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Study on consumer's perception towards organic product (Jaggery) in Patna, Bihar

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Abstract

This study investigates consumer perceptions towards organic jaggery in Patna, Bihar, focusing on their socio-economic profiles, awareness levels, and consumption habits. A total of 100 respondents were surveyed from 12 villages in Patna, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study reveals that 35% of respondents are aware of organic jaggery and prefer it due to its health benefits, such as higher mineral content, improved digestion, and absence of harmful chemicals. However, key challenges in promoting organic jaggery include its higher price (₹80-100 per kg compared to ₹50-60 per kg for conventional jaggery), limited availability in rural areas, and a lack of consumer awareness, particularly in less urbanized regions. The study employed the Garrett Ranking method, which identified high production costs as the primary constraint, followed by low market availability and insufficient marketing efforts. To overcome these challenges, the study suggests strategies such as increasing awareness through targeted campaigns, expanding distribution channels, and providing subsidies to reduce costs. The findings highlight the potential for organic jaggery to become a staple in Patna's market, but substantial efforts are needed to make it more accessible and affordable, thus contributing to better health outcomes and sustainable agriculture in the region.

Keywords: Organic Jaggery, Consumer Perception, Marketing Constraints, Organic Product, Patna

Introduction

The demand for organic products has witnessed a steady surge globally in recent years. Driven by growing concerns about health, sustainability, and environmental impacts, consumers are increasingly favoring products that are free from harmful chemicals and synthetic additives. Organic agriculture offers a solution by producing food in a way that maintains ecological balance, conserves biodiversity, and avoids the use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. Organic jaggery is produced without the use of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, or chemicals, making it an appealing option for those seeking healthier alternatives. The production process of organic jaggery is rooted in ancient traditions, where local farmers rely on natural methods to cultivate sugarcane and produce jaggery. By adhering to organic farming principles, organic jaggery aims to offer a product that is not only free from harmful chemicals but also produced in a sustainable manner that benefits the environment. The increasing demand for organic food products in urban centers, especially among the middle class, has given rise to a niche market for organic jaggery in India. Organic jaggery is gaining popularity due to its health benefits and chemical-free processing. In urban centers like Patna, increasing health awareness and demand for sustainable foods make organic jaggery a viable market opportunity. However, the growth of this niche product is hampered by various constraints like lack of awareness, high cost, and limited distribution. This study explores the socio-economic characteristics of consumers, their perceptions toward organic jaggery, and the factors that facilitate or hinder its consumption.

Research Methodology: The study was conducted in Patna District, Bihar, an area with a growing market for organic products, where urban consumers were increasingly interested in healthier and eco-friendly food choices. A total of 100 consumers were randomly selected. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire focusing on income, education, perception, and buying behavior. Secondary data were collected from journals, government publications, and online sources.

Analytical Tools Used

- Percentage analysis
- Likert scale
- Garrett's Ranking Technique

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

Particular	Category	Frequency (n = 100)	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)	18–30	35	35%
	31–50	42	42%
	Above 50	23	23%
Gender	Male	60	60%
	Female	40	40%
Education	Illiterate	5	5%
	Primary	12	12%
	Secondary	38	38%
	Graduate & Above	45	45%
Monthly Income	Below ₹10,000	18	18%
	₹10,000–₹30,000	47	47%
	Above ₹30,000	35	35%

The study reveals that the majority of respondents belong to the age group of 31-50 years (42%), indicating that the primary consumers of organic jaggery are within this age range. This group is typically more health-conscious and likely to make informed decisions about food choices. A high percentage of respondents (45%) are graduates, and 38% have completed high school. This suggests that a large portion of consumers in Patna may have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the health benefits associated with organic products. 47% of respondents belong to the income range of ₹10,000–₹30,000, a key income group for urban markets like Patna. This segment has some disposable income but is still sensitive to price differences, especially for organic products.

Table 2: Consumer Perception Toward Organic Jaggery

Perception Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Organic jaggery is healthier than regular jaggery	85	10	5
Willing to pay more for organic jaggery	70	15	15
Organic jaggery is available in local markets	40	20	40
Packaging and labeling are satisfactory	60	25	15
Organic jaggery tastes better than regular jaggery	75	15	10
Prefer organic due to environmental reasons	58	22	20
Need more awareness about organic jaggery	90	5	5

Table 2 represents that significant majority (85%) of consumers believe organic jaggery is healthier than regular jaggery. With 70% agreeing to pay more for organic jaggery, it indicates strong consumer confidence in its benefits and perceived value. Only 40% feel that organic jaggery is available in local markets, revealing a potential gap in distribution and accessibility. 60% are content with the packaging and labeling, although a notable 25% remain

neutral, indicating room for improvement. 75% believe organic jaggery tastes better than regular jaggery. A remarkable 90% express the need for more awareness about organic jaggery, emphasizing an opportunity for education and marketing to further boost adoption.

Table 3: Constraints in Marketing of Organic Jaggery (Garrett Ranking Method)

Constraint	Garrett Score	Rank
High price of organic jaggery	76.4	1
Lack of consumer awareness	72.8	2
Limited availability in stores	67.2	3
Lack of trust in organic certification	60.3	4
Poor branding and advertising	55.1	5
Inconsistent quality or taste	49.7	6
Lack of government promotion and subsidies	45.2	7

Table 3 suggested that High production costs (76.4) were the biggest challenge for producers. Organic farming practices, while beneficial for the environment, increase the production cost of jaggery, which is then passed on to consumers. Lack of consumer awareness (72.8) continues to be a major barrier. Even if organic jaggery is available, many consumers are unaware of its benefits or the existence of the product. Limited availability (67.2) was another significant constraint. This indicates that consumers who are aware of organic jaggery may not always have access to it due to poor distribution networks and limited retail presence.

Conclusion

The research on consumer perception towards organic jaggery in Patna, Bihar, has provided significant insights into the growing demand for organic products, particularly organic jaggery, which is considered a healthier alternative to refined sugar. One of the key conclusions drawn from the study is that socio-economic factors such as income, education, and occupation play a critical role in determining consumers' willingness to purchase organic jaggery. Consumers with higher levels of education and income are more likely to be aware of the benefits of organic jaggery and are willing to pay the higher price associated with it. This suggests that organic jaggery is primarily a product for the upper-middle-class and affluent segments of Patna's population.

The high production costs of organic jaggery emerged as the most significant barrier to its widespread adoption, as highlighted by Garrett's ranking in the study. The cost of production for organic jaggery is higher due to the use of traditional farming methods, absence of chemical fertilizers, and the time-consuming nature of organic farming practices. The study identified that while many consumers were aware of the health benefits of organic jaggery, there was a lack of awareness about its superior quality compared to traditional jaggery. This indicates the need for targeted awareness campaigns to educate consumers about the nutritional advantages of organic jaggery. The organic jaggery market in Patna is at a pivotal stage. There is a strong demand for organic alternatives, but the market's expansion is hindered by price sensitivity, limited availability, and insufficient consumer awareness. Overcoming these barriers will require a concerted effort from producers, government bodies, and retailers.

Recommendations

1. **Awareness Programs:** Use social media, health camps, and school programs to educate consumers.
2. **Certification & Branding:** Ensure proper labeling and third-party organic certification to build trust.
3. **Retail Expansion:** Promote availability through supermarkets, organic outlets, and online platforms.
4. **Price Subsidies:** Collaborate with local cooperatives or FPOs to offer reasonable pricing.
5. **Quality Assurance:** Maintain consistent taste and texture through standard processing protocols.

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