

2. Organic Farming in India

The approach and outlook towards agriculture and marketing of food has seen a quantum change worldwide over the last few decades. Whereas earlier the seasons and the climate of an area determined what would be grown and when, today it is the "market" that determines what it wants and what should be grown. The focus is now more on quantity and "outer" quality (appearance) rather than intrinsic or nutritional quality, also called "vitality". Pesticide and other chemical residues in food and an overall reduced quality of food have led to a marked increase in various diseases, mainly various forms of cancer and reduced bodily immunity. This immense commercialization of agriculture has also had a very negative effect on the environment. The use of pesticides has led to enormous levels of chemical buildup in our environment, in soil, water, air, in animals and even in our own bodies. Fertilizers have a short-term effect on productivity but a longer-term negative effect on the environment where they remain for years after leaching and running off, contaminating ground water and water bodies. The use of hybrid seeds and the practice of monoculture have led to a severe threat to local and indigenous varieties, whose germplasm can be lost forever. All of this is for "productivity". In the name of growing more to feed the earth, we have taken the wrong road of unsustainability. The effects already show - farmers committing suicide in growing numbers with every passing year; the horrendous effects of pesticide sprays by a government-owned plantation in Kerala some years ago; the pesticide contaminated bottled water and aerated beverages are only some instances. The bigger picture that rarely makes news however is that millions of people are still underfed and where they do get enough to eat, the food they eat has the capability to eventually kill them. Yet, the picture painted for the future by agro-chemical and seed companies and governments is rosy and bright .Another negative effect of this trend has been on the fortunes of the farming communities worldwide.

This is where organic farming comes in. Organic farming has the capability to take care of each of these problems. Besides the obvious immediate and positive effects organic or natural farming has on the environment and quality of food, it also greatly helps a farmer to become self-sufficient in his requirements for agro-inputs, and reduce his costs. Chemical agriculture and the agriculture and food distribution systems have developed, propagated, sustained and now share a symbiotic relationship which affects each of us in many ways.

Organic farming was practiced in India since thousands of years. The great Indian civilization thrived on organic farming and was one of the most prosperous countries in the world, till the British ruled it.

In traditional India, the entire agriculture was practiced using organic techniques, where the fertilizers, pesticides, etc., were obtained from plant and animal products.

Organic farming was the backbone of the Indian economy and cow was worshipped (and is still done so) as a god. The cow, not only provided milk, but also provided bullocks for farming and dung which was used as fertilizers.

3. Given Below are Some of the Advantages of Organic Farming for Small Farmers

1. **High premium:** Organic food is normally priced 20 - 30% higher than conventional food. This premium is very important for a small farmer whose income is just sufficient to feed his/her family with one meal.
2. **Low investment:** Organic farming normally does not involve capital investment as high as that required in chemical farming. Further, since organic fertilizers and pesticides can be produced locally, the yearly costs incurred by the farmer are also low. Agriculture greatly depends on external factors such as climate, pests, disease. Furthermore, most of the small farmers are dependent on natural rain for water. Therefore in cases of natural calamity, pest or disease attack, and irregular rainfall, when there is a crop failure, small farmers practicing organic farming have to suffer less as their investments are low. (It should be noted that while shifting from chemical farming to organic farming, the transition might be costly)
3. **Less dependence on money lenders:** Many small farmers worldwide commit suicide Since chemical inputs, which are very costly, are not required in organic farming, small farmers are not dependent on money lenders. Crop failure, therefore, does not leave an organic farmer into enormous debt, and does not force him to take an extreme step.
4. **Synergy with life forms:** Organic farming involves synergy with various plant and animal life forms. Small farmers are able to understand this synergy easily and hence find it easy to implement them.
5. **Traditional knowledge:** Small farmers have abundance of traditional knowledge with them and within their community. Most of this traditional knowledge cannot be used for chemical farming. However, when it comes to organic farming, the farmers can make use of the traditional knowledge. Further, in case of organic farming, small farmers are not dependent on those who provide chemical know-how.

Table 1.1. *Main organic agricultural products of India*

Sl No	Products	Sl No	Products
1	Bajra-mustard-wheat	15	Dungarpur Pulses-cereals
2	Chilly	16	Bajra
3	Cereals-cereals	17	Mustard
4	Cereals-pulses	18	Til
5	Kholar	19	Wheat
6	Maize	20	Nagour Guar-cumin
7	Ginger	21	Guar-wheat
8	Soybean	22	Moong
9	Large cardamom	23	Mustard
10	Passion fruit	24	Ganganagar Cotton
11	Bhilwara Urd	25	Jaisalmer Bajra
12	Bharatpur Bajra	26	Jhunjhunu Pulses
13	Alwar Wheat and bajra	27	Banswara Maize
14	Cotton-grass	28	Jaipur Guar

4. SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

With rising concern of health issues and food safety, many consumers have turned their site to organic products. The increased consumers' interest in organic food has been attributed among others to the growing demand for food free from pesticides and chemical residues.

Organic food promotes a balance of human, other living organisms and the nature. It also promotes no artificial preservatives and best maintain the originality of food. This prevents excess use harmful ingredients and thereby ensures health.

This study attempted to gain knowledge about consumer attitude towards organic food product consumption and to see whether there is any potential this might have for changing their behaviour. The rationale for carrying out this study is that consideration for the environment could come only from well-informed citizens who are aware of, and fully committed to their rights to a quality health and environment. Nevertheless, before any behaviour can be changed, it is necessary to evaluate the current state of consumers' awareness and knowledge. Therefore consumer's attitude, perception towards organic food products, willingness to pay for organic food product and intention to purchase organic food will be the main agenda of this study.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To asses and evaluate the factors facilitate the consumption of organic products in the study area.
2. To analyze the potential Markets for organic products.
3. To examine the consumers perception towards organic products in the study area.
4. To analyze the constraints in marketing of organic products and to suggest suitable measures thereof.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1. Data Collection Methods

The study is based on primary and secondary data.

The primary data had collected from selected consumers on Simple Random sampling techniques and Retail outlets of Organic products, Organic Products Marketing Agencies, by administering the structured questionnaires.

The secondary data had collected from Department of Horticulture, Organic Farming Certification Agencies, APEDA, District Statistical Office in Mysore, NISARGA and HASIRU Organic Products Marketing Agencies, and other agencies involved in production; and marketing of organic products in Mysore city. Apart from this, the secondary data will also be collected from published books, reports, journals, magazines, and internet.

6.2. Sample Design

In order to understand the demand factors in organic products and the consumers perception of organic products in Mysore city the following sample size will be used to collect the primary data.

Sl No.	Name of the Agency	No. of Consumers
1	NISARGA Organic Products Marketing Agency	50
2	HASIRU Organic Products Retail outlets	50
	Total	**100**

6.3. Statistical Tool for Analysis

The SPSS, Multivariate Analysis, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and will be adopted to analysis the consumers response towards organic product in Mysore city .

7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study has been confined to NISARGA and HASIRU organic stores, Mysore City and organic products. The inference drawn purely on the responses obtained from the respondent in the study area.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. *The Classification of Respondents Based on Gender*

S L	Gender	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Male	62	62
2	Female	38	38
Total		100	100

Source: Primary Data-2013

The above table1 reveals that the 62 percent of Respondents were belonging to Male, remaining of the 38% of the respondents were Female. Majority of the male respondents were purchased organic products.

Table 2. *The classification of Respondents on their Age*

SL NO	Age	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	15- 25 years	22	22.0
2	25-40	31	31.0
3	40-50	26	26.0
4	Above 50	21	21.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

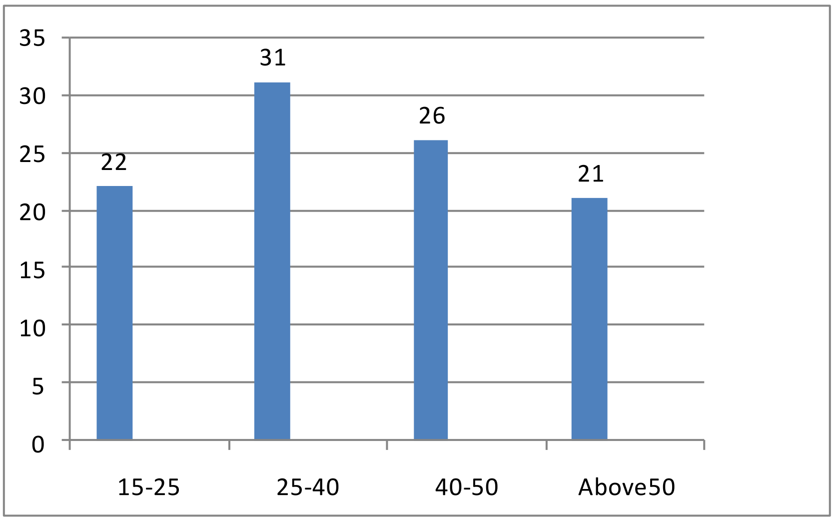

Figure 2. *Age of the Respondent*

The table: 2 shows that 22 percent of the respondents are in the Age between 15-25 Years old, 31 percent of respondents are in age between 25-40 years, 26 percent of respondents are in between 40-50 years old age and remaining 21percent of respondents are Above 50 years old out of 100 Respondents. The ages between 40-50 years are well aware about organic products, and they are the head of the family, so that they purchase more in the study area.

Table 3. *Monthly income of the respondents.*

SL NO	Income of the Family	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	1000-5000	9	9.0
2	50000-10000	21	21.0
3	10000-20000	53	53.0
4	Above 20000	17	17.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

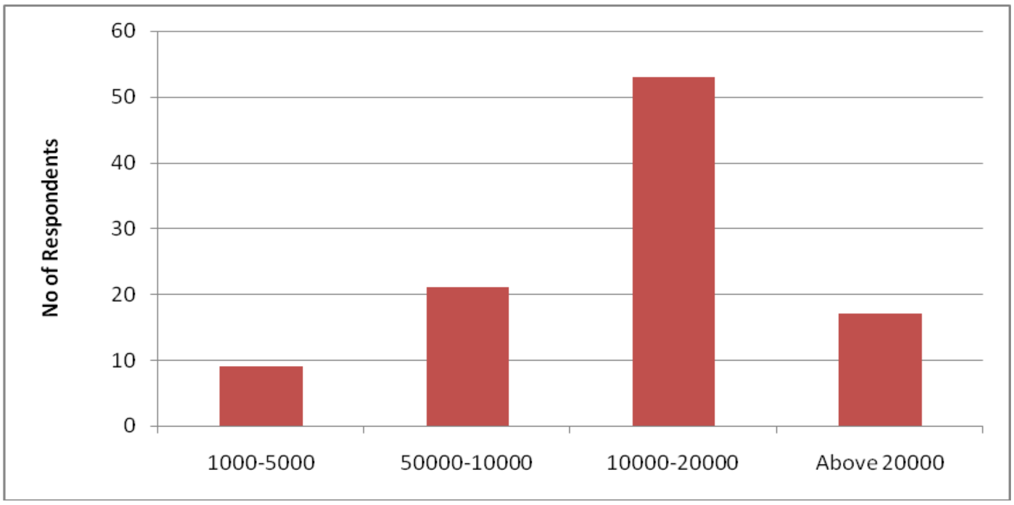

Figure 3. *Monthly Income of the respondents*

The above table 3 shows that 9% of respondents are having monthly income between Rs 1000-50000, 21% of respondents are having income between Rs 5000-10000, 26% of respondents are having income between Rs 10000-20000 and rest 17% of respondents are having income Rs .above 20000,out of 100 respondents considered for study.

Table 4. *The classification of respondents based on their Qualification*

SL No	Qualification	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Primary	9	9.0
2	Higher school	34	34.0
3	Graduation	54	54.0
4	Illiterate	3	3.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

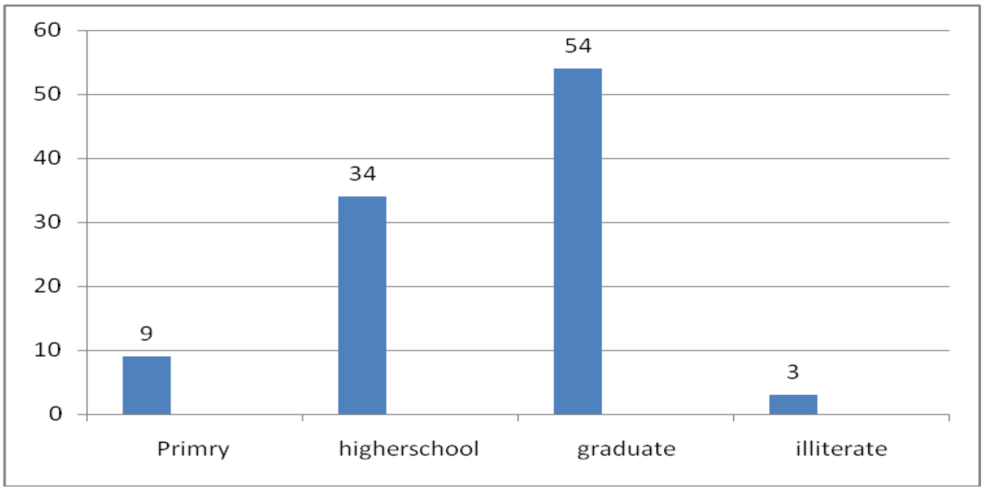

Figure 4. *Qualification of the Respondent*

The table 4 shows that 54 percent of Respondents qualification is Graduate, 34 percent of Respondents are having Higher School education, 9 percent of respondents are primary education and remaining 3 percent of the respondents are Illiterate among out of 100 respondents. The respondents are aware a using organic products in the study.

Table 5. *The classification of respondents based on Total Family Members in the House hold.*

SL No	Total Family Members	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	2-3	26	26.0
2	3-5	49	49.0
3	5-7	18	18.0
4	More than 7	7	7.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

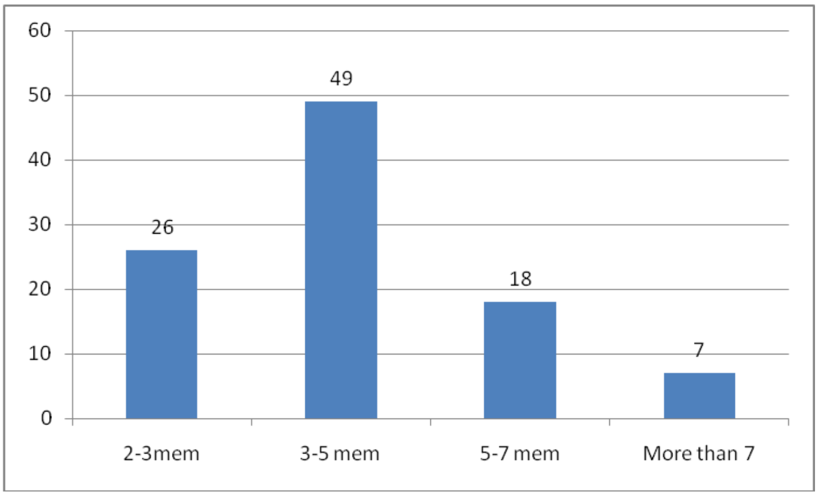

Figure 5. *Family Members in the House hold, among respondents*

The table 5 shows that 26 percent of the respondents are having between 2-3 members in a family, 49% of respondents having 3-5 members, 18% of respondents having 7 members and remaining 7% of respondents having more than 7members in a family. out of 100 respondents, in the study area.

Table 6. *Preference for Organic products, among respondents*

SL No	Preference	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	100	100.0
2	No	0	0
	Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data

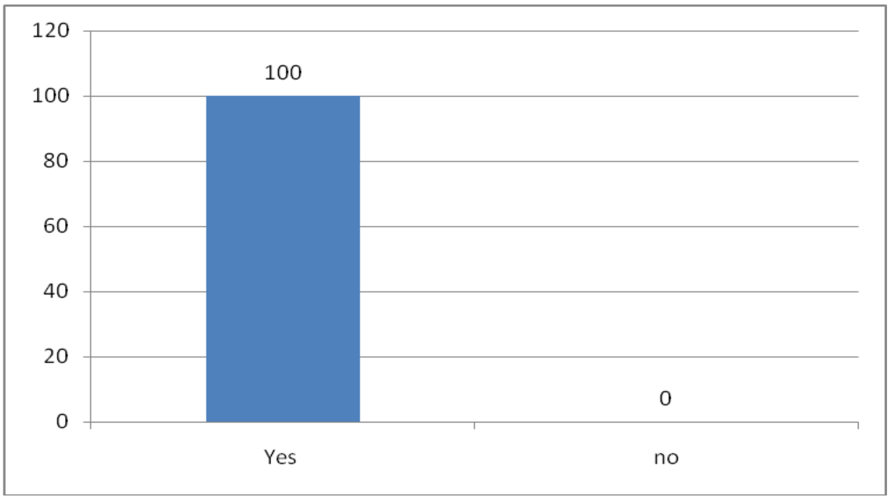

Figure 4.6. *Respondents Preference for Organic products.*

The table 6 shows that preferences for organic products among respondents in the study area. All the respondents preferred organic products and they are consuming the same , in the opinion that using of organic products, maintenance of good health.

Table 7. *The classification Respondents based on frequently purchase of products*

SL No	Duration	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Daily	64	64.0
2	Weekly	34	34.0
3	Once a month	2	2.0
4	Few Times a Year	0	0.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary data-2013

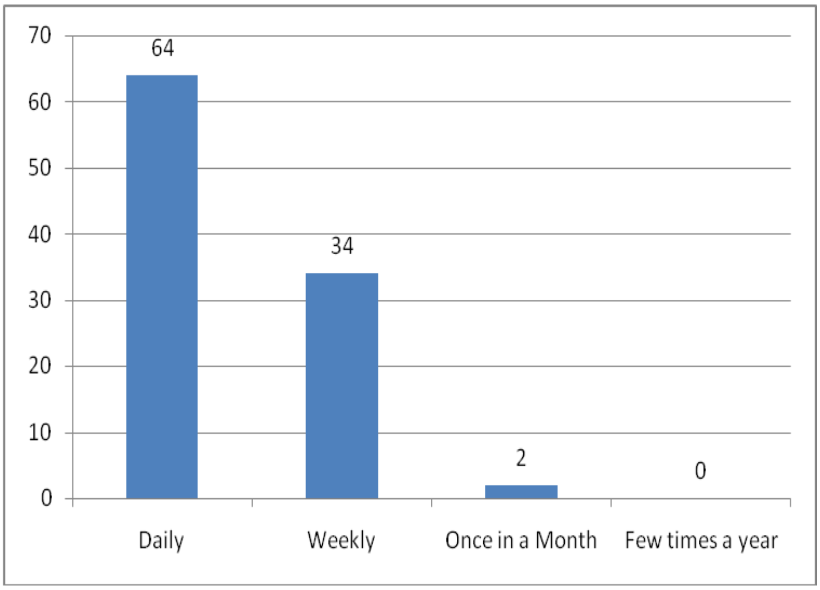

Figure 7. *Buying frequency of organic products.*

The table 7: shows that the 64 percent of respondents are buying Daily Organic products, because most of the organic products are perishable in nature, 34 percent of Respondents are weekly once purchasing and remaining 2 percent of respondents once a month a purchasing of organic products out of 100 Respondents.

Table 8. *Place of Purchase of organic products by the Respondents.*

SL No	Purchasing Place	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Super/ Retail Markets	11	11.0
2	Organic Stores	76	76.0
3	Producers Farm	13	13.0
4	Others	0	0.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

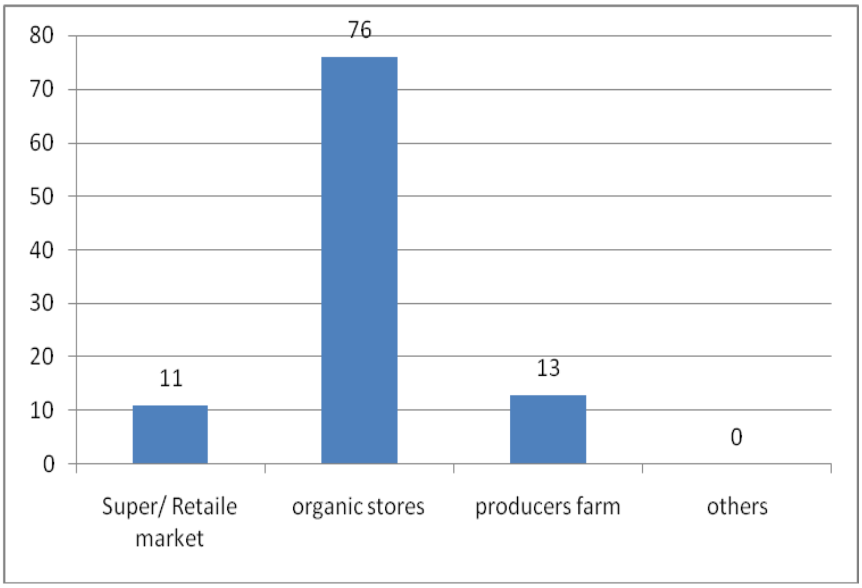

Figure 8. *Where do you buy the organic products*

The figure 8 clearly shows that 76 percent of the respondents purchase the organic products in organic stores because of quality, freshness, price and other factors; and the rest of the 24 percent of the respondents go for nearer producer's farm and some of the people go for super markets and retail shops.

Table 9. *Reasons for purchase of the Organic Products.*

SL No	Reasons	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Maintain Good Health	58	58.0
2	Prefer taste/ feelings	14	14.0
3	Quality of food	26	26.0
4	Low Price	2	2.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

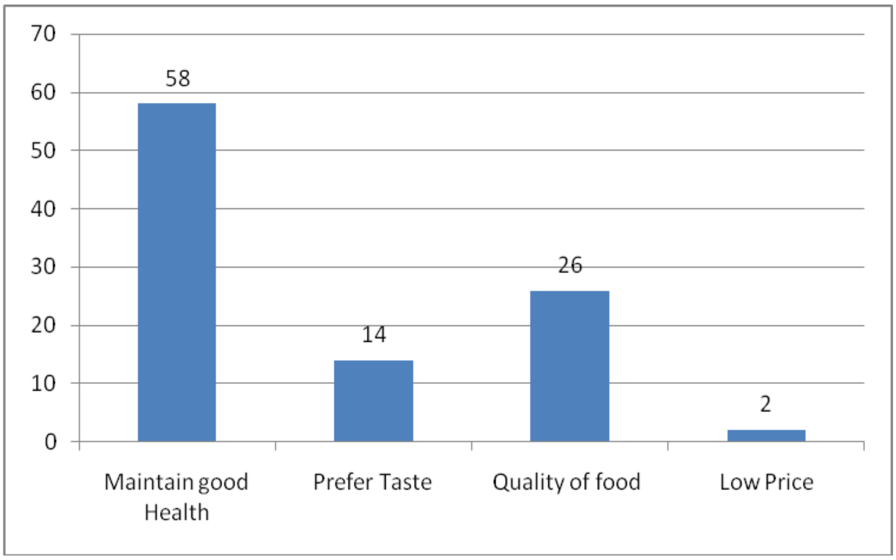

Figure 9. *Reasons for purchase of the Organic Products.*

The table 9 describes that the 58 percent of respondents prefer organic food to maintain good health , 14 percent of respondents prefers for its taste and other feelings ,and 26 percent of respondents are prefers to Quality of food and remaining 2 percent of the respondents were prefers as low price out of 100 respondents.

Table 10. *How Long Interested in Consumption of organic Products.*

SL No	Duration	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Since 1 Year	19	19.0
2	2Years	25	25.0
3	3Years	30	30.0
4	More than 3 Years	26	26.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

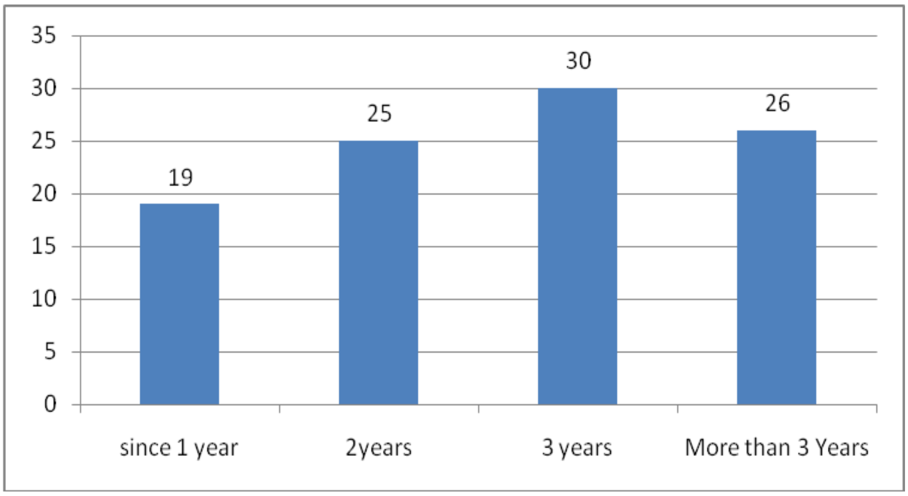

Figure 10. *Consumption of organic Products*

The figure 10 shows the 30 percent of the respondents are purchasing organic products from 3 years, 26 percent of respondents are using more than 3 years, 25 percent of respondents are using from 2 years and remaining 19 percent of respondents are using organic products since 1 year.

Table 11. *Purchase of Different Kinds of Organic Products*

SL No	Types of Products	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Food Products	23	23.0
2	Fruits and Vegetables	42	42.0
3	Beverages	14	14.0
4	Cereals and Pulses	5	5.0
5	Milk	16	16.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

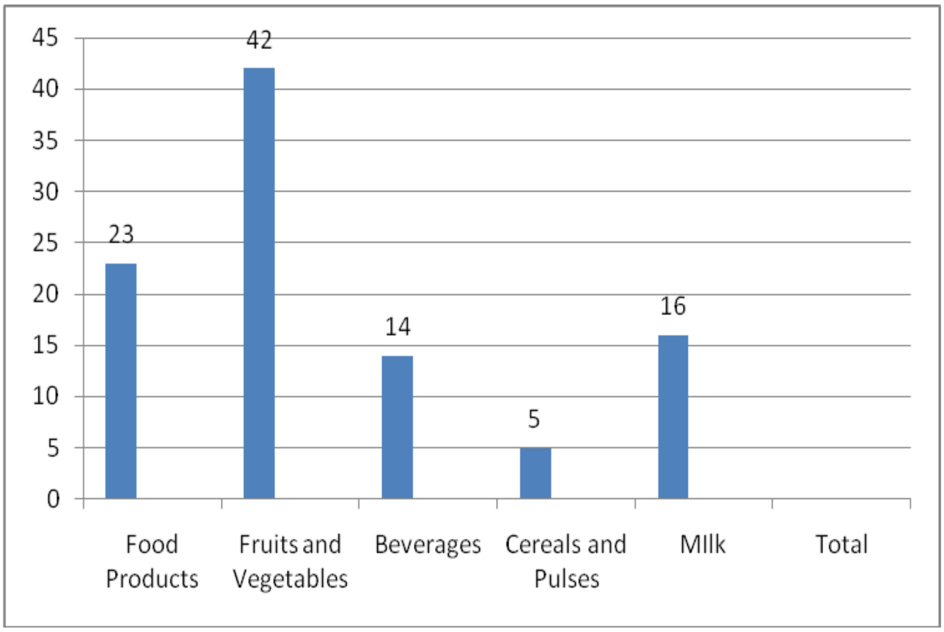

Figure 11. *Purchase Different Kinds of Organic Products*

The table 11 clearly shows that the majority of the respondent(42%)are usually purchase of fruits and vegetables because of the fruits and vegetables are perishable in nature, 23 percent of people are using food products, and another 16 percent of people are purchasing milk and remaining 5 percent of respondents are using cereals and pulses.

Table 12. *Respondents based on The Economic downturn affected while purchase of organic products.*

SL No	Economic downturn affected	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Increased Spend	57	57.0
2	Stayed same	20	20.0
3	Reduced spent	23	23.0
4	Others	0	0.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary data-2013

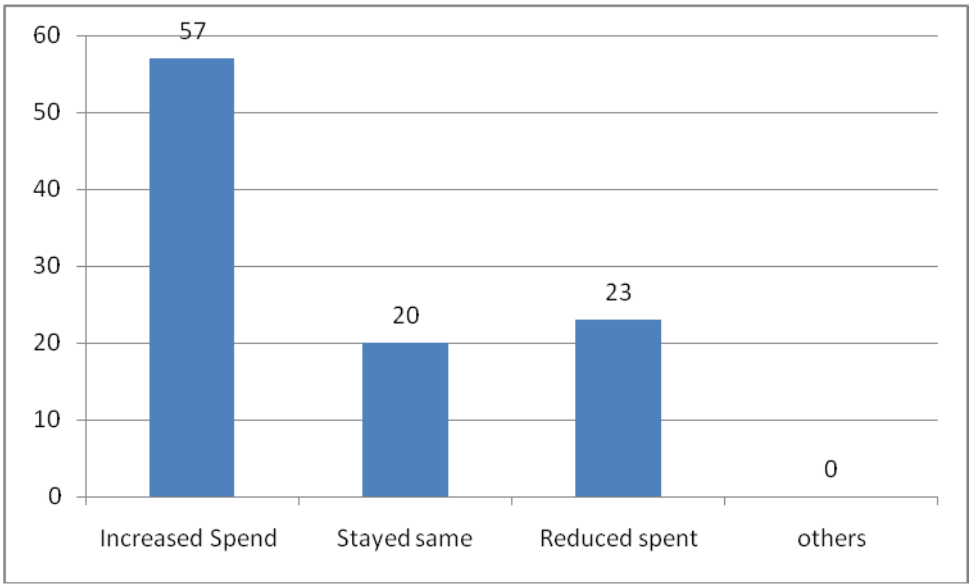

Figure 12. *The Economic downturn affected while purchase of organic products.*

The above table 12 shows that 57 percent of respondents are incurred more expenditure on organic products because of it is more than non-organic products, 23 percent of respondent were think that its reduces the expenditure, and remaining 20 percent of respondents thought that there is no difference between organic and non-organic products.

Table 13. *Respondents opinion towards Price of Organic Products.*

SL No	The price of organic products	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Expensive	69	69.0
2	Too Low	3	28.0
3	Moderate	28	3.0
4	Others	0	0.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

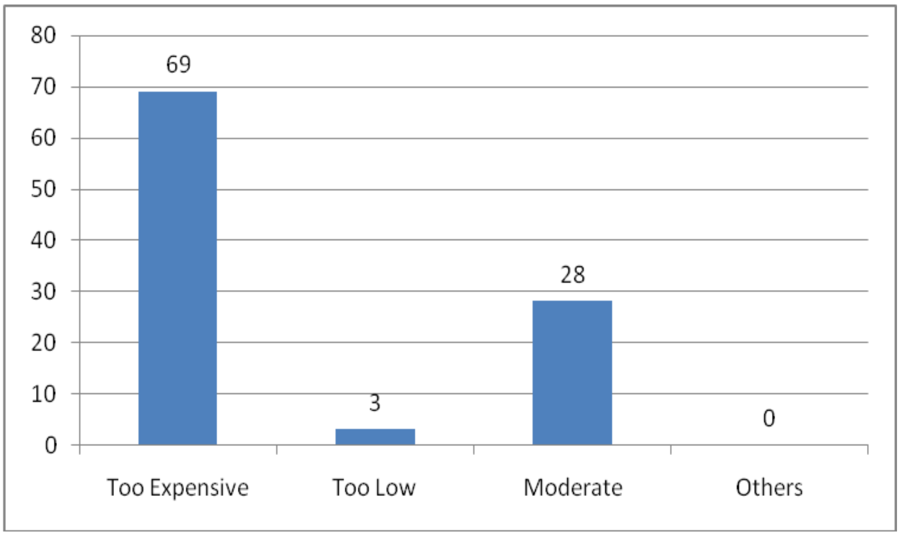

Figure 13. *The Respondents thinking about Price of Organic Products.*

The table 13 indicates that the 69 percent of the respondents were opined that the organic products are very expensive because of inputs and procurement costs are more than conventional product ,28 percent of respondents were expressed as moderate and remaining 3 percent opined that its very low compare to non-organic products in the study area.

Table 14. *The Respondents reaction if frequently price rise of the organic products*

SL No	Reaction	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Yes	86	86.0
2	No	14	14.0
	Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary data-2013

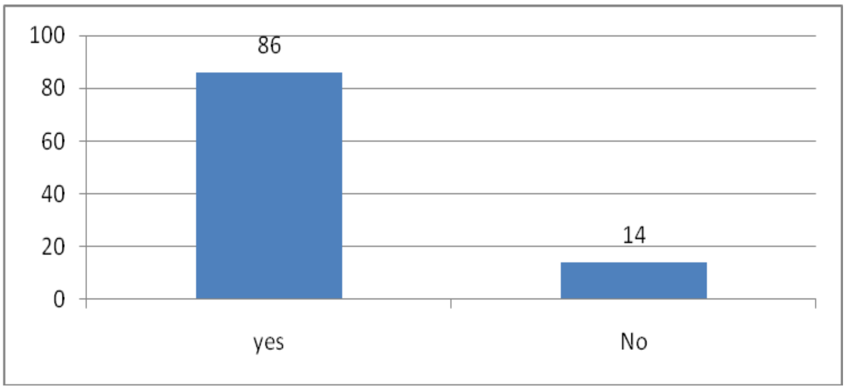

Figure 14. *The reaction if price rise of the organic products*

The table 14 clearly indicates that the 86 percent of the respondent are ready to purchase the organic product even frequently increasing price in the future, and remaining 14 percent of respondents are not able to purchase a organic products while frequently increasing the price of organic products.

Table 15. *The sources of Supply of organic products.*

SL No	Source	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Super markets	7	7.0
2	Direct Shops	10	10.0
3	Organic product shops	73	73.0
4	Producers farm	10	10.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

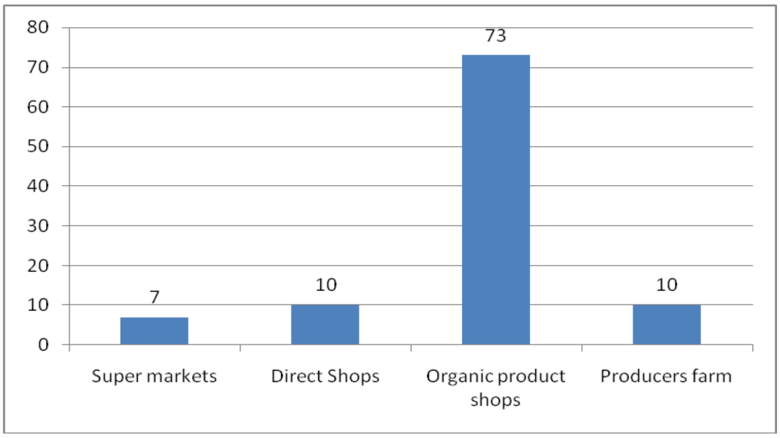

Figure 15. *The sources of Supply of organic products*

The table 15 clearly states that the maximum number (73 percent) of the respondents were buy organic products through organic products shops ,10 percent of the respondents were through direct shops and producers farm each of 7 percent the of respondents were purchased in super markets.

Table 16. *Reasons for not purchasing the organic products*

SL No	Reasons	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Too expensive	12	12.0
2	Not enough choices	28	28.0
3	Not available regularly	59	59.0
4	Don't like Packaging	1	1.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

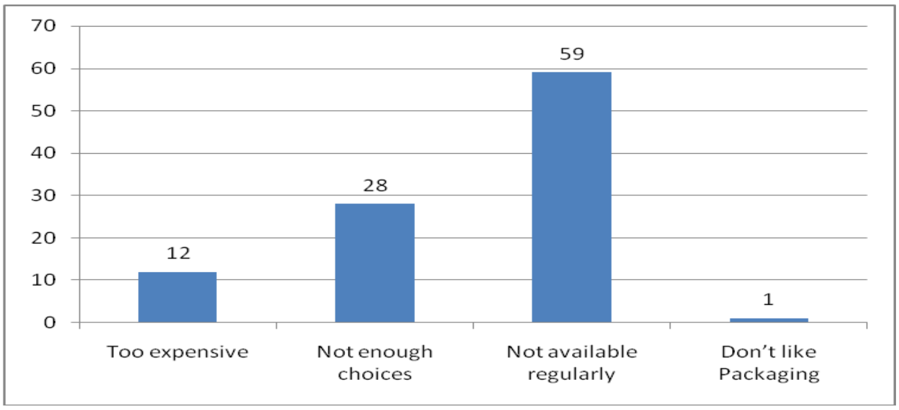

Figure 16. *Reason for not purchasing the organic products*

The figure 16 shows that the 59 percent of the respondents were could not purchase the organic products because of the supply of organic products was not available regular, 28 percent of respondents were rejected for limited choices of commodity, and remaining 12 percent of respondents were reject to because too expensive price of organic products.

Table 17. *Ready to purchase of organic product, when the price is hiked*

SL No	Percentage	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	0-20%	18	18.0
2	20%-40%	41	41.0
3	40%-80%	36	36.0
4	More than 80%	5	5.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary source-2013

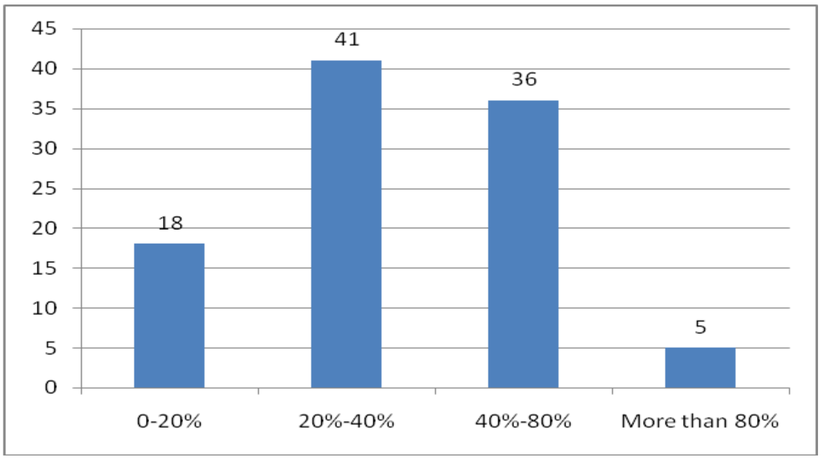

Figure 17. *Percentage of cost raise when compare to non-organic products*

In the figure 17 shows that 41percent of respondents are ready to purchase when increased cost between 20-40 percent of cost compare to non-organic products,36% of respondents are ready to purchase between 40-80percent , and 18 percent of respondents are ready to purchase between 0-20 percent and remaining 5 percent of respondents are ready to purchase more than 80 percent comparatively cost of organic products are hiked in the study area.

Table 18. *Respondents ranking for organic products.*

SL No	Rank of organic products	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Good	18	18.0
2	Very Good	66	66.0
3	Better	13	13.0
4	Same as non-Organic products	3	3.0
Total		100	100.0

Source: Primary Data-2013

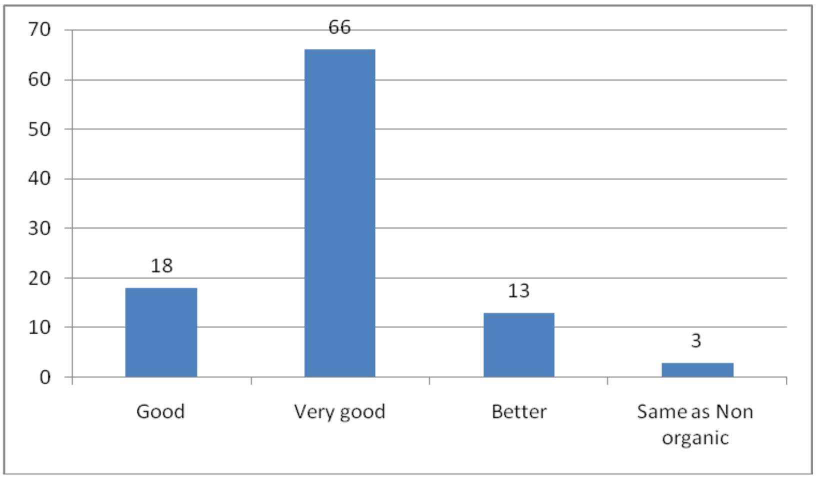

Figure 18. *The Ranking of organic products by Respondents*

The table 18 it shows that the 66 percent of Respondents were agreed the organic products as very good when compared of non-organic products regarding all the aspects, 18% of respondents were agreed organic products as good, 13 percent of respondents were agreed better place compared to no-organic products, and remaining 3 percent of respondents were agreed there is no difference between organic and non-organic products.

9. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

9.1. Findings of the Study

The study reveals that a lot of problems are faced by respondents while purchasing the organic products in the markets.

The Findings of the study are as follows.

- The main problems of organic consumers are irregular availability of organic products. Sometimes, the organic consumer would purchase non organic products along with organic products.
- The organic products are too expensive than non-organic products. So that the organic consumers are not to purchasing more quantity of products.
- The varieties of organic products which are available in the market are limited.
- There is a lack of awareness about organic products to consumers.
- The organic products are not properly certified from any organic certified agency or authority.
- The organic products shops are limited in the city.
- There is a lack of technology for the procurement of organic products.

- The consumers are the convinced about higher price about organic products.
- The more number of organic products consumer are aged between 25-40 accented for 31 percent.
- The 54 percent of the organic products consumers are Graduates followed by High school education with 34 percent.
- In Mysore City, out of 100 consumers every one preferred organic products.
- The 64 percent of the consumers purchase the organic products daily.
- The organic products stores are very few in Mysore City, whereas, 76 percent of the consumers are purchased from organic stores, followed by Super markets with 11 percent.
- The 42 percent of the preferred to organic fruits and vegetables followed by food products with 23 percent in the study area.
- The consumer opined that organic products maintain good health (58 percent), the quality of food (26 percent) and good tastes (14 percent).
- The 69 percent of the consumers expressed their opinion towards price as expensive for organic products.
- The 86 percent of the consumers are ready to purchase /consume the organic products, even the price is high only 14 percent of the consumers are not ready to consume.
- The study reveals that the main sources of supply of organic products are organic products outlets/shops in the study area.
- The main reasons for not to consume the organic products by the consumers are not availability of organic products regularly and no choices are given in the organic products.
- The overall Ranking of organic products by the consumers as very good followed by good and better with 66 percent and 18 percent and 13 percent respectively.
- The advertisement of organic products is very low when compare to non- organic products.
- Education background of the consumers is one of the important variables which influence the purchase of the organic products. The result is show that there are no illiterate among the respondent and majority of the consumers are graduate.

9.2. Suggestions

The following are the suggestion made based on the results of the study.

- There is a need to open organic products marketing shops every extension areas in the Mysore city.
- The Creation of awareness of organic products is necessary among consumers.
- Sustained improvement in product features would lead to increase in consumption of organic food products.
- The increase frequency of viewing the advertisement of organic food products and better taste would influence the purchase organic food products. The influence of advertisement of organic food products with an increase in education found particularly among consumers.
- To persuade to buy organic good products, the variables like familiarity, personal ideology, social interaction and monitory 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. The availability organic food products need wider advertisement.
- 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 products and consumption of organic food products will make the consumers more environmentally conscious "Green Consumer".
- "Organic" to be promoted as "the way of life" them 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 Organic Certification Department, which help them to get a good price.
- Demand creation large-scale production and availability of organic food products should go hand in hand. According a more responsible advertisement can play a positive and beneficial role in bringing out a desirable among homemakers in Organic food products market.

9.3. Conclusion

Consumer behavior plays a major role in Organic food products segment. The marketers of organic foods need to be innovative and dynamic in order to complete with the changing purchase behavior in the Organic food products market among urban residents. The importance of organic food products was ignored for quite a long period. As results 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. The respondent without doubt attracted towards Organic food products. So the marketers must create 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.

Organically grown products are available in the markets but in limited amounts though the growing demands are there for such products. Consumers are willing to pay price premium of 5-50% for organic products which could be viewed as the cost of investment in human health. Knowledge and awareness about organic products could affect attitudes and perceptions about the product and, ultimately, buying decisions of the consumers. Vegetables followed by fruits and beans are the most preferred and highly demanded the commodities at present and the price of vegetables specially the leafy ones are higher than other normal vegetables. But, quality characteristics affect consumers' preferences for organic products; with the most important including health and nutritional value, taste, and fresh and general appearance. Consumers' willingness to purchase is influenced by limited and erratic supply, higher price of the products and very limited access and information.

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