



# Consumer Behaviour Toward Organic Products: A Rudimentary Study of Union Territory of Chandigarh, India

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## Abstract

*The advent of the new century navigated people to choose lifestyles that revolve around the connection between diet, health and the environment. Consumers embarked on shopping for products with clean labels and transparency. This gradually turned into an active pursuit of organic products in the second decade. Organic food sales in the United States in 2022 broke through \$60 billion, raising the curiosity for studying their future in a climate-active world.*

*This paper mainly concentrates on local consumers' behaviour towards organic products in a city with diverse options available for consumption. The objective of the conducted analysis is to forecast the pivotal consumer base in terms of socioeconomic factors and their intent behind the consumption of organic products. This study can further be used to synthesize the probable areas of organic products that can be used in future research.*

## 1. Introduction

The Greek word 'organikos' is conducive to the origin of the word organic. Organikos relates to the part of the body, implying that matter received from living organisms was considered organic (Rehber et al., 2018). Opposed to conventional agriculture, organic agriculture refers to adopting ecological farming principles that ensure higher food safety and are cruelty-free. Organic farming is a process that is pursued to achieve the goal of sustainable agriculture.

## 1.1 History of organic farming & early Investigation of organic products

### 1.1.1. International context

The term 'ecology' was coined by Ernst Haeckel in 1866 which describes the "economies of living forms" and the interaction of nature with living organisms (Sarkar, S., 2016). Ecology is deeply embedded in the development and study of organic farming. One concept that interweaves with the concept of organic farming is green manuring. Green manuring refers to the application of plant-based fertilizer to soil fertility and increases organic production. Milkwetch, primarily, a medicine used for over 2000 years in China, originated as a primary crop used in green manuring during the Eldo Era (1603-1867). Following its origin in China, green manuring was a linchpin to the rise of organic farming during the Japanese-Russian war which ensued in 1904. This indicates that Organic Farming has inadvertently been a practice science the ancient periods.

### 1.1.2. The Advent of organic farming in India

Organic farming had been rooted globally before 1940, and a similar scenario befitted the case in India. Sir Albert Howard was the founder of the organic farming movement and along with Robert McCarrison, a British physician in India, he commenced the observation of the physical features of agriculture in the country. His publications include 'Utilization of Agricultural Wastes' with co-author Y.D. Yad and 'Agricultural Testament' outlined the results of his research on the synthesis of agricultural waste and fresh manure, thereby establishing new trends of compost and organic farming in India (Barton, G., 2001).

## 1.2 Trends in organic products during the contemporary period

Contemporary time implies the period between 1945-1960, this period witnessed the onset of World War 2 and major technological innovations which gave way to the green revolution in India. Organic farming was in practice during this period and India as a civilization thrived on this ecological way of farming. People were close to nature and traditional farming methods passed down from generation to generation were in vogue. The population was also sparse so their food requirements were easily met (Singh, 2017).

### 1.2.1 International context

In countries like Germany and Switzerland, health food stores started specializing in organic food products, but the distribution was only through the medium of direct marketing as distribution channels and logistics were not well developed. So, 1938 witnessed great dissatisfaction concerning the fulfilment of the population's demand for food products.

### 1.2.2 National context

The period of 1950s and 1960s witnessed a tremendous surge in population in India. This increase in population led to food scarcity in India and paved the way for modern techniques to replace conventional farming methods. The government used to import food grains to meet this ever-increasing demand. As a result, the green revolution was introduced in the 1960s to enhance food security and meet the growing population demand. Hybrid seeds were introduced along with modern techniques of production.

This boon came with some shortcomings and the green revolution showed its darker side. Excessive use of chemicals led to a decrease in land fertility. Moreover, chemically produced food is unhealthy. Keeping in view these deteriorating factors, organic farming came back with firm footing.

### 1.3 Modern Trends in organic products

Modern trends of organic products record the trend in purchase intention of consumers towards organic products thereafter the period of 1960. In the modern day, a product is referred to as organic if it's certified to have grown on soil with no prohibited substances applied three years before harvest. Prohibited substances include pesticides, insecticides, and additional use of chemicals. In instances when a grower has to use a synthetic substance to achieve a specific purpose, the substance must first be approved according to criteria that examine its effects on human health and the environment (McEvoy, M., 2022). In recent times, concerns about the impact of the food that people consume on their health, as well as the social and environmental consequences that it entails, have led to major changes in all steps of the food chain including all the agents from the producer to the retailer. These phenomena comprise complex technological, social, economic, and environmental linkages that require integrated research approaches (Falguera, 2012). Due to the following arising concerns and the impact of covid-19, consumers in India are starting to incline more towards healthier food options i.e. organic products. It is projected that the organic food market alone will grow upto \$553.87 million in FY2026 from \$177.14 million in FY2020, moving ahead with a CAGR of 21.00 per cent by FY2026 (Gupta, 2021). Modern trends can be in two aspects i.e. international and national trends.

#### 1.3.1 International Trends in the organic produce market

The organic food market consists of sales of organic food and beverages and related services. Organic food production involves practices that promote ecological balance and aim to conserve biodiversity. These food products do not use any food additives or industrial solvents. The international organic food market is expected to grow from \$512.01 billion in 2027 at a CAGR of 14.8%. Increasing health concerns due to the growing number of chemical poisoning cases globally are driving the organic food market. Consumers are becoming more health-conscious owing to the harmful effects caused by the presence of chemical pesticides in food products.

### 1.3.2 National Trends in the organic produce market

India being an agro-based economy plays a vital hand in the organic produce market. The organic market in India is currently exhibiting strong growth currently due to multiple reasons, one of them being consolidating government policies and schemes. The Indian government is promoting organic farming by providing financial support to farmers who are adopting organic farming under various government schemes such as the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), etc. As per current trends, the Indian organic food market is expected to exhibit a CAGR of 25.25% during 2022-2027. India is bestowed with a lot of potential to produce all varieties of organic products due to its various agro-climatic conditions. In several parts of the country, the inherited tradition of organic farming is an added advantage. This holds promise for the organic producers to tap the market which is growing steadily in the domestic and export sector. As per the available statistics, India ranks **5th** in terms of the World's Organic Agricultural land and **1st** in terms of the total number of producers as per 2021 data (Rani, A., 2023).

## 2. Literature review

According to the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) the agriculture practised in the modern scenario, post the green revolution and occasionally conventional agriculture accounts for the emission of 1/5th anthropogenic methane and nitrogen oxide (Reddy, BS., 2010).

### 2.1 Organic food

The word “organic” doesn’t have homogeneous meanings associated with it. It entails the elimination of synthetic chemicals and signifies the essence of “natural” produce. Organic food encompasses natural food items which are free from artificial chemicals such as fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, antibiotics, and genetically modified organisms. Additionally, organic food is not subjected to irradiation. It is broadly classified as fresh, pure and local food that is a healthier alternative for farmers to exponentially grow their sales with ethical production (Rana, J., & Paul J., 2017). The word ‘organic’ as indicated by FSSAI refers to products of holistic agricultural practices focusing on biodiversity, soil health, chemical-free inputs etc. with an environmentally and socially responsible approach that has been produced by organic production standards. The organic food market in India is a niche market, with the market expected to see wider penetration in the coming years. Owing to the growing incidences of food adulteration, the demand for organic food is anticipated to rise in the coming years. The e-commerce industry growth also serves as an aid to enterprises as a way of appealing to potential consumers due to the lucrative offers and wider market penetration of the platforms.

### 2.1.1 Indian Organic Market

The Indian organic food market is experiencing robust growth with rising awareness about organic food products. The growing level of health consciousness in the country is a key factor driving the demand for organic food. The rising awareness about the nutritional content and quality of the food consumed by Indian consumers is leading to the growing demand for organic food. In addition, consumer spending on health and wellness products has increased dramatically due to factors including strong economic growth, urbanization, and rising income levels. The strong government funding is catalyzing the market for organic food in India. The Government of India encourages organic farming through financial assistance to farmers who are implementing organic farming under various government schemes, such as the Mission for Integrated Horticulture Development, National Food Security Mission, and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana. As per the available statistics, India rank 5th in terms of the World's Organic Agricultural land and 1st in terms of the total number of producers as per 2021 data.

### 2.1.2 Area Under Organic Farming

As of 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2022 total area under the organic certification process (registered under National Program for Organic Production) is 9119865.91 ha (2021-22). This includes 4726714.74 ha cultivable area and another 4393151.17 ha for wild harvest collection. Among all the states, Madhya Pradesh has covered the largest area under organic certification followed by, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. In 2016, Sikkim achieved a remarkable distinction of converting its entire cultivable land (more than 75000 ha) under organic certification.

### 2.1.3 Production of Organic Products in India

India produced around 3430735.65 MT (2021-22) of certified organic products which include all varieties of food products namely Oil Seeds, fibre, Sugar cane, Cereals & Millets, Cotton, Pulses, Aromatic & Medicinal Plants, Tea, Coffee, Fruits, Spices, Dry Fruits, Vegetables, Processed foods etc. The production is not limited to the edible sector but also produces organic cotton fibre, functional food products etc. Among different states, Madhya Pradesh is the largest producer followed by Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Odisha. In terms of commodities, Fiber crops are the single largest category followed by Oil Seeds, Sugar crops, Cereals and Millets, Medicinal/ Herbal and Aromatic plants, Spices & Condiments, Fresh Fruit Vegetable, Pulses, Tea & Coffee.

### 2.1.4 Export of Organic Products

The total volume of export during 2021-22 was 460320.40 MT. The organic food export realization was around INR 5249.32 Crore (771.96 million USD). Organic products are exported to the USA, European Union, Canada, Great Britain, Switzerland, Turkey, Australia, Ecuador, Korean Republic, Vietnam, Japan, etc. (Rani, A., 2023).

## 2.2. Consumer Attitude & Behaviour

Attitudes being the major driver of purchase behaviour, reflect a consumer's beliefs and trust which lead them to like or dislike, adopt or abandon a certain product. Consumers are highly influenced by the packaging of labels. A vigilant consumer adheres to the nutritional information on the packaging of food products (Kozup et al., 2003). The consumer is growing more vigilant in the present scenario and seeks products varying their ethical and environmental concerns. Ethical consumerism is burgeoning and forms a crucial basis for product selection (Honkanen et al., 2006). Consumer behaviour consists of the ideas, feelings, experiences and actions of consumers with additional environmental factors like ads, prices and comments. Furthermore, consumer behaviour is a dynamic process, because of the continuous changes in ideas, perceptions and activities of consumers as an individual or in a group (Mutlu & Nihan, 2017). While considering consumer behaviour and purchasing attitudes towards organic products we have several factors in our hands to consider.

### 2.2.1. Health Consciousness & Expectation of Well Being

Health consciousness is the degree to which health concerns are integrated into a person's daily activities. A study explored university students' health consciousness and how it is related to their consumption of organic foods. A paper survey was administered to 202 students at San Francisco State University, with questions on overall health consciousness, consumption behaviour, and demographic characteristics. Results indicated that there was a significant correlation between students' health consciousness and their organic food consumption. Overall, the more students were concerned about their health, the more they consumed organic food. Also, a significant difference was found between male and female organic food consumption, with women more prone to both purchase and consume organic foods. All respondents were more inclined to consume organic foods in non-food service settings. Insights from this study can help family and consumer sciences professionals redesign their outreach, curricula, and policy recommendations around organic food consumption (Chowdhury et al., 2023).

### 2.2.2 Environmental-friendly Products

A substantial part of sustainable consumption belongs to green purchases; such 'green' behaviour diminishes the negative effect of humanity on the environment (Liu et al., 2012). Therefore, consumers are increasingly starting to consider environmental problems, engaging in energy-reducing consumption, using environmentally-friendly products, etc. Sustainable behaviour expressed by consumers can be envisioned in the consumption of products and services fulfilling their basic needs and also bringing a higher quality of life, whilst at the same time reducing the use of natural resources, avoiding toxic materials, and diminishing waste emissions and pollutants. In such a way, future generations' needs are being respected (Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, 1994). Therefore, consumers become increasingly aware of the effects of consumption on the natural environment and the welfare of humanity in the future. Research by Hueber (1991) shows that over 70 per cent of Americans support the protection of the environment; moreover, 49 per cent of them would refuse to purchase products that could be environmentally unsafe or harmful.

### 2.2.3 Price Familiarity

As Marian, Chrysochou, Krystallis, and Thøgersen ascertained from several studies, the attitude of consumers towards organic food is in general positive with typically associated benefits being superior taste, more environmental-friendliness, improved health, safer food, and more animal welfare. A frequently reported reason for not buying organic food was price since it was usually premium priced (Marian et al., 2014). The assumption that a larger share of consumers would buy organic food if it was less costly, however, is strongly questioned by the results of Bunte, Galen, Kuiper, and Tacken (2010). Their study in the Netherlands showed that even if prices for organic food were lowered to the level of conventional products, this did not lead to significantly higher sales. Additionally, revealed a strong difference in the price elasticity of consumer demand by product groups in their review article. Therefore, the role of price in the purchase decision is still a matter of debate (Manika & Ulrich, 2015).

### 2.2.4 Gender Impact

Research has identified gender as a moderator in several consumer behaviour domains. The relationship between gratitude and the amount spent is significant and positive for males and insignificant for females. Similarly, the influence of obligation on the amount paid is significant and positive for females and not significant for males (Barber et al., 2009). Gender differences in information search: Implications for retailing. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*.). These authors argue that males possess more product knowledge which will impact product gratitude and purchase. In contrast, in the case of females, the purchase is influenced by social aspects linked to obligation. The extent of knowledge an individual possesses about the environment will be based on their gender (Tikka et al., 2000). Gender could play an essential role in their food decisions and choices and reported that women compared to men were more conscious about body weight and were more likely to consume low-fat food. Lopez-Larson et al. (2011) used the fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) technique and found men and women have different brain patterns when they were prompted to take high-calorie food (e.g. conventional food items) vs. healthy food (i.e. organic food) (Arganini et al., 2012). Hence, there are pieces of evidence to show that gender differences can affect green product consumption (Raghava R. et al., 2022). organic food quality and purchase, while other studies show that gender does not moderate the relationships between the following variables and behavioural intentions: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, subjective norm and perceived credibility. Further, research conducted in Europe has established that gender has a limited effect on the consumption of organic food. Further, it was found that the attitude–purchase intention and subjective norm–purchase intention relationships are moderated by gender.

### 3. Research gap

The key motivating factor for this research is the impact of the pandemic on consumer behaviour toward organic products. However, after reviewing plenty of literature, it was observed that little work had been done to identify the correlation between covid-19 and its impact on consumer attitudes toward organic products. Most of the published works had a European background and threw a little light on the consumer base in India. This research in contrast specifically targets the consumer area of Chandigarh. The questionnaire is designed keeping in mind significant demographic factors in play (age group, gender, income, etc.). According to the research hypothesis, the major factors affecting consumer purchasing intention are age, knowledge, health consciousness, price and availability, subjective factors, and trend fads. The age group targeted here is above 18 while keeping in mind that the consumer base must be local. However, it must be additionally stated that further research opportunities can be extended by encompassing a larger sample size, demographic area, and extensive factors.

### 4. Objectives

The overall goal of this study is to evaluate the behaviour of consumers buying organic products. However, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) To identify the pivotal consumer with classification in socio-economic factors.
- 2) To identify the motivating factors that foster consumers' inclination toward organic products in the selected demographic area.
- 3) To identify the impact of COVID-19 on the choice of products.
- 4) To study the impact of social media on product preference.

### 5. Data Settings and Methods

The methodology of this research divided itself into three broad steps.

1. The first step of the research was a literature-based study regarding the significance of organic products and current trends in consumer purchasing behaviour towards organic products internationally and in India over the pandemic.
2. The second step of research focused on qualitative data collection while keeping in mind demographic aspects such as age, gender, income group, etc. The data collection was conducted with the help of the survey method that will record primary and descriptive data. The questionnaire used in the survey was specially modified to capture the essence of this research, it focused on the local consumer base and comprised questions written in simple and understandable English.
3. The final step of this research was to analyze the data recorded, the data was then deciphered into logical and meaningful manuscript texts. Lastly, conclusions were derived accordingly.



#### 4. Sample Size

The collection of data took place through questionnaires. Respondents were asked gently about their willingness to participate and their queries regarding the survey were addressed. The sample comprised 51 people, which included all genders and people from varying income groups, which implies that any particular income group is not specified.

### 6. Results & Discussion

Various factors impact the choice of organic products. A few of them can be studied below.

#### 1. Health Concerns and Lifestyle

Today's life is getting very competitive and demanding. The consumer has a hard time with physical activities but is highly exposed to diseases. Consumers are very much concerned about their health and their food choice to stay healthy. Health concern has influenced consumer attitude toward organic food. Consumers' attitude towards organic food and their willingness to pay premium prices by people (Basha & Mason, 2015).

#### 2. Socio-demographic factors

Various theories exist that state that attitude alone does not affect behaviour; there are other factors that not only influence behaviour but also the strength of the attitude-buying behaviour relationship. The socio-demographic attributes are the factors that influence actual buying behaviour. Factors influencing Indian consumers' actual buying behaviour towards organic food products (Voon et al. 2011).

#### 3. Environmental consciousness

The environmental movement has greatly changed consumer behaviour and environmental awareness, resulting in an increased demand for green products. The green behaviour and benefits boost loyalty not only in the case of the products and brands but also towards the different retail formats. Thus, environmental issues have become a frequent topic among consumers and more consumers have recognized the consequences of the effects of consumption on the environment. This environmental activism inclines companies to develop and produce more environmentally friendly products, which are less harmful to the environment (Pop & Saplacan, 2020).

#### 4. Impact of COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic crisis had caused a severe global health emergency and, consequently, led to a shift in food systems and how people purchase and consume their food. The study from Meixner and Katt assessed the IOC on consumers' perceptions of food safety issues. Their findings suggest that food safety concerns are becoming increasingly important due to COVID-19. Moreover, the latest studies reported that the COVID-19 pandemic lead people's behaviour and lifestyles towards a sustainable and healthier direction. People tend to consume more environmentally friendly food products due to an increase in their food safety concerns (Qi & Ploeger, 2021).

## 5. Consumers' social class

A consumer's position in a society with income level, family background and profession are the indicators of a person's social class. The amount of money spent and the way these expenditures are both considered in the social status. Studies have different results on income variables. Some researchers claim that income has a positive effect on organic food consumption (Davies et al., 1995; Wier and Calverley, 2002; Latacz and Foster, 1997; Padel and Foster, 2005; Zanolini et al., 2004). Another claim is, people who grow up and live in urban consume more than rural people (Radman, 2005). Danish studies also agree on; organic consumers mostly live in big cities and urban areas with higher socio-economic status (Zanolini et al., 2004).

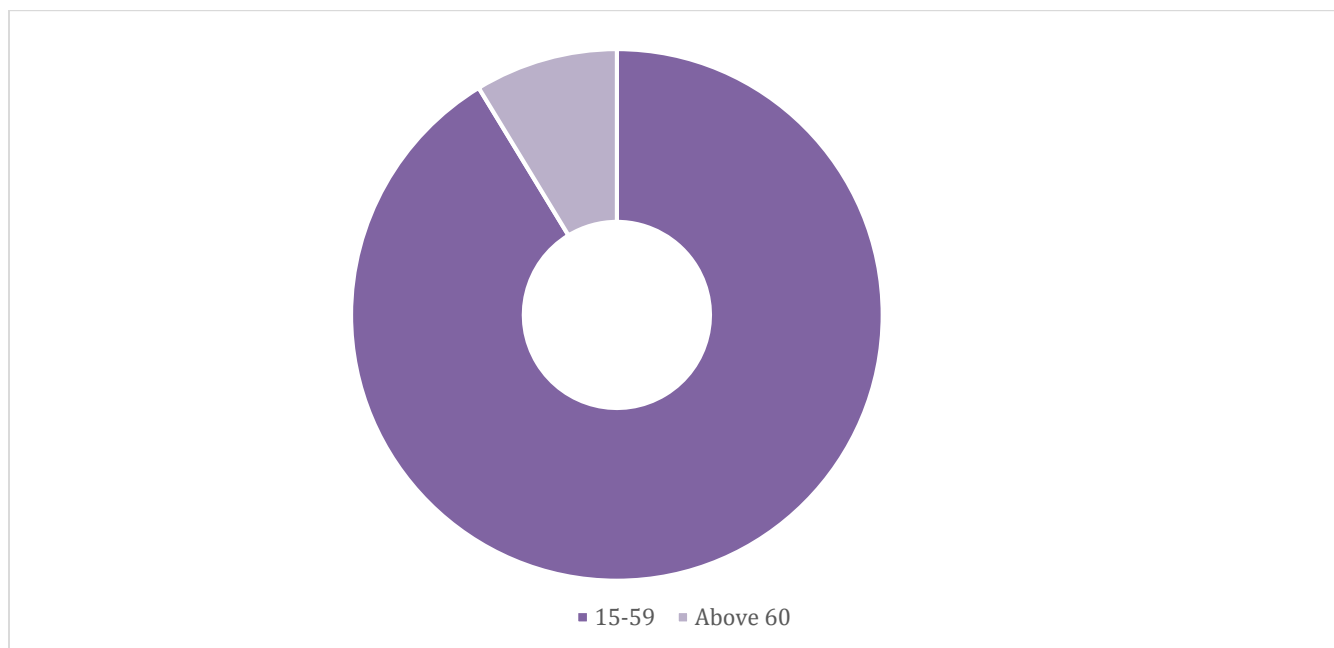
## 6.1 Demographic Distribution

Previously it has been demonstrated that there is an equal distribution in terms of gender among the consumers of organic products, indicating that healthier alternatives biogenically converted are demanded more in the evolving world irrespective of gender. Demographic variables are an important factor in determining consumer behaviour toward the purchase of organic products. Age, gender, education, place of residence, and income influence a consumer's purchase of green products. Previous studies have shown that in terms of gender, women are more interested in buying organic products as compared to men as they are more aware and sensitized about health. Moreover, women having children are likely to spend on green products due to the prevailing consciousness about their child's health. People with high-income levels are more inclined toward organic products as compared to people with low-income levels as wealthy individuals are in a position to pay the required price. When it comes to the influence of age on purchase intentions, some studies have shown that age does not impact people's purchase decisions while according to some other findings, older people are more likely to rely on organic products due to their concern for the environment and health. Studies have evinced that people in the age group of 40-60s score high on purchasing green products in comparison to other age groups (Barbu, A. et al., 2022). Place of residence also impacts purchase decisions profoundly. It is observed that urbanites' inclination is more toward green products as compared to people living in rural areas.

### 6.1.1 Age

The age distribution of consumers shows that the dominant group of regular buyers of organic products is between the ages 15-59 comprising 91.30 per cent of the respondents. Only 8.70 per cent of people of and above the age of 60 purchase organic products regularly. This indicates that teens and the working class are active buyers of organic products. (Figure 6.1)

Figure 6.1: Age Distribution of Regular Buyers

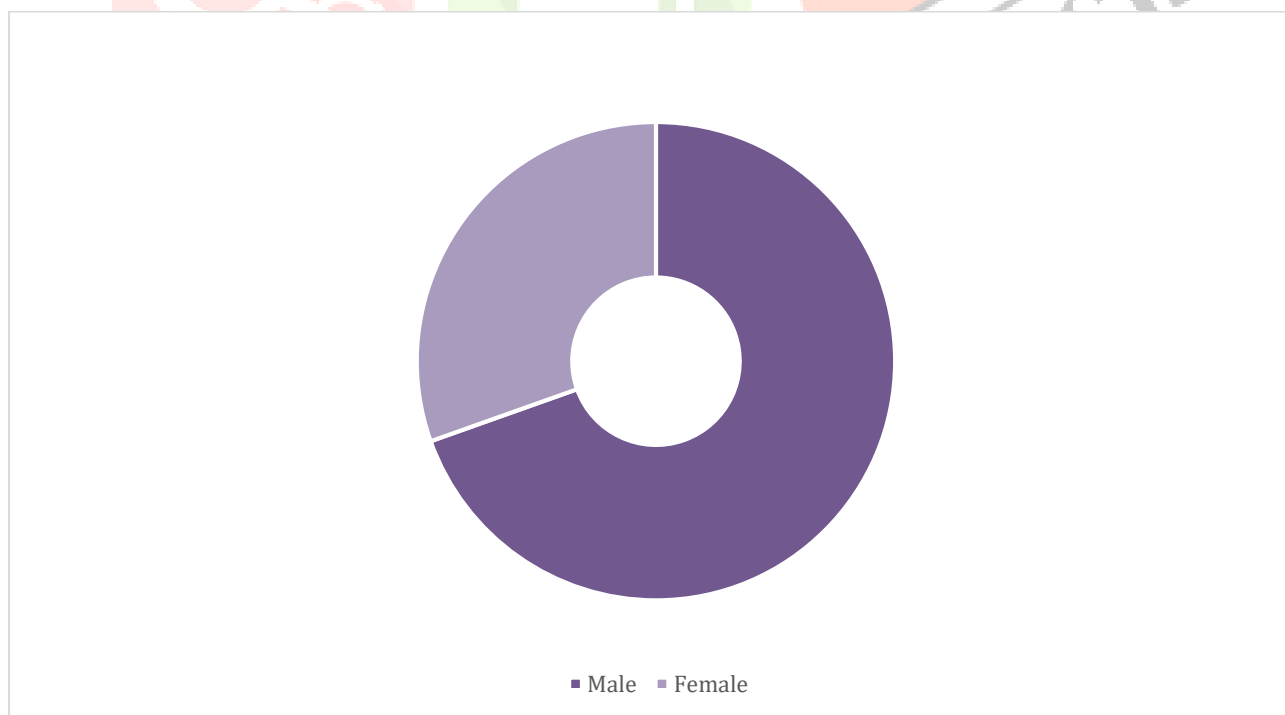


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

### 6.1.2 Gender

It is further observed that males comprise of the majority consumers of organic products with female respondents making up only 30.43 per cent of the total. (Figure 6.2)

Figure 6.2: Gender Distribution of Regular Buyers

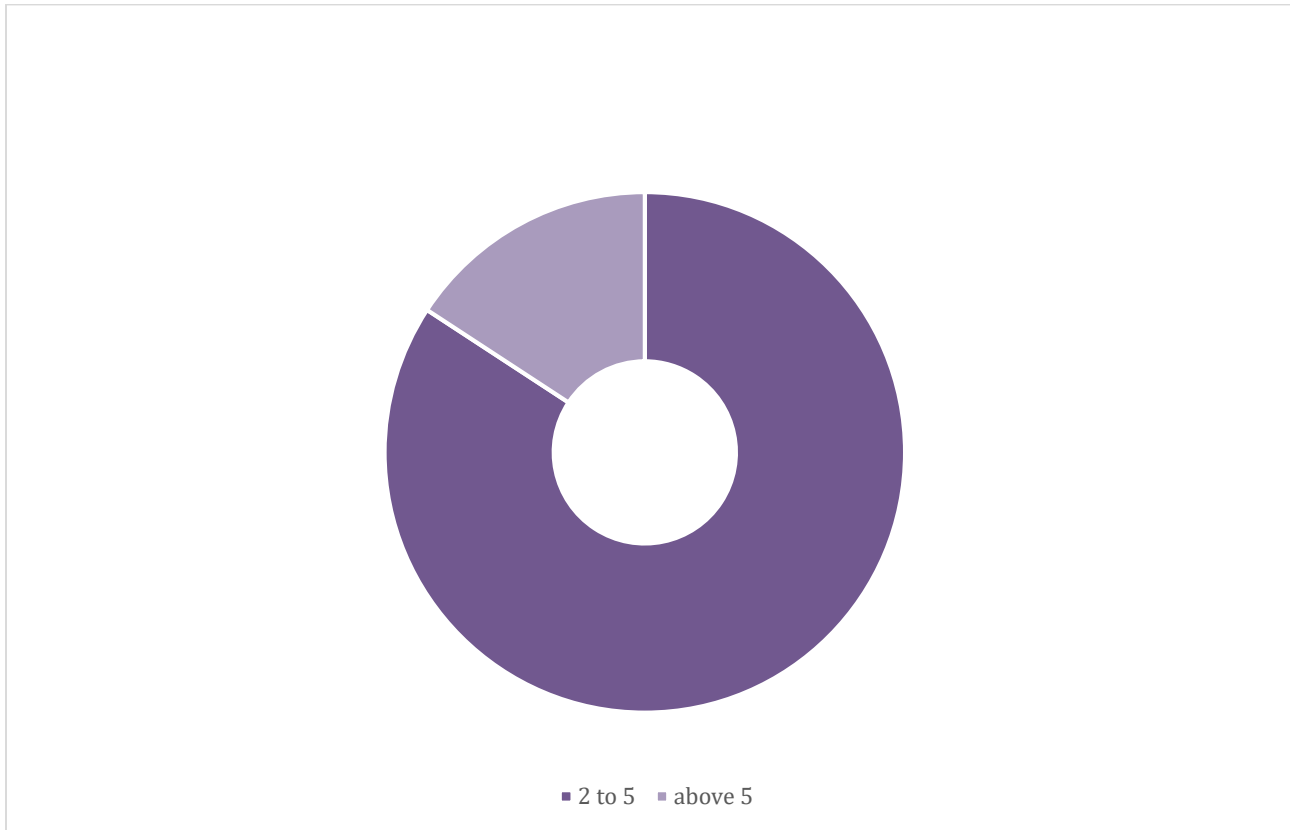


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

### 6.1.3 Size of the Household

84.21 per cent of organic consumers belong to small and mid-sized households with 2-5 members and only 15.78 per cent of organic consumers live in families larger than 5 members. (Figure 6.3)

Figure 6.3: Household Membership Distribution of Regular Buyers

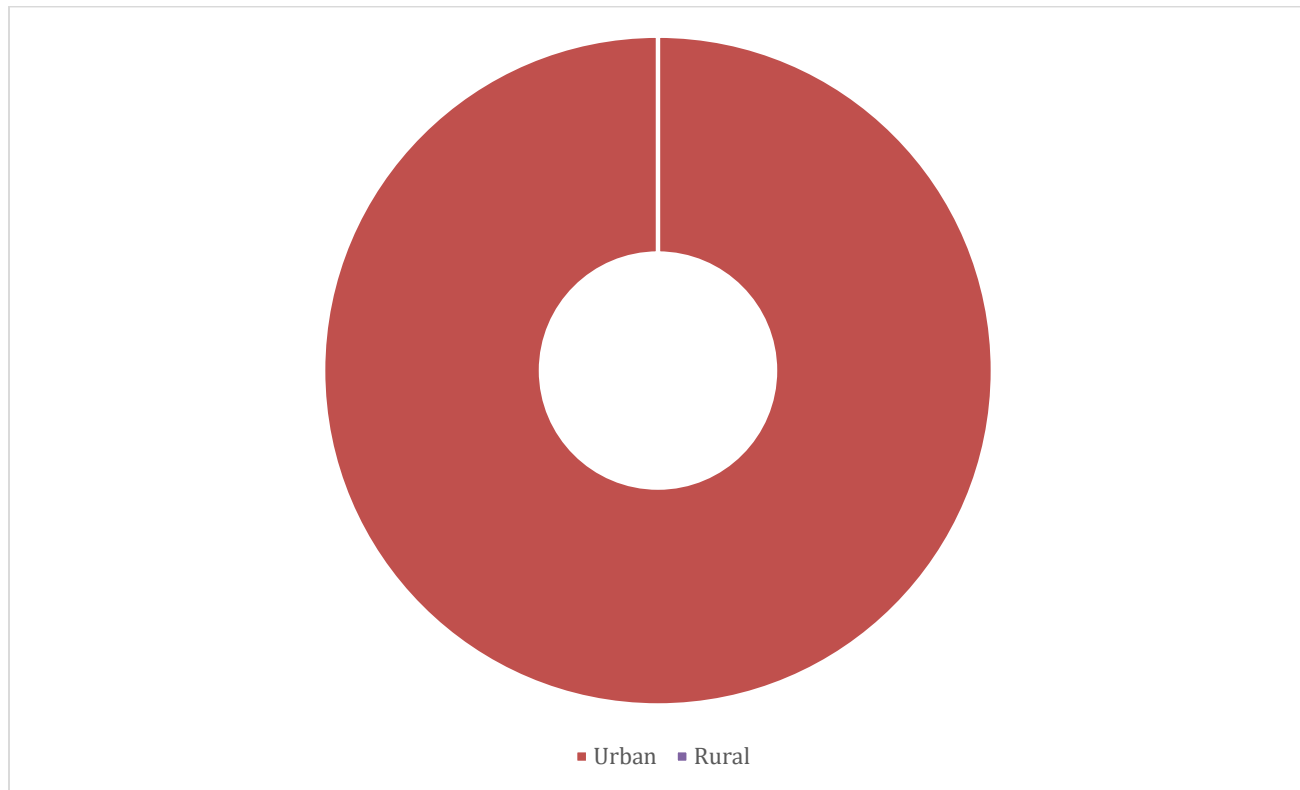


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

#### 6.1.4 Place of Residence

Additionally, observations regarding the residency of regular buyers indicate that 98 per cent of the respondents live in urban areas. Since the results show only 2 per cent of respondents live in rural areas, it can be deciphered that the availability and accessibility of organic consumer goods are better in urban areas.

Figure 6.4: Place of Residence of Regular Customers

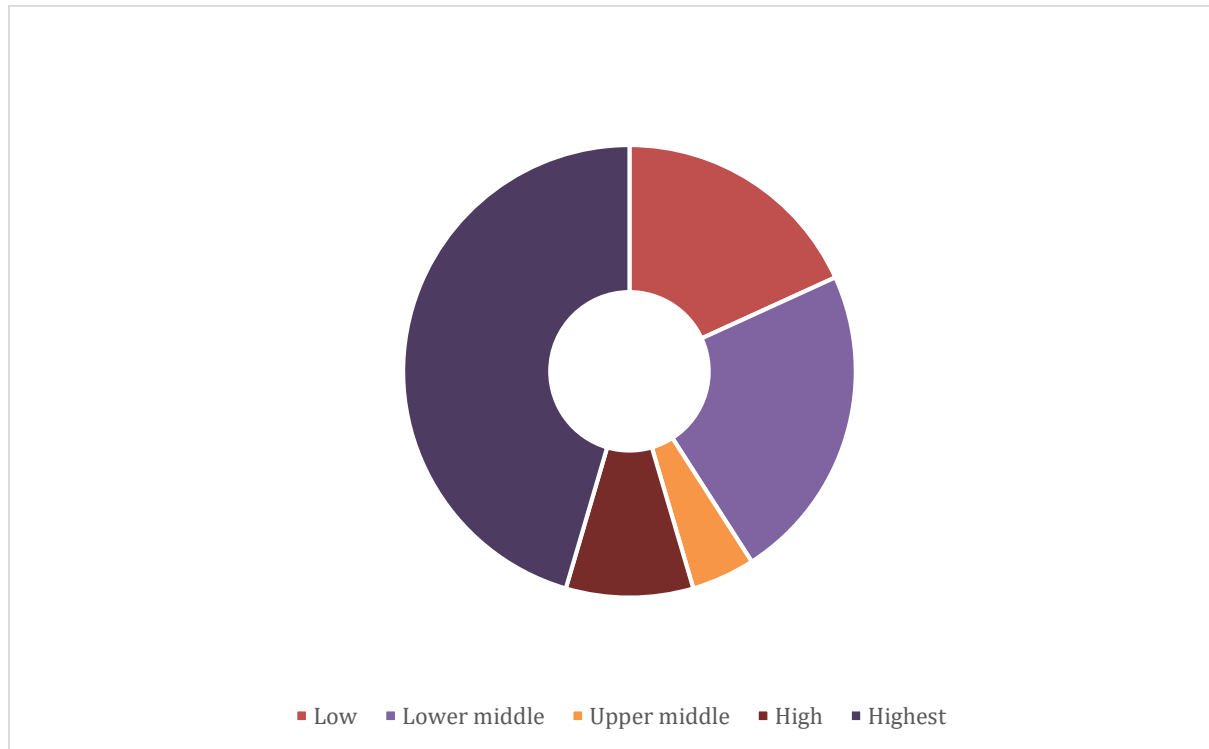


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

### 6.1.5 Income Group Distribution

The data regarding income distributions reflect that 45.45 per cent of the regular buyers belong to the highest income groups followed by lower-middle (22.72 per cent) and lowest (18.18). The upper-middle and high-income groups together constitute only 13.62 of the patrons of organic products. Income, thereby, is a strong stimulus for the consumption of these products, clearly in addition to individual interests and needs.

Figure 6.5: Income Group Distribution of Regular Buyers



Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

### 6.2 Major Motivating Factors

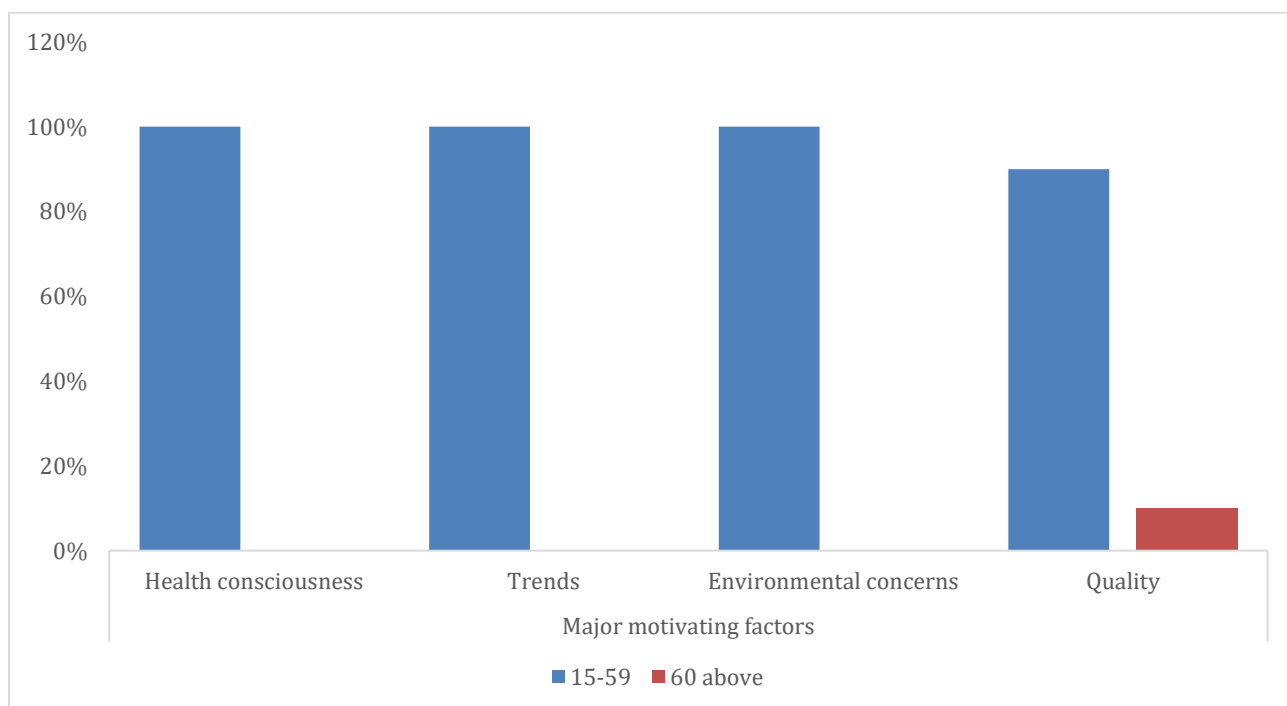
Consumer behaviour towards the purchase of green products is also determined by factors other than socio-demographic indicators. Health consciousness, attitude, environmental awareness, and availability of organic products also impact consumers' purchase decisions. The results of previous studies show that consumers are willing to purchase organic products as they perceive them as environment-friendly and good for their health. Health is observed as the most important factor as over 92 % of organic buyers purchase based on this factor. About 84% of people acquire green products as they are environment-friendly and free of pesticides. When it comes to knowledge regarding organic products, over 40% of organic buyers possess little knowledge while only 5% claim to be well-informed. Previous studies have also considered the availability of organic products as another motivating factor. Statistics show that around 58% of people are satisfied with the range and variety available in organic stores while another share of 41% would like to buy some more variety (Iqbal & Mehree,

(2015). A consumer's attitude also impacts purchase decisions as it was seen that over 22% of people buy organic products to just try something new.

### 6.2.1 Age

Upon analysing the magnitude of differences between the key motivating factors for different age groups, it can be deciphered that teens and the working class pay the highest importance to health consciousness (61 per cent) followed by quality (18 per cent), environmental concerns (14 per cent) and trends (6 per cent). The age group 60 and above solely emphasizes on quality of organic products while making decisions. This reflects that the age group 15-59 is flexible in its approach toward organic products.

Figure 6.6: Major Motivating Factors for Various Age Groups

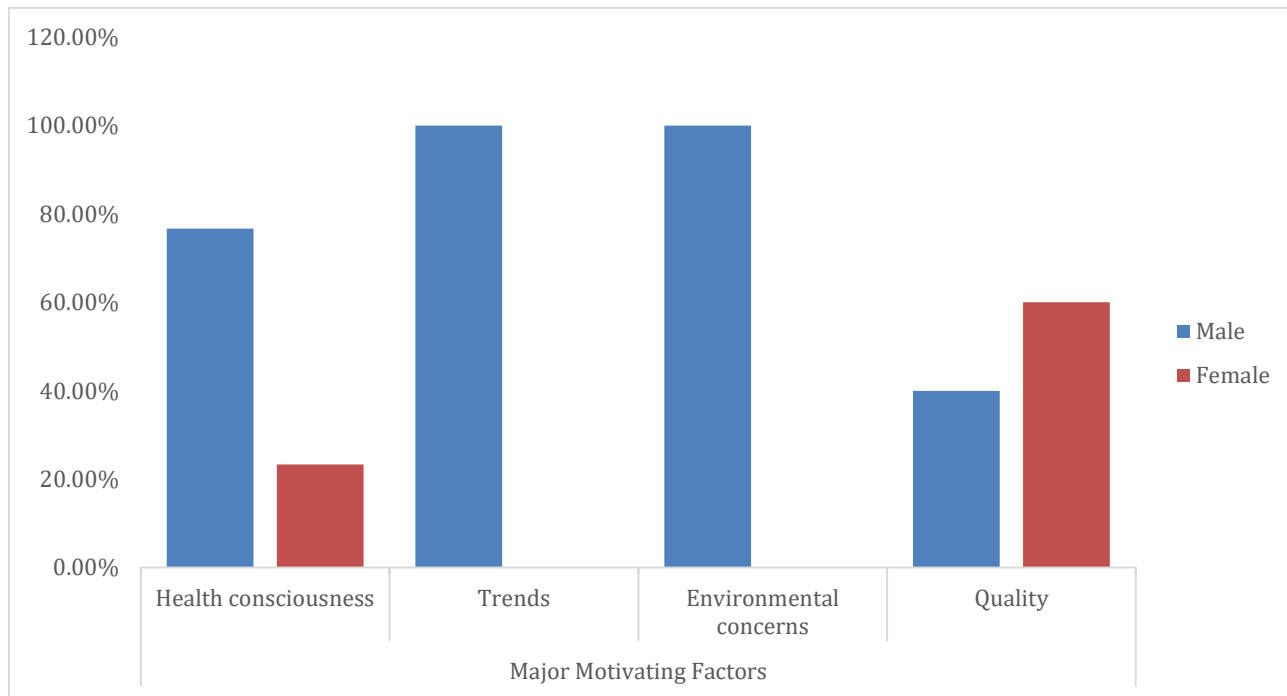


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

### 6.2.2 Gender

The pivotal motivating influence for investment in organic products is health consciousness for males and females alike. Health consciousness (62 per cent) is followed by environmental concerns (19 per cent), quality (11 per cent) and trends (8 per cent). It can be interpreted that females lay importance on solely two factors – health consciousness (54 per cent) and quality (46 per cent) – when it comes to the purchase of organic products.

Figure 6.7: Major Motivating Factors Across Genders



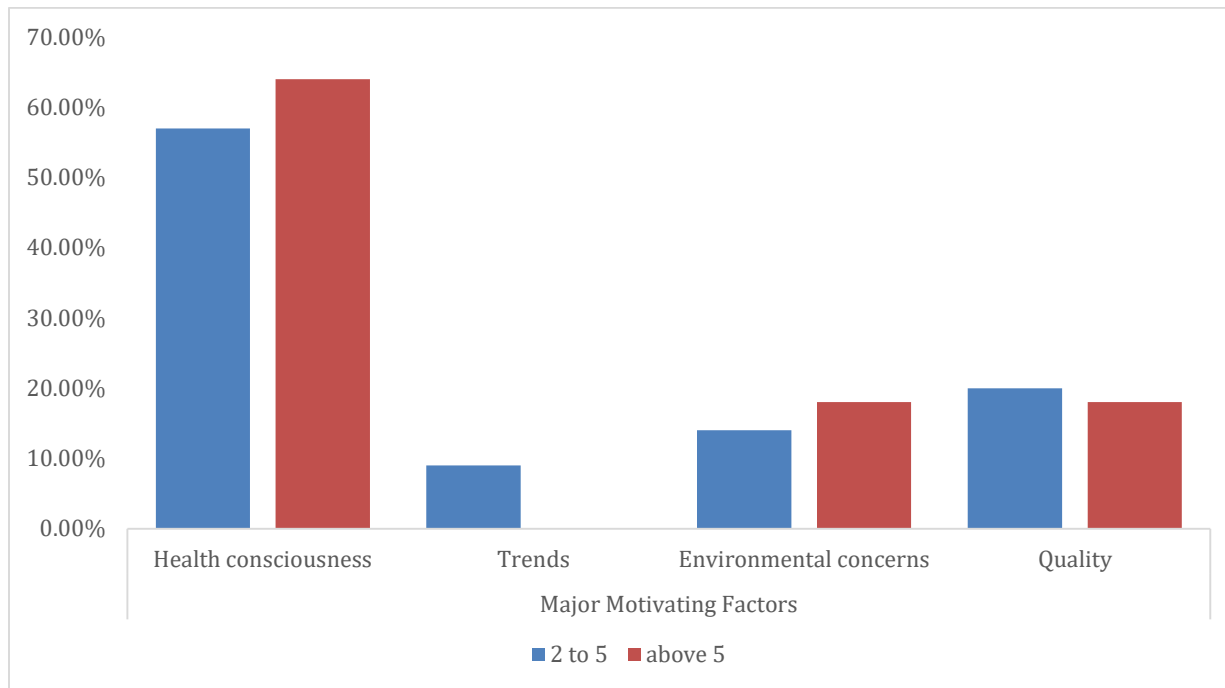
Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023



### 6.2.3 Size of the Household

When the relationship between family size and motivating factors is studied, it can be seen that health consciousness is prioritized irrespective of family size. This is followed by small & mid-sized families prioritizing quality, environmental concerns and trends. Large families are oblivious to trends concerning organic products purchase.

Figure 6.8: Major Motivating Factors for Different Family Sizes

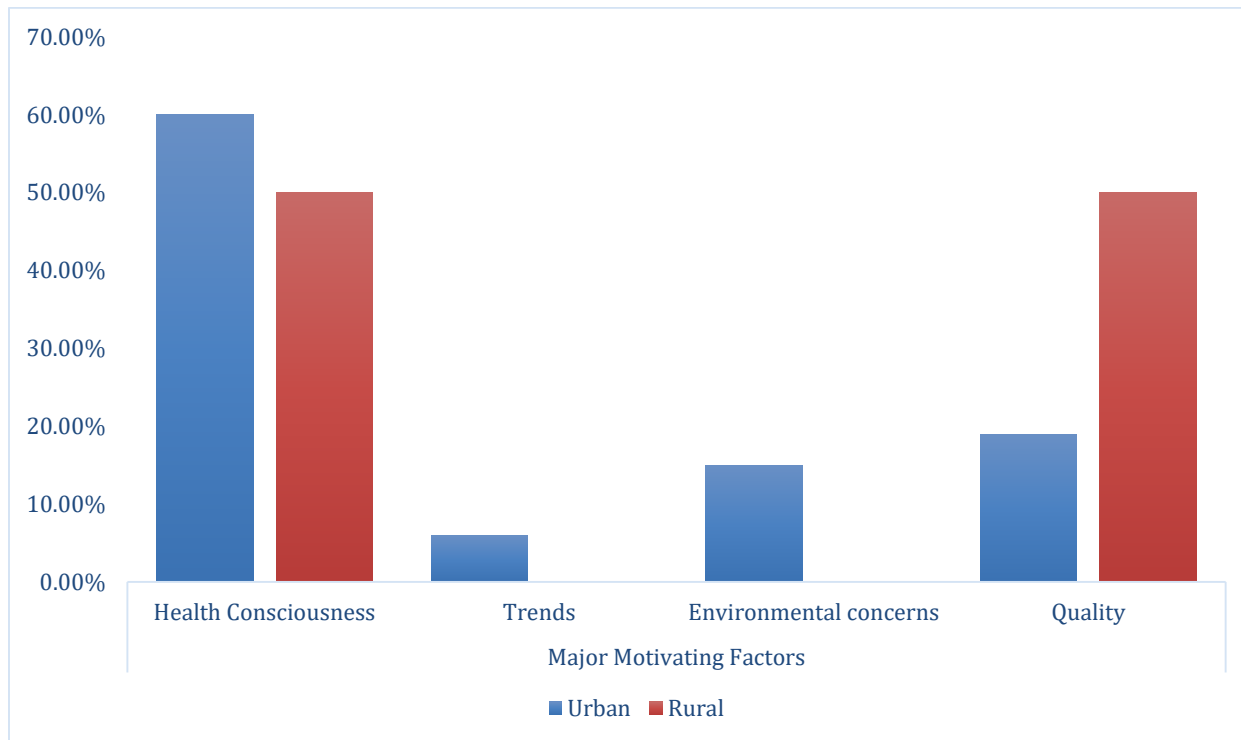


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

#### 6.2.4 Place of Residence

By analyzing the differences between influences that motivate consumers based in rural and urban areas, it is construed that while respondents in rural areas equally emphasize health consciousness and quality as essential factors, respondents in urban areas place the highest importance on health consciousness (60 per cent) followed by quality (19 per cent), environmental concerns (15 per cent), and trends (6 per cent).

Figure 6.9: Major Motivating Factors Based on Place of Residence

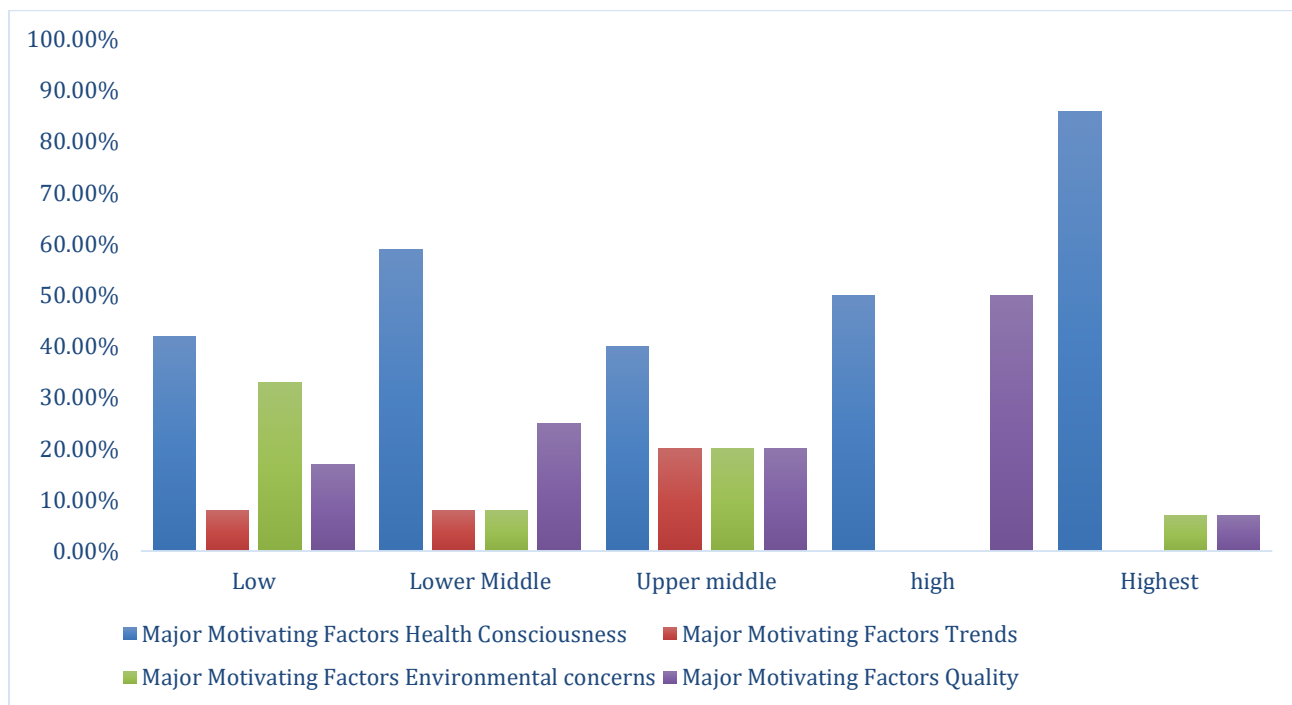


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

### 6.2.5 Income Groups

Findings from the cross-study between income groups and motivating factors suggest that each income group places health consciousness superior to other factors. Consumers from the highest income group give it the highest importance among other groups with 86 per cent of respondents making it the crux conducive to the purchase of organic products. Among other income groups, the second highest importance is given to the promising superior quality of organic products which is 50 per cent in high-income groups and 25 per cent and 20 per cent in lower middle and upper middle-income groups.

Figure 6.10: Major Motivating Factors for Various Income Groups

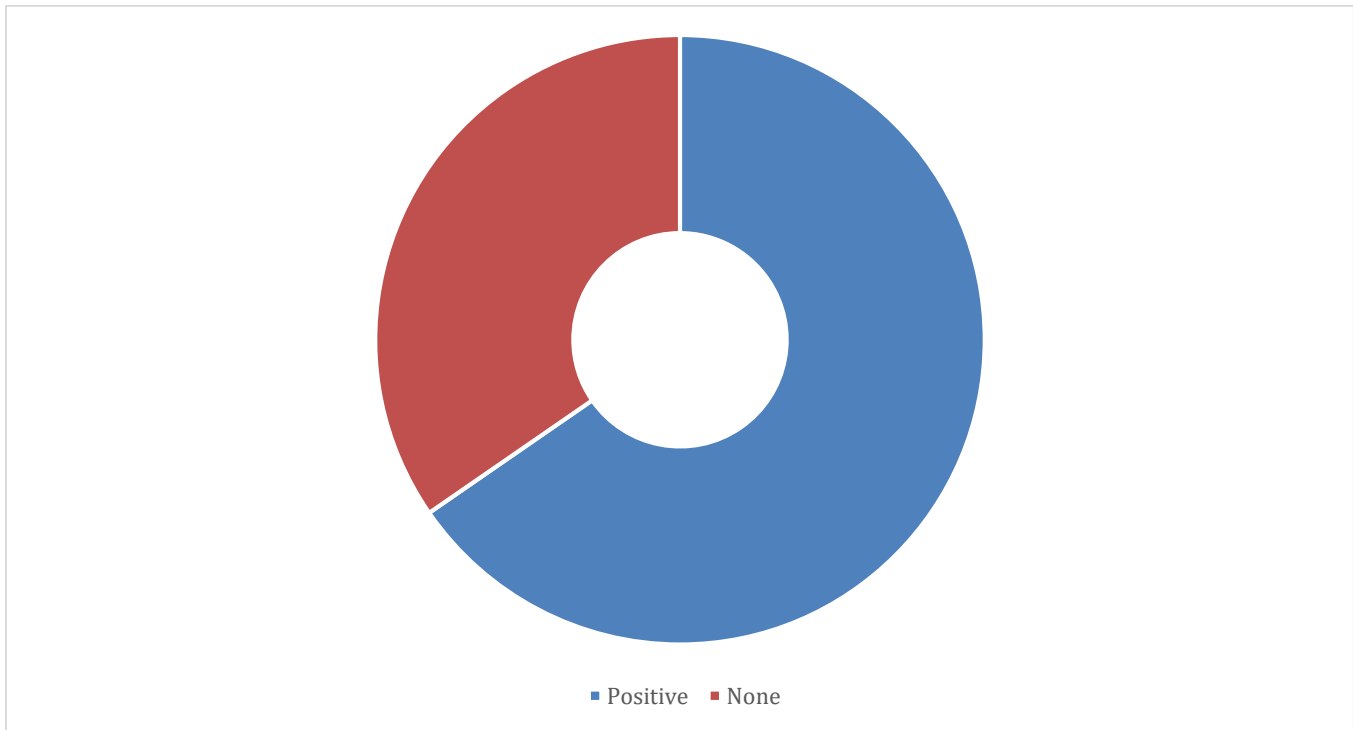


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

### 6.3 Impact of COVID-19 on Consumer Choices

Upon analysing the data impacts of COVID-19 it can be observed that 65.38 per cent of respondents experienced a positive impact of the pandemic on their purchase of organic food products. Organically produced commodities have been given more prominence due to rising consciousness about healthcare. Contrary to this response, 34.61 per cent of respondents reported that COVID-19 didn't impact their organic food choices at all.

Figure 6.11: Impact of COVID-19 on Purchasing Behaviour toward Organic Product

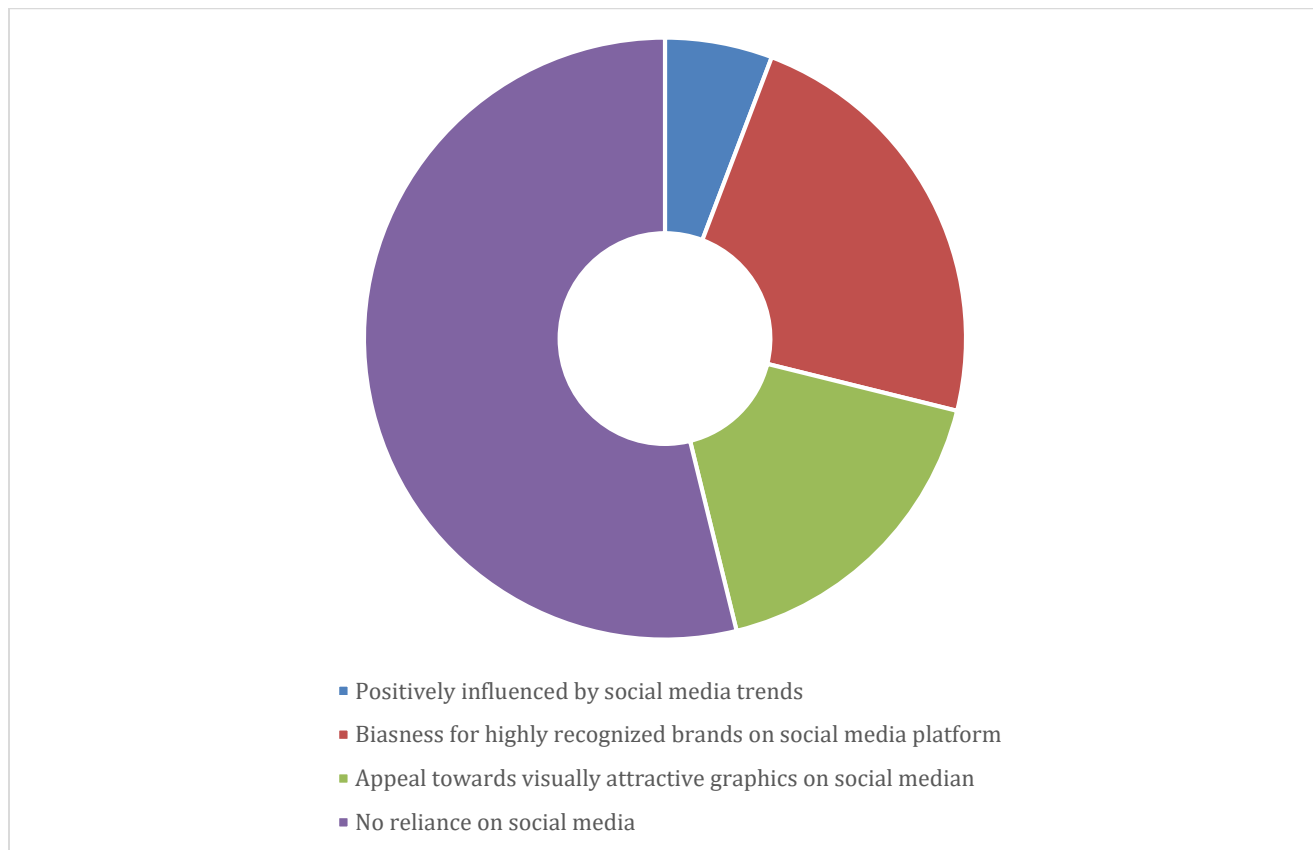


Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

#### 6.4 Impact of Social Media on Consumer Choices

Findings from the relationship between social media and organic products purchase reflect that the majority of respondents (68 per cent) do not rely on social media to navigate their commodity preferences. Only 4 per cent of the respondents affirmatively absorbed the influence of social media trends to navigate their consumption of organic products. Moreover, 16 per cent of the people admitted to being biased toward brands with a higher recognition on social media followed by 12 per cent of people who find appealing graphics to portray an organic brand's credibility. This data suggests that even though the majority of consumers of organically produced goods do not get influenced by social media, the impact of social media is gradually spiralling upwards.

Figure 6.12: Social Media's Impact on the Purchase of Organic Products



Source: Field Survey, 2022-2023

## 7. Conflict of Interest – None

## 8. Conclusion

It can be identified from the rudimental cues that millennials and Gen-Z exhibit fervent integration of healthy lifestyles and organic consumption. The quality of the products and constituents of the same are key factors conducive to consumption. It can be ascertained that contagions (like COVID-19) nudge people toward embracing holistic lifestyles. Generally, the gender of the person doesn't reflect the choice of consumption, establishing that people, irrespective of their gender, are enthusiastic consumers of organically grown healthier alternatives. In addition to this, affluence, emoluments and allocation of monetary resources are central to the decision of consumption. These are the inevitable binding factors that navigate consumer preference.

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