

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR AND ORGANIC FOOD INDUSTRY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CHANGING PROSPECTIVE & CONSUMPTION PATTERN

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ABSTRACT

Organic agriculture has evolved from a green movement in India since 1990. The result of second green revolution can be seen in the form of organic food productivity. The organic food products offer profitable business opportunities because they give higher price in the domestic as well as export markets as a premium price. A number of Indian companies have ventured into the organic food business, supplying organic food in India as well as abroad. The Government of India is keen to involve the private sector in organic food business, and is trying to come up with supporting regulations. Indian organic food market is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of over 25 % till 2020. India has come a long way from opportunities offered by organic agriculture to exploring the true potential in today's world. Collective efforts of farmers, NGO networks, government policies, and market forces have brought organic agriculture to prominent stage in Indian agriculture. So the lot of efforts is being done by farmers to meet the requirements of organic and to adopt the organic farming in practice, although, it helped to a great extent to achieve the target of food security to protect the soil health. The major reasons of inclination of consumers towards the organic food include growing awareness about environmental protection and sustainable agricultural practices will be adopted in future. It reduces the adverse impact of chemicals in soil, environment and human health. The organic food products offer profitable business and they can make opportunities to get higher price v/s conventional food product in the domestic as well as export markets. The organic food movement is undergoing a revolution. The food industry is facing greater rise in the number of women entrepreneurs who are not only doing organic farming, but making their voices heard about issues related to the foods we eat. We should look forward for future growth and encouragement established by a woman scientist and women entrepreneur. Some of the rising stars of the organic food movement are the ones who have raised awareness of the organic, either by producing the organic or by their greater involvement in encouragement to use the organic. Basically they are building a platform to speak from or by using their existing platform to educate others about the organic food. "We are what we consume".

KEYWORDS: *Organic Farming, Organic Food, Agricultural Revolution, Women Entrepreneurship.*

Introduction

The organic food business industry in India is not a new phenomenon. Some companies such as Chamong Tee Exports Pvt Ltd. Started their business in the conventional food and now they diversified into organic food production business back in 1970s and the 1980s when they realized the consumer's preference for organic food in domestic markets, the premium price for organic food products increased. A number of companies have entered the organic business who deals only in organic products with their own brand name, such as:

- Navdanya,
- Sresta Natural Bio products Private Limited,

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- Bio-Diverse Farming Private Limited
- Fabindia,
- Godrej Nature's Basket(retail chains)
- Spencer's Retail (retail chains)

The main motive of organic companies is to provide people with healthy and nutritious food and maintaining the biodiversity. One more and specific segment, where organic industry is getting more attention and growing very fast due to women leadership in the segment, called "personal care industry". The active participation of women in this segment shows the positive growth of organic cosmetics. Organic cosmetics products are manufactured from ingredients extracted from plants, herbs and flowers under eco-friendly conditions. Indian environment is suitable for cultivation of the unique herbs and flowers which are used to produce the cosmetic formulations. Natural ingredients have been a part of the beauty of Indian women since long. Many brands both Indian and International have realized the true potential of ancient organic ingredients. They are producing products based on these natural organic ingredients for better skin & hair care. These products are priced at least 40% premium and packed in unique attractive packaging. These products are targeted towards the working women who have disposable income. Some of the ingredients used cannot be cultivated and have to be collected from the forests the aggregators play a significant role in procuring them. Currently there are very few manufacturers of organic personal care products in India. Some of them are

- forest essentials,
- Fab India,
- Soul tree (cosmetics)
- Biotiques,
- Patanjali
- Bio fresh
- Eco fresh. etc

Looking on the current market trends and consumer preferences we can anticipate a futuristic market for organic products in India. As the purchasing power and awareness level of consumers affects the overall demand of organic products. This will lead to increased market competition to larger retailers and wholesalers who seeking to expand their product ranges. Implementing a regulatory framework like USDA-Organic, which has strict instructions to be followed helps to maintain standardized domestic organic market in India. This will not only help to build the consumers positive perception towards the products but also create a conducive industry with premium pricing .it will further boost the interest of the companies to indulge in this sector. Consumption has a strong effect on individuals as well as on families; it becomes part of our identities. In this new era customers want to identify themselves as health conscious and environmental friendly. Organic products are perfect fit to such a world of consumers. It is a healthier and pro-environment solution in a current world of pollution and adulteration. It counteracts agriculture problems by restoring soil health, enhancing human health and minimizing negative impacts on the environment. This new found awareness among the customers to shift from conventional to organic products. Currently India produces organic products worth Rs. 11,000 Cr out of which unfortunately only half are branded and marketed (Rs. 6,000 Cr). Domestic branded market accounts for Rs. 1000 Cr whereas the international markets make for rest Rs. 5,000 Cr. Food and cosmetic ingredient market are major contenders of the organic sector. Indian organic food market can be broadly classified as:

- Cereals (major profit margins)
- pulses,
- plantation crops,
- oil seeds (contribute the lion's share of production)
- spices,
- Fruits and vegetables.

The Indian organic food market in India is highly unorganized. Almost half of the produce is sold uncertified which doesn't fetch premium pricing and the other half (branded market) is facing difficulties due to lack of suppliers due to adding significant demand supply gap which raises the price gap. India has the highest number of organic producers in the world (about 6 lakh) but this mainly due to small land holdings .to remove this gap of demand and supply the organic ratilers have adopted the backward

integration policy. This policy helps them to ensure good quality, guaranteed quantity as well cost control. In the market distribution channels connect the organic food producers to the metro cities such as Delhi, Pune, Bangalore, Mumbai and Hyderabad, Chennai etc .and brands (retail outlets) such as Big Bazar, Spencer, More and Easy Day, ITC Foods, Reliance, Fab India, Godrej Agrovet and Organic India etc. Agriculture and organic farming are the prime sectors in India . For the study purpose we have distributed the study in following sections:

Agriculture Sector in India

Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy. According to Agricultural Census of India 61.5% of the 1300 million Indian populations is rural and dependent on agriculture as their principal means of livelihood (2011). The number of farming households is 159.6 million. Total agricultural exports from India grew at a CAGR of 16.45 % over FY10-18 to reach US\$ 38.21 billion in FY18. The contribution of agriculture to total export was 12.26 % in FY17. Tea exports from India reached a 36 year high of 240.68 million kilograms in CY 2017. The total volume of organic produce export during 2017-18 was 4.58 lakh MT. The organic food export realization was around INR 3453.48 crore (515.44 million USD)(2017-2018). In terms of export composition Oilseeds (47.6%) leads, followed by Cereals and millets (10.4%), Plantation crop products such as Tea and Coffee (8.96%), Dry fruits (8.88%), Spices and condiments (7.76%) and others .Organic products are exported to USA, European Union, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Israel, South Korea, Vietnam, New Zealand, Japan etc.

Origin, Status and Scope of Organic Farming in India

"Organic farming is completely holistic agricultural system which promotes and enhances the health of agro products. This production system includes biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity and uses the same methods to fulfill requirements of organic products. In this type of farming various techniques are used such as inter-cropping, mulching, and integration of crops and livestock - are practiced under various agricultural systems. All synthetic inputs are prohibited, and "soil building" crop rotations are mandatory that makes the organic agriculture effective under the various agriculture system .organic farming reduces or eliminates soil and water pollution and helps conserve water and soil on agricultural lands. Organic farming is one of superior approach to sustainable agriculture. Generally farmers are experiencing the loss due to synthetic inputs and pesticides because of the common problem of fertility and it takes time to restore the ecosystem to the point where organic production is possible.

Objectives of Organic Farming

Organic agriculture avoids the use of pesticides which can leave harmful residues in the environment. Beneficial plant life such as host plants for useful insects may also be destroyed by pesticides. Soil cultivation carried out frequently when it is necessary. The aims for organic farming are-

- Conserving environment and natural resources.
- Re-establishing ecological balance.
- Encouraging sustainable agriculture.
- Improving soil fertility.
- Conserving flora and fauna.
- Increasing genetic diversity.
- Putting an end to chemical pollution and toxic residues.
- Adopted to Increase genetic diversity.
- Adopted to promote more usage of natural pesticides.
- Adopted to ensure the right soil cultivation at the right time.
- Adopted to Keep and build good soil structure and fertility.
- Adopted to Control pests, diseases and weeds.

Types of Organic Farming

Pure organic farming Integrated organic farming

- It involves the use of organic manures and allowed pesticides.
- It avoids inorganic chemicals and harmful pesticides.
- It involves nutrition management
- It involve pest management.
- It involves crop development from natural resources which have great nutritive value and protect from the pests.

Techniques of Organic Farming

- Crop Rotation
- Green Manure
- Biological Pest Control
- Compost

It is the technique to grow various kinds of crops in the same area, according to the different seasons, in a sequential manner. It refers to the dying plants that are uprooted and turned into the soil to make them act as a nutrient for the soil to increase its quality. With this method, living organisms are used to control pests with or without the use of chemicals. Highly rich in nutrients, it is a recycled organic matter used as a fertilizer in the agricultural farms.

Research Methodology

- **Objectives of the Study**
 - To know about the organic food industry in India
 - To know the reason behind the inclination of consumers towards the organic food
 - To study the role of women entrepreneurs in organic food industry and their perception towards the use of organic food
 - To analyze the involvement of women entrepreneur to the industry and their achievements
 - To give suggestions and recommendation based on analysis.
- **Research Methods**
 - Research design has been taken descriptive and analytical for describing the consumer's perceptions and their inclination towards the organic food. It concerned with the role of women entrepreneurs role in this industry and their awareness to the organic food. It gives the positive prospects of the industry for the future with facts & figures and various examples related to organic industry.
 - The study is mainly based on the information and data obtained from the secondary sources. Secondary sources included published materials, government documents, information from various websites of organic food, website, various reports & surveys, seminars paper discussion with the various senior officials and experts in the field.

Review of Literature

- The latest budget the government has launched two schemes- the 'Pamparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana' which aims to bring 5 lakh acres under organic farming over a period of 3 years and organic value chain development in NE region, under this the focus is on value addition to the organic produce grown in the region. A sum total of Rs. 412 Cr is made available for these schemes. A major incentive of organic farming is that it is not only a greener option but also good for business. It not only fetches premium pricing for the retailers but also is advantageous to the farmers.
- A study on Economics of organic farming v/s chemical farming for three crops like paddy, redgram and groundnut in Andhra Pradesh (Sudheer, 2013) says that organic farmers of these three crops are earning more profit compare to conventional farmers of these crops. This premium is encouraging farmers to adopt the practice of organic farming but challenges that are hampering this transition are lack of knowledge, unavailability of planting material and bio pesticides, high certification costs and high risk of low yield for conversion period.

The organic food movement is the result of second green revolution and now it is health revolution in which it is undergoing. The food supply industry is seeing a rise in the number of women who are not only farming, but making their voices heard about issues related to the foods we eat. The popularity of the organic food movement is going very high due to changing perceptions of consumers and women entrepreneurs. We should look forward for future growth and encouragement, established by a woman scientist and women entrepreneur. Some of the rising stars of the organic food movement are the ones who have raised awareness of the topic, either by building a platform to speak from or by using their existing platform to educate others. These women entrepreneur are playing the more active role in organic food encouragement are as follows:

- **Monica Eaton-Cardone**

She is a health expert and influential business leader, she says it's women who represent the largest section of consumer spending, and yet, the majority of people making decisions in merchant companies are men." Eaton-Cardone says that women can give the faster solution of the problem with superb decision making skills.

- **Clare Leschin-Hoar**

Clare Leschin-Hoar has written on the environment, food, and health. Being a national writer, speaker and moderator, she has given the answer of toughest food questions i.e. Antibiotics in food production, food waste, and regulations for food suppliers. Her publications can be seen as "The Guardian, Scientific American, and Time".

- **Carey Gillam**

She was very interested to answer the questions relating to organic farming. She was very fair and clear in his perception regarding the farming practices and generally avoids the ambiguity in the answers. Her work was inspirational and can be seen as C-Span and in the Washington Journal, to name a few.

Melanie Warner (Author of Pandora's Lunchbox: How Processed Food took Over the American Meal)

Melanie Warner is a freelance reporter for the New York Times. Her career as a food science writer began with the question related to cheese existence over the year she investigated inner workings of the food industry. Her research was the big contribution to processed food industry and to bring back to "real food."

Vani Hari

According to Time Magazine, Vani Hari (author of The Food Babe) is one of the most influential. Food activist: Her contribution was started with his own food scarce he has faced and when he started to work over it he found lot of people was agreed with him.

Analysis and Explanation

Historically, the food industry has operated largely unchecked, even as the idea of conventional food merged into food science. If you truly are "what you eat", these women entrepreneurs are making sure what exactly we are becoming.

Box 1: Nature way Organic Fresh

Dr. Haimanti Dhir is a scientist engaged in extensive research in the areas of pesticide use and heavy metal poisoning. She established Natureway Organic Fresh in the year 2006 in order to keep alive the biodiversity, and provide people with healthy and nutritious food. She started organic farming on a two-acre plot of land give to her by a friend in Barasat, West Bengal. Natureway Organic Fresh's farmers are spread across North Bengal (Darjeeling and Jalapiguri), Barasat, Kirshnanagar and Naihati in West Bengal. The company is in the process of acquiring an organic farm in Jhargram, West Bengal, and is also trying to source produce from neighbouring countries such as Bhutan, and Indian states such as Odisha. Today, Naturanna Organic, the brand of Nature way Organic Fresh, is a pioneer in organic food business, and provides certified organic fruits and vegetables to institutions, hospitals, super markets, and hotels, among others. The company is certified by the third-party certification body, ECOCERT. In spite of not exporting or planning to export in the near future, Dr. Dhir is in favour of third-party certification of organic food products as it signals authenticity of the product. Dr. Dhir worked closely with farmers by training them and sharing knowledge about organic farming practices. In the first year, the farms did not yield the desired results. But in the subsequent years, the yield improved, and gradually she worked with the farmers to grow over forty-five varieties of fruits and vegetables. By working with farmers, she realized that yield loss can be minimized through multi cropping and by adopting holistic agriculture practices.

Box 2: Spice Root Limited

Spice Root Limited was set up by Indian entrepreneur Devyani Sharma in the UK. Spice Root Limited sells organic, wholesome, and clean certified organic ingredients in the UK. Settled in the UK, Ms. Sharma used her existing expertise and contacts in Ayurveda and diversified her product line into organic by developing the "Spice Root" brand. She realized that there was demand for organic and wholesome products in the UK, and there was potential to set up a spice supply chain from India to the UK. The

company is a pioneer in associating spices with health benefits and making the concept popular in the UK, where consumers are generally very health conscious. The company has established a supply chain in India that sources from states across India. Vedic Agrotech Private Limited (Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh), which is part of Ms. Sharma's family business, is trying to establish a certified organic supply chain. The production and processing of organic spices are done in India and exported to the UK under the "Spice Root" brand name. Spice Root Limited is able to do its own quality checks in India by sending samples for independent laboratory testing to ensure that the products are up to the UK/EU standards. As a next step, the company plans to expand its presence in the UK and the EU and diversify the product range.

Box 3: Kavita Mukhi- Go Organic

Organic food is eco-nutritionist Kavita Mukhi's passion. she moved on from Conscious Food years back, she put her energies into setting up the farmer's market. She started this market to help our farmers get their due. The response has been good if not overwhelming. People who come to visit this market are those who truly believe in organic. It is not easy for farmers in India to get organic certification for their produce especially when standards for hygiene maintenance and transportation are high and when there is copious paperwork involved. There are many certification agencies that label organic produce. Go organic is labeled with the EcoCert, (an international agency that certifies organic products). The farmers harvest and transport the produce to the city at their own expense while the market provides them with the space to sell. Prices are set depending on the farming labor, costs and a fair return.

Box 4: Nutritionist Ishi Khosla.

Nutritionist Ishi Khosla is the founder and director of Whole Foods. Growing food organically doesn't alter the nutritional content but avoids the synthetic pesticide residues. She believes that change in the attitude of people towards health can only take place with government intervention, changes in policy. these changes will promote the consumption of healthy food. The market for organic products is growing rapidly and although organic food cost 10 to 15 %more than the conventional food items priced in comparison with higher demand and consumption of organic products

Box 5: Reetha Balsavar

Reetha Balsavar, director of Navdanya, has seen the change in consumer patterns and vouches for the growing popularity of all things organic. But as the director of Navdanya, a 3.5 year old store in Andheri, Mumbai, she has seen the change in consumer patterns and vouches for the growing popularity of all things organic. There may be four types of consumers first, who want to start their children on an organic diet, the second are people who have had a taste of the organic lifestyle while living abroad and want to continue with the same trend; the third category consists of people who have been a family member affected by serious health issues like diabetes or cardiovascular disease, and the fourth are those who are already eco conscious and believe in eco-friendly life.

Box 7: Urvashi Mody

Urvashi Mody, partner of Eco Corner Mumbai, a store that encourages living a healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle. Despite the knowledge of organic food people are using conventional food, the main reason behind it may be the higher prices of these products. Partner of Eco Corner Mumbai, a store which encourages living a healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle. Although organic products are available for a premium prices, the current environmental climate consciousness is leading more and more people to use the organic. It is the mission to place organic product range within the reach of every eco-conscious citizen of India. The good news is that there is large scale awareness is available and first comers are also interested to get knowledge about the organic food. Why these food products are important to us and why it is necessary to adopt an organic lifestyle." Home accessories, aroma products, natural bath and body products, jute handbags and exclusive handmade stationary etc organic products are available in the market.

Conclusion

- The inclination of the consumers towards the organic food industry is for the better health, trust & safety.
- The Consumer's awareness affects the demand of organic food products.
- The income shows the positive effects on customers' purchasing power of Organic Food Products. Higher income group can purchase the organic products easily.

- Organic food buyers were more concerned with pesticides residues, additives and preservatives than non-buyers.
- Consumers of organic food appreciate the quality of the organic food and perceived them to be better in taste, quality, health and nutrition.
- Psychological and demographic characteristics more important to organic consumers than socio-economic factors. Increasing awareness towards nutritious, tasty and healthy food and changing lifestyle are surging the demand for organic food, particularly across the metro cities such as Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Gurgaon, Bengaluru and Pune.
- Key factors affecting consumer preferences were freshness, healthiness, flavor, nutrition, safety, appearance, price, environmental effect, certification, where it is grown, and brand.
- Attributes that are very desirable or extremely desirable to consumers included fresh looking, fresh tasting, high quality, seedless, good value, reasonably priced, healthy formed, high in nutrition, looks sweet, free of insects, sale priced, and free of pesticides.
- Food safety was most important for consumers of meat. Purchasers of organic meat also believed it is superior in terms of quality, safety, labeling, production methods and value.
- Women entrepreneurs are the main source of innovation as they are the finest selection for any change in country. Their suggestions of transformation from conventional farming to organic farming are very effective.
- These women entrepreneur has started the organic farming practices in country as well as the working man. The inclination of consumers towards organic food is the result of their innovational practices in agriculture sector.
- The involvement of women entrepreneur in organic agriculture or in organic products can be seen on the basis of their contribution towards industry.
- Women entrepreneurs are changing the perception of country for using the organic food products due to health prospects also. Health is the prime factor of human being and now they are willing to protect themselves from dangerous diseases by using chemical free organic food products.

Role of Government

The Government of India is keen to promote organic sector in India and help the industry develop organic business. This is evident from the various policy initiatives taken by the central government and state government of states such as Karnataka, Gujarat and Sikkim, to name a few. States such as Gujarat, Sikkim and Karnataka have their own third-party certification bodies to certify organic products while states such as Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka have come up with their state organic policies. Many other states such as:

- West Bengal strongly encourages adoption of organic farming practices through PGS-India, in spite of not having a state policy.
- Sikkim has been declared 100% organic state in 2016.
- The Karnataka state government has also encouraged marketing of organic products by engaging farmer organizations and conducting national trade fairs. An example of such an event is the "Organics and Millets 2018 International Trade Fair" which will take place in Bengaluru, Karnataka in January 2018.

There are multiple government agencies and ministries coming up with fragmented organic policies for the domestic market and for exports. In order to present holistic organic regulations and vision, it is necessary for the departments to work together to avoid confusion, especially on the part of the companies which are catering to the domestic as well as the export market. There are few subsidies provided in the organic sector, which mostly relate to PGS certification and PKVY schemes. In order to reduce risks associated with land conversion, yield losses and market access, the government should provide subsidies to the farmers which can include yield-based subsidies (as in the case of countries such as the UK) to cover up for the yield losses during the conversion period, input subsidies (for construction of poly houses, vermi composting pits, etc.), and subsidies on the cost of third-party certification, which is necessary for exports. In India, only NPOP-certified farmers are allowed to export organic products. PGS certified products can be imported into India, and but Indian farmers who are PGS certified cannot export. Since there are countries such as Malaysia and Brazil, which recognize PGS

certification for organic products, the government can create policies which would allow PGS certified farmers to export to these countries. This would widen the markets for the farmers and help them fetch good prices for their produce.

Suggestions

The government may take initiatives to identify and map organic agricultural clusters and promote them, which will help develop agro-processing hubs and supply chain infrastructure around these clusters. Initiatives taken by some states to create farmers producers association for product marketing has helped both farmers and producers. Similar initiatives may be taken by other states. State governments may work closely with the industry to promote organic and nutritious food in school and college canteens, workplaces and other institutions. Specific support can be provided to the organic clusters in hilly and tribal areas to help them to link to the market and reduce the logistics cost and transportation time. Besides the existing measures taken by various state governments, there should be more efforts in areas of identification of state specific crops which can be cultivated with chemical inputs, standardization of inputs quality and helping farmers to access the right inputs, providing farmers with a guide on pest control specific to the state etc. Such guides can be developed by state agriculture universities. Further, states can help farmers through knowledge sharing and training in partnership

Key Findings

Most of the Indian companies entered the organic food business in the past decade but there are some who have been in the conventional food business for a long time (for example, Chamong). While companies catering to the domestic market sell both fresh and processed organic food products, those involved in export are mainly engaged in semi-processed and processed food products such as tea, rice and spices. Exports of fresh organic produce are limited. Companies in the UK export products such as organic chocolates, or certain variety of teas such as moringa tea, tea with herbal infusions (ginger, lemongrass, etc.), among others, to India.

Reasons for Entering into Organic Business: The Survey in India

The Indian entrepreneurs were asked why they entered the organic food business. The reasons they gave included a passion for protecting the environment, and the desire to ensure that future generations have access to good quality food and remain healthy. There were some entrepreneurs who referred to themselves as social and environment activists who are trying to develop a market for farmers and helping them in conserving their land and earn a better living.

To conclude, the organic business in India is booming and is projected to expand even more by the year 2020. However, in order to develop the industry and encourage entrepreneurs (both Indian and foreign) to invest in the sector, there are business risks which have to be mitigated through collaboration between the industry and government, and through right policies and close coordination across different government agencies looking after domestic as well as export market. The government policy should be holistic to not only enable the sector to grow but also to create employment and help farmers realize better incomes for their produce. Lack of effective regulation which can differentiate the spurious products that brand themselves as organic from the authentic is another major issue. As on date there are no regulations to govern the authenticity of the organic products in the domestic market. Only Organic products exported from India are marked with the India Organic certification mark issued by APEDA. Some of the Indian companies do adhere to these standards while catering to the domestic markets but the fact that these are voluntary standards is a huge setback.

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