

INVESTIGATING CONSUMER'S BUYING BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract: During the last four decades, the progressive increase of organic food has become an environmental consciousness, and many consumers are attracted to buying organic food. Limited studies focused on organic foods in developing countries. The behavior compelling the consumer's intention to purchase organic food has received little attention. Further, there is limited knowledge concerning the factors that impact consumer behavior towards organic food. Thus, this paper systematically reviews the buying behavior of consumers towards organic food in emerging markets. Moreover, this study investigates the motivation behind the purchase intention and challenges faced by consumers in the adoption of organic food. This review indicated that the influencing factors of attitude, trust, consumer's lifestyle, environmental benefits, price, quality, safety concern, and health concern greatly impact the buying behavior and purchase intention of consumers toward organic food. This review also revealed that consumers majorly face the challenges of higher prices for organic food in emerging markets. Thus, this review in turn will enhance the livelihood of consumers and increase their standard of living and purchasing behavior towards organic products.

Keywords: *Organic food, Consumer buying behavior, Purchase Intention, Environmental concern, Health consciousness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, the consumption of organic food in the market has grown steadily in developed and developing countries, and it is widely regarded as one of the biggest growth markets in the food industry. Compared to developed countries, the consumption of organic foods is a new practice in many developing countries [1, 2]. Human activity is the main cause of various crucial environmental problems, such as air pollution, climate change, and the depletion of natural resources. Hence, to promote and accelerate environmental sustainability, the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors is very important [3]. Organic food does not use any chemical fertilizers, pesticides, antibiotics, and growth hormones. Since the consumption of organic food is increasingly associated with environmental friendliness, such consumption has become a part of a way of human life [4]. Therefore, the consumption of organic food is contemplated as a new lifestyle trend, which contributes to health and well-being. The consumer has perceived such food to be healthier than conventionally produced food, which is assumed to be harmful to human health [5, 6].

Thus, rising demands for organic food have attained considerable attention on consumer motivations and decision processes. Worldwide, consumers are showing a serious concern about

the quality of their food intake and individual health. Thus, due to safety concerns, consumers are willing to pay a 5 to 7% premium on organic food [7, 8]. Most of the research on the Indian food organic food markets shows positive trends in demand through consumer shifts in organic food buying behaviors. However, in India, the industry of organic food is yet to understand the decision-making process of buying behaviors of organic food consumers [9]. In recent years, the global organic market has developed dramatically due to organic sales of green consumption. The developed popularity has prompted researchers to investigate the motivational drivers of consumer buying behaviors concerning organic products [10]. Many existing studies have focused on purchasing behaviors in relation to organic food products. Despite the considerable evidence, the determinants of factors influencing organic buying behaviors remain uncertain. Therefore, this paper is carried out to systematically review the consumer buying behaviors towards organic food in emerging markets. The main objective of this review is to focus on investigating the various influencing factors and challenges for consumers towards buying organic food. The draft of this paper is organized in a sketched diagrammatic format, which is shown in below Figure 1,

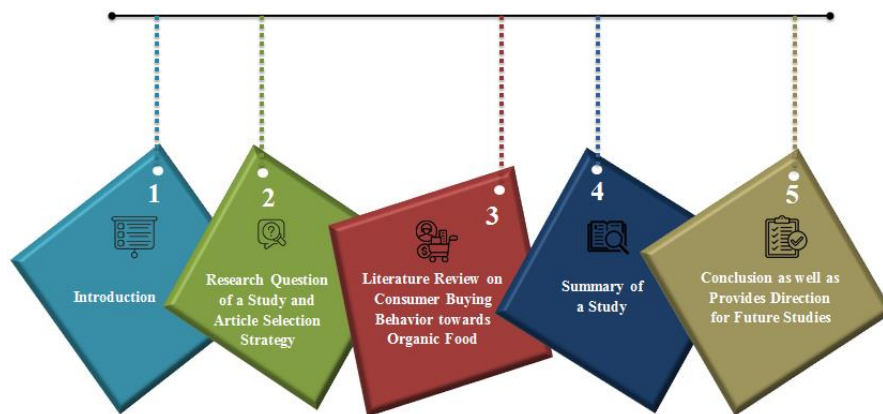


Figure 1: Structured framework of a study

2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND ARTICLE SELECTION STRATEGY

This study aims to understand the buying behaviors of consumers towards organic food and the influencing factors towards buying organic food. For conducting an effective systematic literature review on a topic, it is necessary to formulate the research questions.

2.1. Research questions

The research questions formulated for the current systematic review are as follows:

- How does organic food affect emerging markets?
- What motivates consumers to purchase organic food references to the Indian and global context?
- What are the factors that affect the buying behavior of consumers toward the demand for organic food?
- How the attitudes and purchase intentions influence consumers of organic food?
- How do consumers face challenges for organic food adoption in the emerging marketplace?

2.2. Information sources of selection strategy of article

A systematic and well-planned search is essential for gathering applicable material from the searched data of the desired domain. To describe the subject and field of study in the titles and abstracts of research articles, keywords are considered as significant words. Thus, to obtain solutions to the study questions, literature is searched by using related keywords. Further, using keywords, literature is retrieved from the database and other sources. Thus, to discover the primary studies for this systematic literature review, there is a list of the keywords that have been used in the “Abstract” section. In this study, a Prisma methodology has been applied to the selection strategy of an article. The Prisma framework depicts the flow of information through the different phases of a systematic review. It maps out the number of identified records, included and excluded data, and the reasons for exclusion. Thus, the Prisma framework is shown in Figure 2,

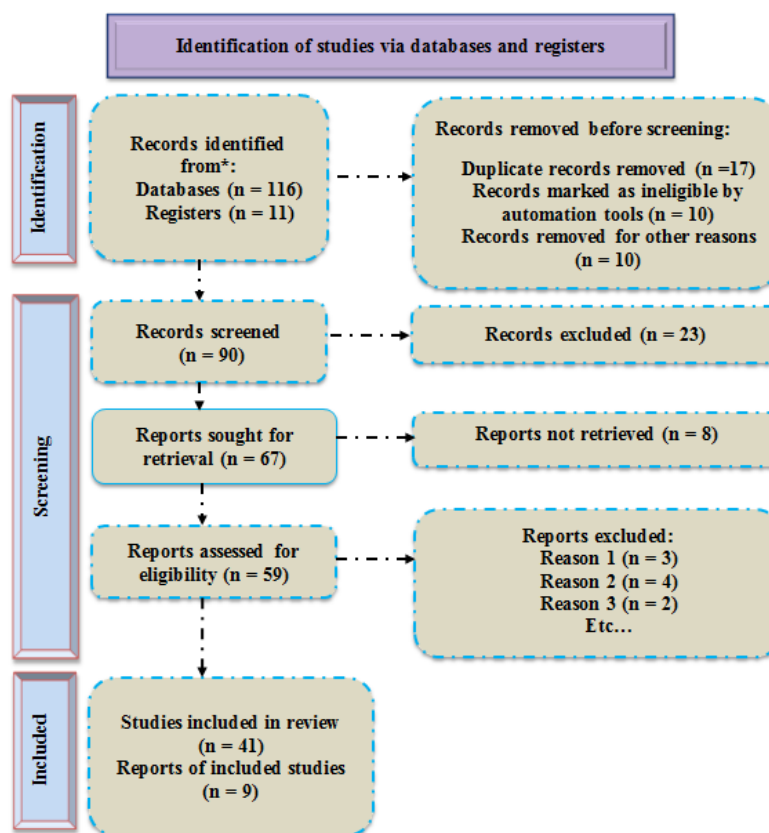


Figure 2: Prisma Framework

2.3. Inclusion criteria and Exclusion criteria

Based on certain specified parameters, such as the language of the paper, the year of the paper, and the relevance of the topic within the desired domain, the initial selection was considered.

- Initially, an extensive list of papers is included following the keyword search.
- Research papers written only in English language were included, whereas other language papers were omitted.
- This systematic review paper focused on research published between 2012 and 2022.

- Papers from renowned publishers are included, such as Springer, Wiley, Taylor and Francis etc.
- Then, abstracts of the papers are read, and those papers that describe consumer buying behaviors are included.
- Papers that were not focused on the domain of consumer buying behavior were omitted.
- Articles are included if the solution to any question is found; otherwise, it is excluded.

2.4. Selection and Evaluation Procedure

The paper identified and selected 127 papers that had a title relevant to the study published in Web of Science (WOS), Scopus, Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), and others by using the initial search criteria. Subsequently, the abstracts of those selected papers were examined more closely for relevance, which led to reducing their number to 90 papers. Next, the research papers that successfully passed the abstract-based selection were studied in detail. Thus, for the final review, the quality of those research papers was fully examined, and finally, 50 quality papers were selected. Thus, the search results of this study are represented in Figure 3.

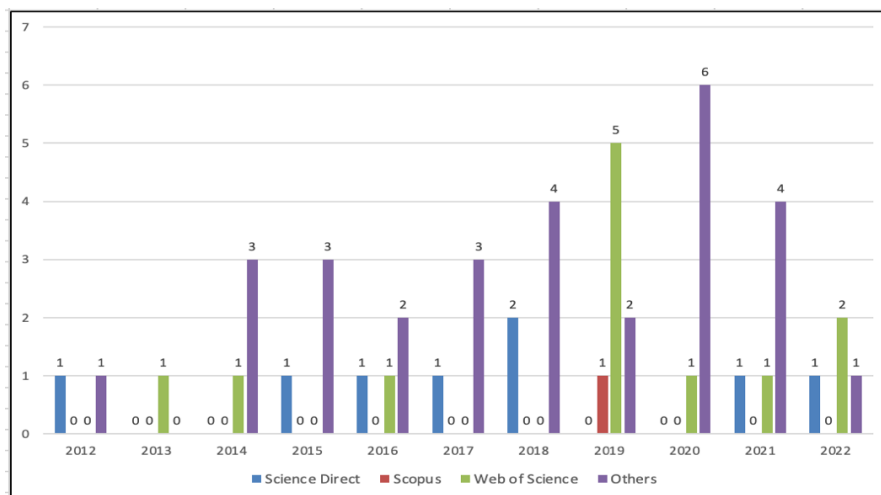


Figure 3: A graphical representation of search results of the article

3. LITERATURE SURVEY

Interest in organic food has grown remarkably as consumers and marketers react to popular media about the health and environmental effects of pesticides, genetically modified organisms, and food safety. There are so many articles based on organic food products with reference to customers' mindset on organic food products and reasons for buying organic products. However, there are limited works that present a comprehensive systematic review of consumer buying behavior towards organic food. Therefore, this review paper presented a detailed overview of existing research on consumer buying behavior towards organic food. Section 3.1 defines the overview of the increasing shift of organic food in emerging markets; Section 3.2 explains the consumer motives towards increasing preference for organic market in the Indian and global context; Section 3.3 explores the factors affecting consumer behavior towards buying organic food; Section 3.4 illustrates the consumer attitude and purchase intention for organic food; Section 3.5 represents the challenges faced by consumers for organic food adoption in the emerging market place.

3.1. OVERVIEW OF INCREASING SHIFT OF ORGANIC FOOD IN EMERGING MARKETS

Among the specific sections of the citizenry of contemporary India, organic food has become a primary choice for these sections. Globally, the organic food annual growth market has been increasing day by day. Growth of the organic products market in the country has been at a CAGR of 25 percent, and statistics project it to touch INR 10,000–20,000 crore at the end of 2020, from INR 4000 in 2019. Thus, the estimated growth of the market size of organic packaged food crossed INR 87.1 crore by 2021 from INR 53.3 crore in 2016 [11, 12].

Sheng-Hsiung Chang and Chin-Wen Chang [13] aimed to analyze the organic food purchase influence in an emerging market. In addition, this study examined the relationship between green purchase intention and green purchase behavior. By applying a convenience sampling method, a total of 578 consumers have been selected for green consumption of organic food in Taiwan. The findings of the study showed that normative interpersonal influences and informational interpersonal influences had a positive relationship with green purchase intention. A study was confined to an emerging market, which might restrict the generalizability of the findings.

Li Bai *et al.* [14] examined the antecedents of purchases of organic food by understanding the roles of beliefs, subjective norms, and identity expressiveness. Survey data has been collected from 1750 consumers in China by utilizing a non-probability sampling method. Based on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the antecedents of purchase attitude and intentions were tested. The study proved that identity expressiveness played a major role in the purchase intention of organic food in emerging markets. The study collected most of the samples from young respondents, which might contribute to the low variation in the responses.

Weng Marc Lim *et al.* [15] explored the consumer's perceived value and willingness to purchase organic food. A total of 15 consumers were selected for the research findings with the use of a random sampling technique in Malaysia. The result of the study has been examined through the qualitative approach. The study concluded that the "willingness to pay" had a significant measure of the relationship between declared values and organic food. However, the size of the sample was very low in this research study.

3.2. CONSUMER MOTIVES TOWARDS INCREASING PREFERENCE FOR ORGANIC FOOD MARKET IN INDIAN AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

In the global and Indian context, organic food production may positively impact the overall food system. In the early 2000s, the demand for organic food products has been increased by raising the consumer's consciousness about the quality and safety of food. The production of organic food is considered ecologically safe, socially acceptable, and economically viable. In addition, organic foods may serve as the transition to more sustainable food consumption and as a fundamental factor of a more sustainable diet [16]. The most significant motives for the influence of consumer behavior toward organic food were analyzed. Besides, the authors, the study aim, emerging context, and the study limitations have been presented in below Table 1.

Table 1: Motives towards increasing preference for organic food

Author	Aim	Context	Significant motives	Limitations
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Abdul Alem Mohammed [17]	Consumer motivation toward purchasing organic food in the emerging context	Saudi Arabia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective norms 	The study was carried out in the most populated areas in Riyadh Province, thus the findings couldn't be generalized to all consumers.
Andrzej Soroka and Julia Wojciechowska-Solis [18]	Consumer motivation to buy organic food depends on lifestyle	Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of harmful substances 	The same result was not applicable to other geographical regions or countries.
Lubna Nafees <i>et al.</i> [19]	Motivations to buy organic food in emerging markets	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Environmental motives 	Limited size of a sample.
John Thogersen <i>et al.</i> [20]	Buying motives of consumers towards organic food in two emerging markets	China and Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthiness • Taste • Environmental friendliness 	However, correlational data does not allow causality.

3.3. FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARD BUYING ORGANIC FOOD

Around the globe, the popularity of organic food growth has exponentially increased. To sustain the environment, consumers began to adopt ecologically sound behaviors, including the consumption of organic food. Consumers are effectively turning towards naturally grown food or organic food and moving away from food that has been produced using intensive, chemical-laden farming methods [21, 22]. Over the past two decades, consumers also realize that their buying behaviors have a direct impact on the environment. Various factors are determined to influence the buying behaviors of consumers for not only food, ethical consumption, protection of health, and physical needs but also related to social status, income, education, and other socio-cultural components. Therefore, both farmers and consumers are thinking about returning to organically grown products; thus, organic food is gaining acceptance not only in developed countries like North America and Europe but also in developing countries, such as India and China [23, 24].

Chiew Shi Wee *et al.* [25] intended to examine the actual purchase behavior and consumers' perception of organic food products. A questionnaire data has been collected from 288 respondents from Malaysia, using a convenient sampling method. The study indicated that the consumer's perception of health, safety, and environmental factors affects consumer behavior toward organic

food. However, the theory of behavioral intention and use of behavior towards organic food products was limited only in the context of Malaysia.

Md Tareq Bin Hossain and Pei Xian Lim [26] explored the buying behavior of consumers toward organic food from emerging markets. A sample has been taken from 105 respondents using random sampling techniques in Malaysia. The factors of knowledge and availability, perceived beliefs and attitudes, government support, and policy had a significant positive relationship with consumer behaviors. Due to time constraints, the researcher was rushing to complete the research before the due date.

Eman H. Alshammari [27] identified the factors influencing the behavior of consumers toward organic in the context of Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire data has been gathered from 147 participants, and the collected data has been analyzed through SEM. The findings of the study demonstrated that food quality and scepticism influenced the attitude of consumers toward organic food. However, the study was considered with a limited sample size, which might not be sufficient to generalize the results.

The comprehensive details of the influencing factors and methodologies employed in sample collection and analysis on the buying behavior of consumers are shown in below Table 2.

Table 2: Notable research on factors influencing on buying behavior of consumers toward organic food

Reference	Focus	Country context	Methods	Factors (Significant)	Disadvantage
Marwa Gad Mohsen and Scott Dacko [28]	Aimed to investigate the consumption of organic food	UK	Questionnaire (Correlation and Regression)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of future orientation • High perceived prior knowledge 	The operationalization of the study was in the UK; thus, it does not necessarily enable findings to be generalized to consumers in other countries
Shanjida Chowdhury <i>et al.</i> [29]	Factors affecting food purchasing consumer	Bangladesh	Empirical tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental benefits • Trust • Marketing strategy • Lifestyle • Perceived price • Perceived quality 	The sample size was very low

Martin Grimmer <i>et al.</i> [30]	Effect of purchase situation on consumer behavior	Australia	Empirical tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ease of purchase Availability Price 	The study was based on a self-report survey; therefore, bias in the result might occur.
B. Krishnakumarea and S. Niranjan [31]	Consumers' Buying Behaviour towards Organic Food Products	India	Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belief Attitude Perception Intention 	The result was concluded based on considering only one district, whereas the same result is not applicable to other areas.
Parichaya Sharma <i>et al.</i> [31]	Consumer's Purchase Behavior on Organic Foods	Nepal	Inferential analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude 	The study was limited to the Kathmandu Valley.
Rushdi Ahmed and Khadiza Rahman [32]	Understanding consumer behavior toward organic food	Bangladesh	Quantitative research methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge Trust Availability 	However, the data was collected from one locality.
Tuan Le-Anh and Tam Nguyen-To [33]	Consumer purchasing behaviour of organic food	Vietnam	Nonprobability sampling method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Awareness Food safety concern Perceived value 	Non-probability sampling methods may limit the representation of the research results.
Jatinder Kumar [34]	Consumers' behavior Towards Organic Food	India	Random sampling method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Quality Service 	The study was only confined to organic product market shops in Chandigarh
Md Tareq Bin Hossain <i>et al.</i> [35]	Buying behaviors and social responsibility with respect to organic food	Thailand and Malaysia	PLS-SEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental knowledge and concern Government support and policy Price 	Differences in perceived beliefs and attitudes might cause variation in intention and demand.

3.4. CONSUMER ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE INTENTION FOR ORGANIC FOOD

All over the world, consumers have been increasingly concerned about the quality, safety, and environmental friendliness of food due to a number of food safety incidents and environmental concerns [36]. In recent decades, organic foods are gaining popularity in developed and developing countries. The organic food market is expanding very fast and it has revenue of over 60 billion euros with more than 45 million hectares of land used worldwide for organic farming. As demand for organic food products rises, the production and economies of scale reduce the cost of production and develop the driving growth in India's organic food market over the next five years [37, 38].

Paul and Rana [39] explored the purchase intention of consumers towards organic food. The sample has been taken from 463 consumers using convenience sampling techniques. The study concluded that the purchase intentions of consumers towards organic food were influenced by healthy content, quality, environmental concerns and changing tastes of consumers. A limitation of this study was that the data was gathered by a questionnaire survey and face-to-face interview, which could be impacted by a common method bias.

Siti Hasnah Hassan *et al.* [40] examined the purchasing intention of consumers towards organic food among Generation Y in Malaysia. A structured questionnaire sample of data has been taken from 226 respondents. By using SEM, the results of a study have been explored. The factors of health, environmental concern, and perceived value positively influenced purchasing intention. However, the sample has been considered only from generation Y, whereas the same result was not applicable to other generation consumers.

The purchase intention and motivation of consumers towards organic food were analyzed. In addition, the study aim, method, total sample, and limitation of a study have been represented in below Table 3.

Table 3: Survey on motivation and purchase intention of consumers

Reference	Aim	Sample	Method	Significant variable	Limitations
Muhammad Asif <i>et al.</i> [41]	Factors that affect the purchase intention of organic food	736 (Pakistan, Turkey, Iran)	Quantitative approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness 	Limited to geographical context
Reza Saleki <i>et al.</i> [42]	Identify the significant role of intention factors on organic food	246 (Malaysia)	PLS-SEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subjective norm Attitude Moral norm Self-identity Perceived behavioral control 	Path analysis indicated that behavioral intention account for 62%; therefore, there were still other

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental concern 	unaccounted variables.
Rajvaidya Ralston and Wankhede Abha [43]	Examining factors influencing actual purchase behavior and purchase intention	310 (Mumbai)	Convenience sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Quality • Environmental friendly 	However, actual behavior was not affected by environmental factors.
Hana Novita Hasan and Sentot Suciarto [44]	Influencing factor towards organic food purchase intention	100 (Indonesia)	Purposive sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude 	The size of the sample was very low.
Mahamat Abdourrahmane and Sasiwemon Sukhabot [45]	Consumer's perception and attitude toward the purchase intentions	400 (Thailand)	Convenience sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude 	The findings are not generalizable to other regions or countries.

3.5. CHALLENGES FACED BY CONSUMERS FOR ORGANIC FOOD IN THE EMERGING MARKETPLACE

Within the agricultural industry, the organic market is moving from a niche market to a mainstream market. Thus, with the development of organic food in the emerging market, consumers face challenges. The major challenge was insufficient knowledge of consumers about organic products. The consumption of organic food is just a fashion in some social classes. However, many consumers were confused about whether to trust organic products in terms of health benefits. Despite the awareness of the benefits of organic food, many consumers are still purchasing conventional food products particularly due to the high price of organic food [46]. Thus, Table 4 represents some of the challenges faced by consumers for the adoption of organic food.

Table 4: Challenges faced by consumers in buying organic food

Author	Motivation	Context	Challenges	Disadvantages
Nafees <i>et al.</i> [47]	Health and environmental concerns	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health conscious are more concerned with performance and utility • Environment conscious are more 	Limited to geographical context and Small sample size of urban millennials.

			concerned about social image	
K.SriRithi <i>et al.</i> [48]	Issues faced by consumers and entrepreneurs in buying and selling organic food products	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost • Changing the perception of consumers 	However, this study considered a low level of sample, which might affect the generalizability of the findings.
Komathy Sandran <i>et al.</i> [49]	Consumer's perception of the challenges of consumption of organic food	Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to conventional products, the organic foods were less available • Higher pricing of organic products 	Limited to geographical context and sample size.

Earlier, organic food production was mainly exported, but now more consumers have been found in the domestic market. In 2015, India's organic food sector was estimated to be INR 27 billion (approximately USD 415 million). While the domestic market largely remains untapped due to reasons, such as unawareness and high cost, the Indian organic food market is primarily driven by exports to developed nations. The market size of organic packaged food in India for the financial years 2015 and 2020 with an estimation for 2025 report has been explored. In the year 2015, the estimated growth rate was 3.75 billion, the rate was 10.5 billion in the year 2020, and in the estimation year 2025, it gradually increased up to 30 billion of market size [50]. A graphical representation of the estimated growth rate of organic food is shown in Figure 4.

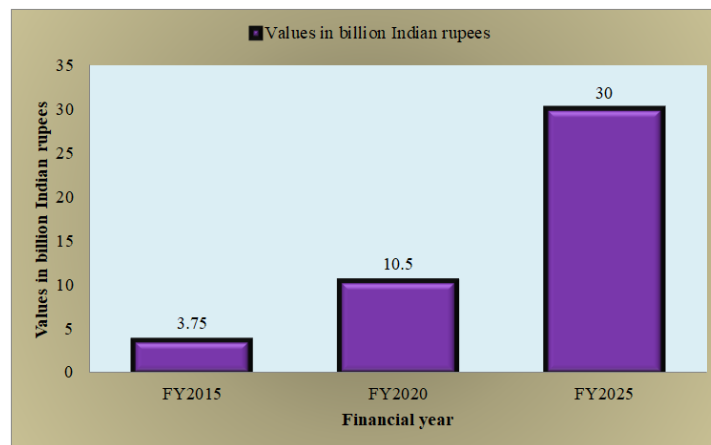


Figure 4: Estimated growth rate of organic food

4. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Many consumers see organic products as being healthier or tastier than those coming from conventional agriculture, whereas some other people appreciate them because of the good practices towards the environment or the Labor force employed in organic form. Thus, the perception of the quality and safety of organic foods has a positive environmental impact on organic agricultural

practices, which encourages the growing demand for organic foods. This paper provides a systematic review of consumer behavior towards organic food. In addition, this review expressed the various influencing factors of consumers' buying behavior toward organic foods and the challenges faced by consumers for the adoption of organic food in emerging markets. Based on this domain, a total of 5 research questions have been framed. Question 1 aims to provide an overview of the increasing shift of organic food in emerging markets. These research questions help to know about the consumer's beliefs and understanding of organic food in emerging markets. Next, research question 2 helped to know about the consumers' motives towards purchasing organic food references to the Indian and global context. Therefore, the significant motives of consumers are represented in Table 1. The majority of the studies highlight that Health and environmental motives [19, 20] greatly impact the consumers' motives towards organic food products. Next, research questions 3 and 4 helped to know about the factors that affect the buying behavior of consumers towards the demand for organic food and consumer motivation and purchase intention for organic foods. Thus, various types of influencing factors and significant variables that impact the motivation and purchase intention for organic foods are depicted in Tables 2 and 3. The factors of Attitude Environmental benefits, Trust, Lifestyle, Perceived price, Perceived quality, Availability, Ease of purchase, Food safety concern, and Perceived value majorly influenced the buying behavior of consumers and purchase intention towards organic food. Finally, research question 5 helped to know about the challenges faced by consumers for organic food in the emerging marketplace. Therefore, the existing motivation for the study and challenges faced by consumers are displayed in Table 4. It revealed that the consumer majorly faced the challenges of Higher pricing of organic products, changing perception of consumers, and difficult to distinguish from conventional products. Furthermore, by analyzing the estimated growth rate of organic products, the growth rate gradually increased up to 30 billion market size in the estimated year of 2025.

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

This paper analyzed the consumer behavior towards organic food and factors influencing the behavior of the consumer towards organic food. Further, this review analyzes the intention to purchase and the challenges faced by consumers for the adoption of organic food. This review concluded that consumer attitudes, environmental concerns, health concerns, and perceived values had highly influenced the buying behavior of consumers toward organic food. Moreover, subjective norms and perceived quality highly motivate the purchase intention of consumer behavior in organic food in emerging markets. Thus, reviewing the existing studies revealed that consumers were highly faced with the challenges of higher prices of organic products. Most of the article was focused on identifying the factors, which impact consumer's impulse to purchase and buy organic food. Certain factors are given less importance while some others are deterrents, which hinder the growth of the market. Still, some areas remain untouched and carry ambiguity. In order to evaluate the limitations of the study, this paper will further focus on exploring the conclusive statement of ethical concern. Further, it will also focus on applying discriminate analysis and will try to make comparisons between the Indian and global context of purchase intention of consumers and organic food market growth rate in future studies.

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