**A DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF CONSUMERS PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS IN JAMMU REGION**

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**Abstract**

The market for Organic food has been increasing in the recent decade. Customers are becoming more aware about what products they are purchasing and consuming. This depends on various factors like quality of climate condition, increasing pollution, excessive use of chemicals etc. Therefore, Consumers these days are very much aware about the products they are consuming. And therefore the concept of organic food product come into picture. This concept is in demand in society especially after increase in health problems in individuals. So they prefer using such food product which are eco-friendly and safe. Though this concept is not new, but still consumers are not much aware about it. This purpose of this paper is to understand the demographic level of awareness about organic food products in Jammu. Statistical tools like Chi-square tests and various charts are used to gather the data obtained from a primary survey conducted in Jammu. From the demographic analysis done in the paper, it is concluded that the people have started consuming organic food lately, although more awareness should be created among consumers to make the consumption more popular.

**Keywords:** Demographic; Consumers; Organic Farming; Organic Food ; Pesticides.

**Introduction**

Organic foods are produced using methods that adhere to organic farming standards. These standards vary globally, but they generally focus on promoting resource cycling and biodiversity conservation. Regulatory organizations may restrict the use of specific pesticides and fertilizers in organic farming. Typically, organic foods are not processed with industrial solvents or synthetic additives. In a country like India, with a large population of small farmers using traditional farming practices and minimal agricultural inputs, organic cultivation is well suited. Approximately 65% of India’s cropped area is considered organic by default, as small farmers cannot afford chemical fertilizers and pesticides. NGOs and other organizations actively support and promote organic farming, leading to the emergence of an organic movement at various levels, including producer groups, certification bodies, processors, and traders. Disseminating information about the opportunities and challenges for Indian organic products in both domestic international markets is essential to sustain this progress.

Organic food production is a self-regulated industry, with some countries implementing government oversight. Notably, the European Union, the US, Canada, Japan, and several others mandate special certification based on government-defined standards for marketing food as organic within their borders. Foods labeled as organic under these regulations must comply with organic standards established by national governments and international organic industry trade organizations. `

**Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

Mythili & Dharshini (2020)observed that Consumers play a major role in studying the perception towards Organic food products segment. Tanishka & Sundari T (2021)observed that as with large number of organic food products campaigns, most of the consumers are aware of such products & prefer such products more than non-organic products. The reviewed literature also highlights the Rust & willingness to pay for organic food products. Kennedy (2020) found that organic market is the one of the fastest growing agricultural markets because consumers are more concerned about their own health, the environment, which ultimately leads to their trust towards these products. Ramalingam & Anuradha (2021) observed that consumers are becoming more health conscious due to the increasing health hazards. Selvam & Naseeba (2020) found that the consumer’s belief and perception and trust towards organic food products depict the strongest relationship with buyers’ intention to buy organic food and they also believe that consuming organic food product is contributing to preserve the environment. The reviewed study also highlight health consciousness & other factors Chandrashekhar (2021) conducted a study and in this study it has been observed that Consumer behavior and health consciousness plays a pivotal role in Organic food products segment. Waqas, Aslam, Chenhong (2019) seen that as with the advancement in economic activities, consumer enthusiasm for organic products has increased exponentially. Ghani, Adli, Saleeh (2021) observed that Organic food is in great demand among consumers because of its improved awareness of eating healthily. This study focuses on the components that may influence customers’ purchase intention towards organic food.

**Research Methodology**

The research is conceptual in nature as it examines the reasons why some consumers prefer organic food products and others do not. In this research, we can explore the relationship between consumers buying behavior and organic food products. Further, the present study also reveals the success of organic market as a corporate social responsibility.

To collect the requisite information, both primary and secondary sources of information have been used. Primary data has been collected using Questionnaire which is being sent to the 85 respondents from whom the responses of only 42 respondents have been gathered and Secondary sources viz. internet, articles and printed journals etc. have been used for reviewing the pertinent literature. The main purpose was to know the awareness, willingness and trust of consumers for the organic food products. Primary data has been collected from different locations of Jammu.

**Analysis And Findings**

Demographic Factors like age, gender, occupation and education are considered for demographic analysis.

**Analysis of demographic information**

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Groups** | **Percentage** |
| **Age** | |
| Between 15 – 25 years | 69% |
| Between 26 – 50 years | 31% |
| Between 50 – 70 years | - |
| Above 70 years | - |
| **Gender** | |
| Male | 23.8% |
| Female | 76.2% |
| **Occupation** | |
| Salaried | 33.3% |
| Self – employed | 7.2% |
| Business | 2.4% |
| Student and Others | 57.1% |
| **Education** | |
| Below 12th | 30 % |
| Graduation | 20.6% |
| Post Graduation | 20.4% |
| Uneducated | 29 % |

The first demographic factor is age. From the above data, it can be concluded that 69% of the respondents are under the age group of 15 – 25 years and 31% of the respondents are under the age group of 26 – 50 years.

The second demographic factor is gender. From the above data, it is seen that 23.8% of the respondents are males and 76.2% of the respondents are females.

The third demographic factor is Occupation. From the above data, it is seen that 33.3% respondents come under Salaried category, 57.1% respondents come under Student & others category, whereas 2.4% of the respondents come under the Business category & 7.2% respondents come under Self-employed category.

The fourth demographic factor is Education. From the above data, it is observed that 20.4% of the respondents fall under the category of Post Graduate, 20.6% of the respondents come under the category of Graduates, 30% of the respondents fall under the category of 12th pass and 29% of the respondents come under the category of Uneducated.

**Table 2: Chi-square test for various demographic factors**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Demographic Factors** | **Chi-square value** | **D.F.** | **P-value** | **Comparison** | **Decision** |
| **Age** | 2.607 | 6 | 0.8448 | >0.05 | Accept |
| **Gender** | 5.9 X 10-31 | 1 | 0.9 | >0.05 | Accept |
| **Occupation** | 2.538 | 3 | 0.4177 | >0.05 | Accept |
| **Education** | 1.7 X 10-31 | 1 | 0.9 | >0.05 | Accept |

A series of chi-square tests of independence were conducted for all demographic factors to assess the relationship between awareness of Organic food and these factors. The results indicate that awareness of Organic food is found to be independent of all demographic factors. Therefore, based on these findings, the following hypothesis are formulated:

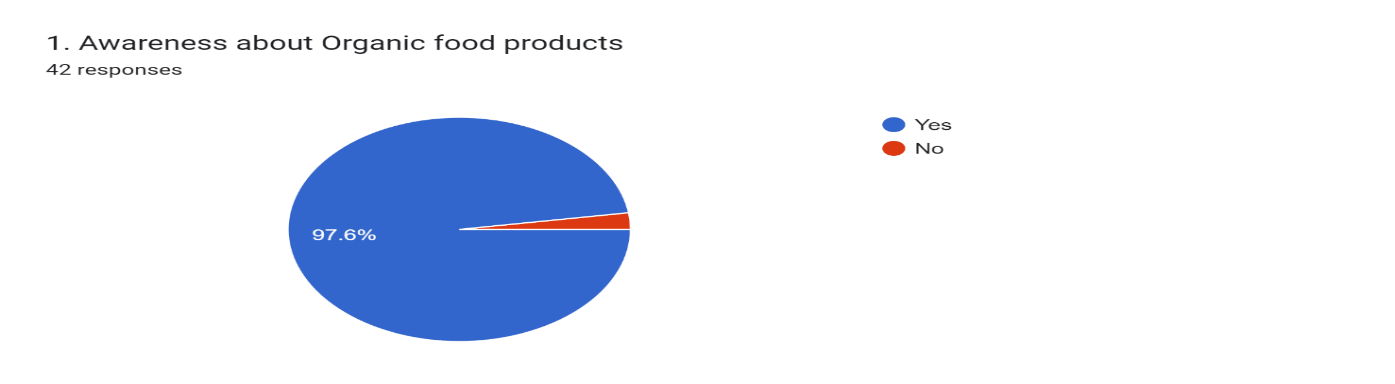
H1: Awareness about organic food is independent of age – groups, H11: It is not independent

H2: Awareness about organic food is independent of Gender, H12: It is not independent

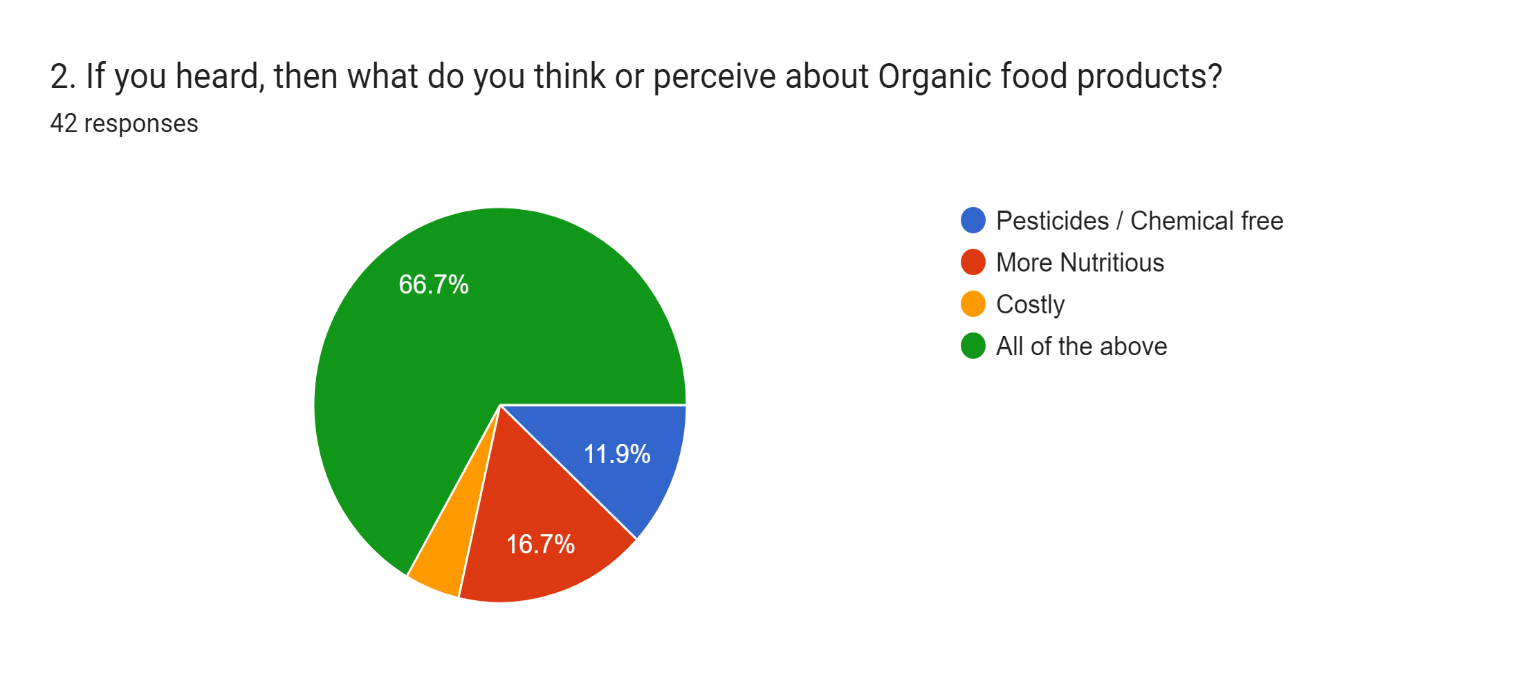
H3: Awareness about organic food is independent of Education, H13: It is not independent

H4: Awareness about organic food is independent of Marital Status, H14: It is not independent

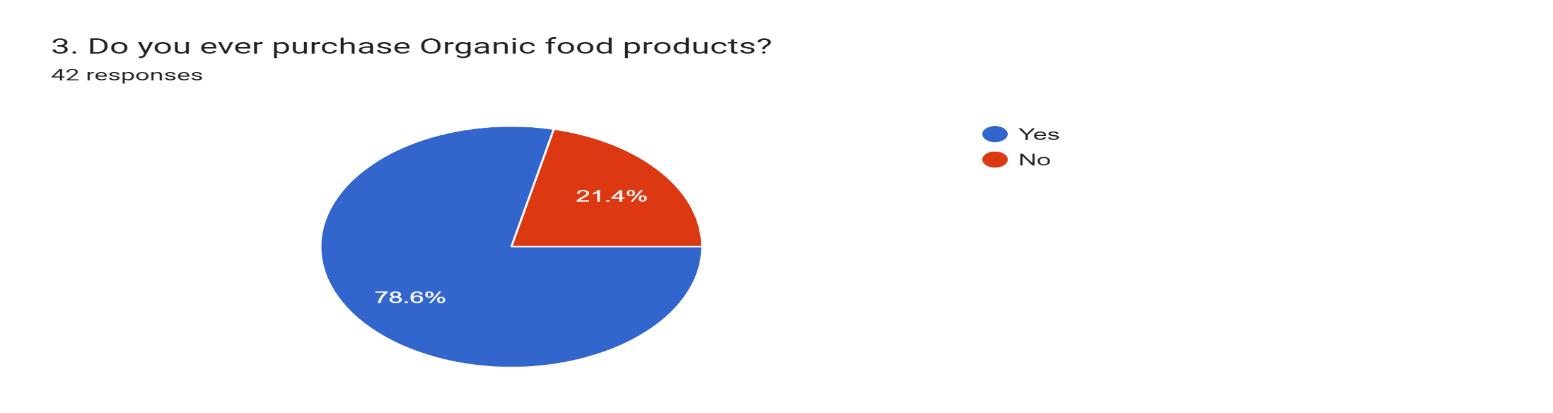
**Information About Organic Food Products**

**Consumer awareness towards organic food products**

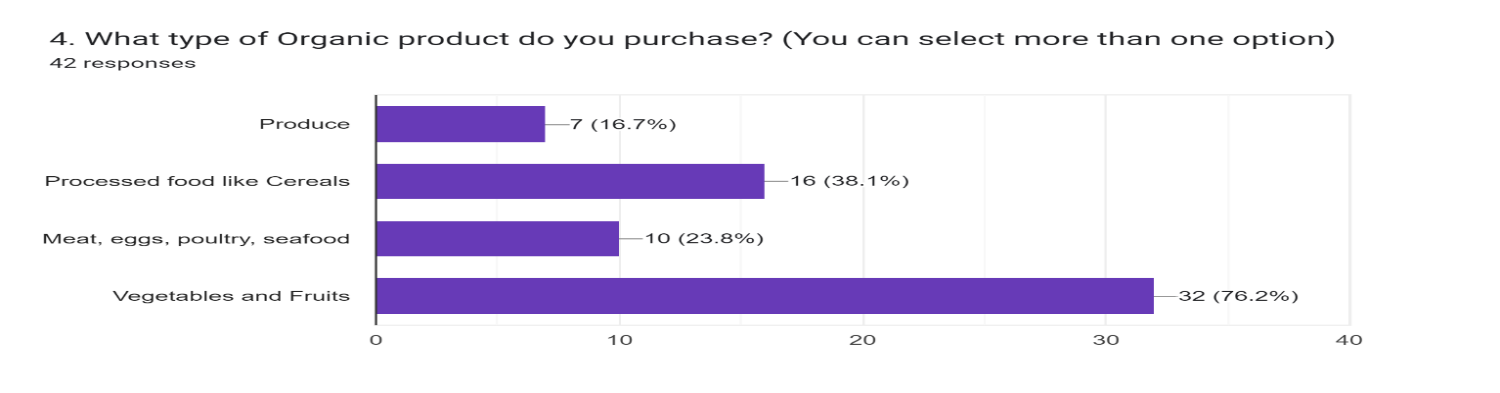
From all the responses collected, it can be seen that 97.6% of the respondents have awareness about organic food products whereas 2.4% of the respondents have not heard about such products. Maximum people said that organic food are way towards healthy lifestyle. Such food are less harmful and have no pesticides used.

**Consumer thinking or perception about Organic food products**

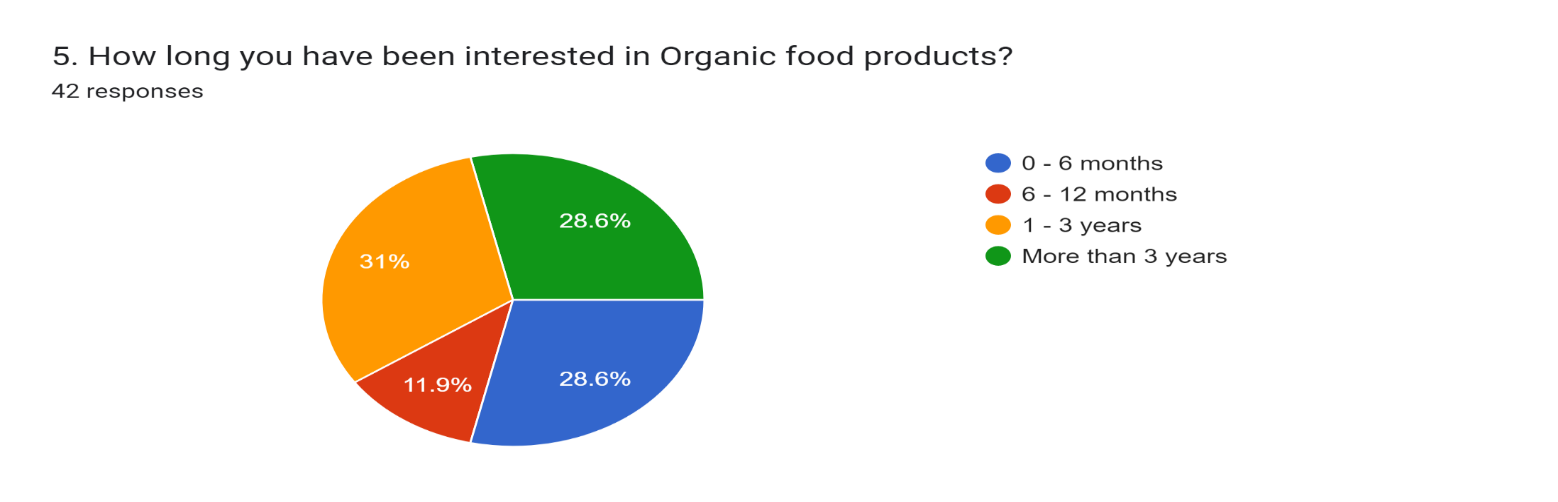
The results indicate that 11.9% respondents think organic food products are pesticides / chemical free, 16.7% respondents have a perception that these products are more nutritious, 4.8% of the respondents think these products are costly and 66.7% of the respondents think these products are chemical free, more nutritious and costly as well. People know that this kind of food is chemical free and less harmful and toxic.

**Purchasing behaviour of consumer towards organic food products**

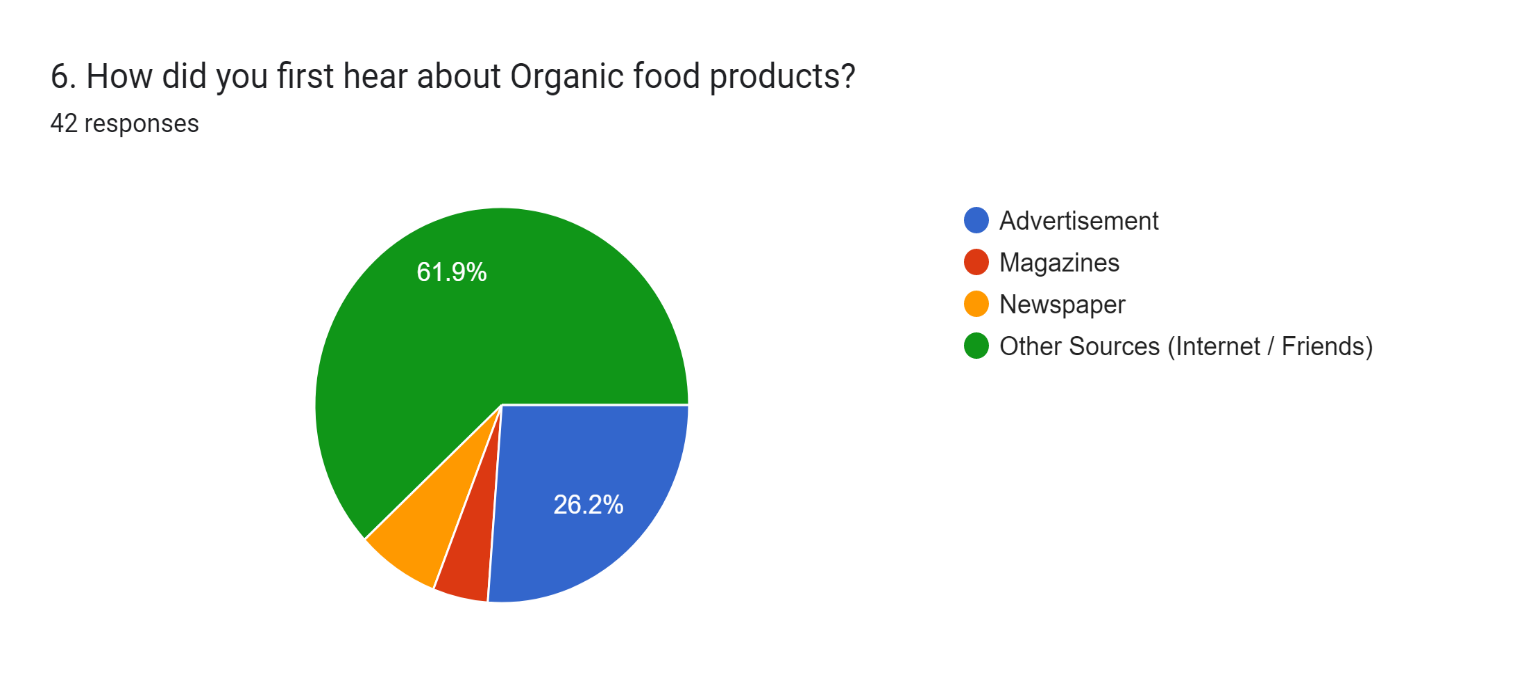
In the above data, it is seen that 78.6% respondents have purchased organic food products whereas 21.4% of the respondents’ despite of knowing about organic food products have not purchased. It can be assumed that those who have awareness about organic food will prefer organic food over the people who do not have knowledge about it.

**Consumer perception about** **purchasing Organic product**

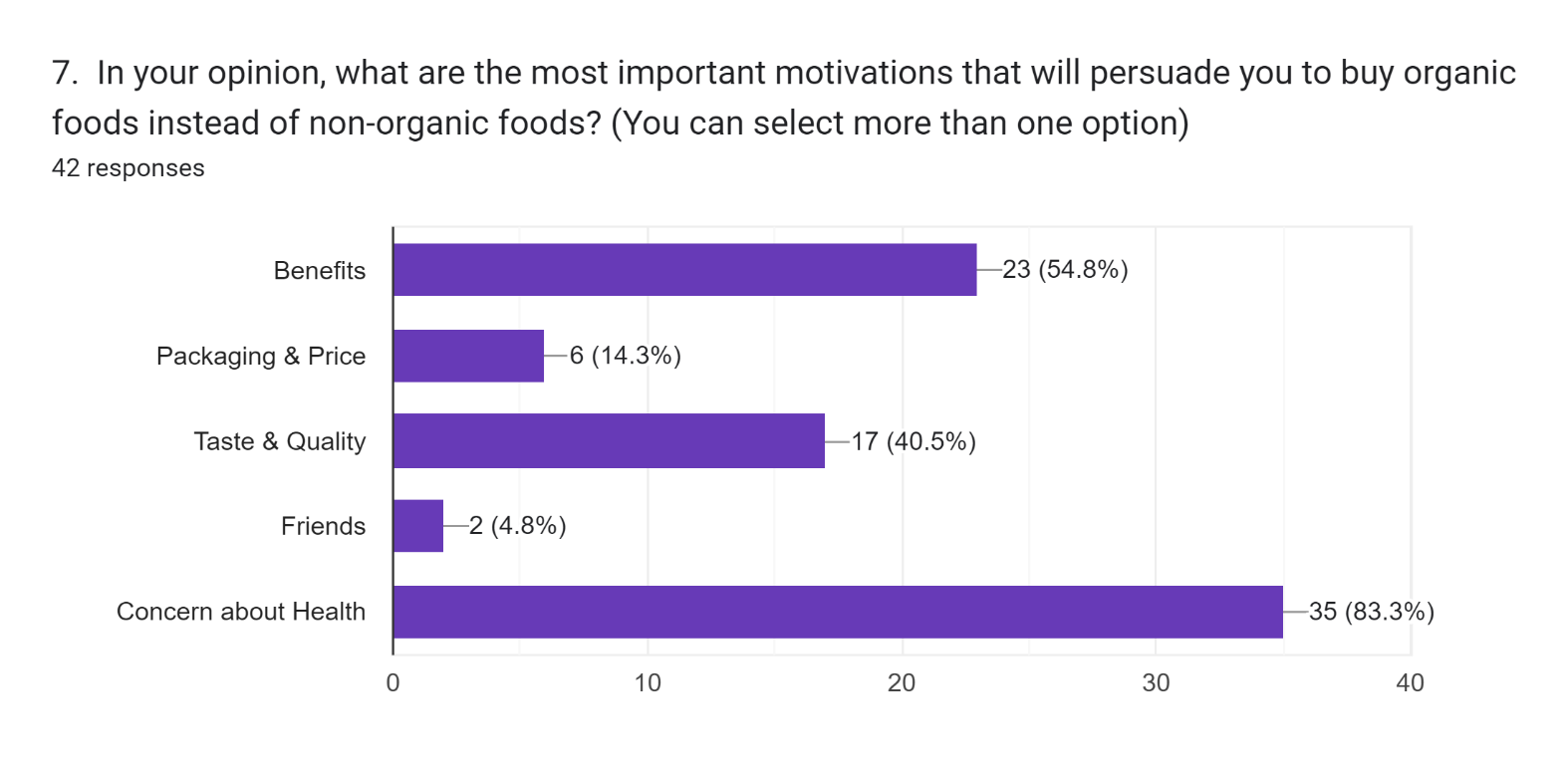
From the above data, it is observed that 38.1% respondents have purchased processed foods like cereals category organic products, 23.8% respondents have purchased meat, eggs, poultry etc. like organic food products, 76.2% respondents have purchased organically produced vegetables and fruits whereas 16.7% respondents have purchased organically produced goods.

**Consumers interest in Organic food products**

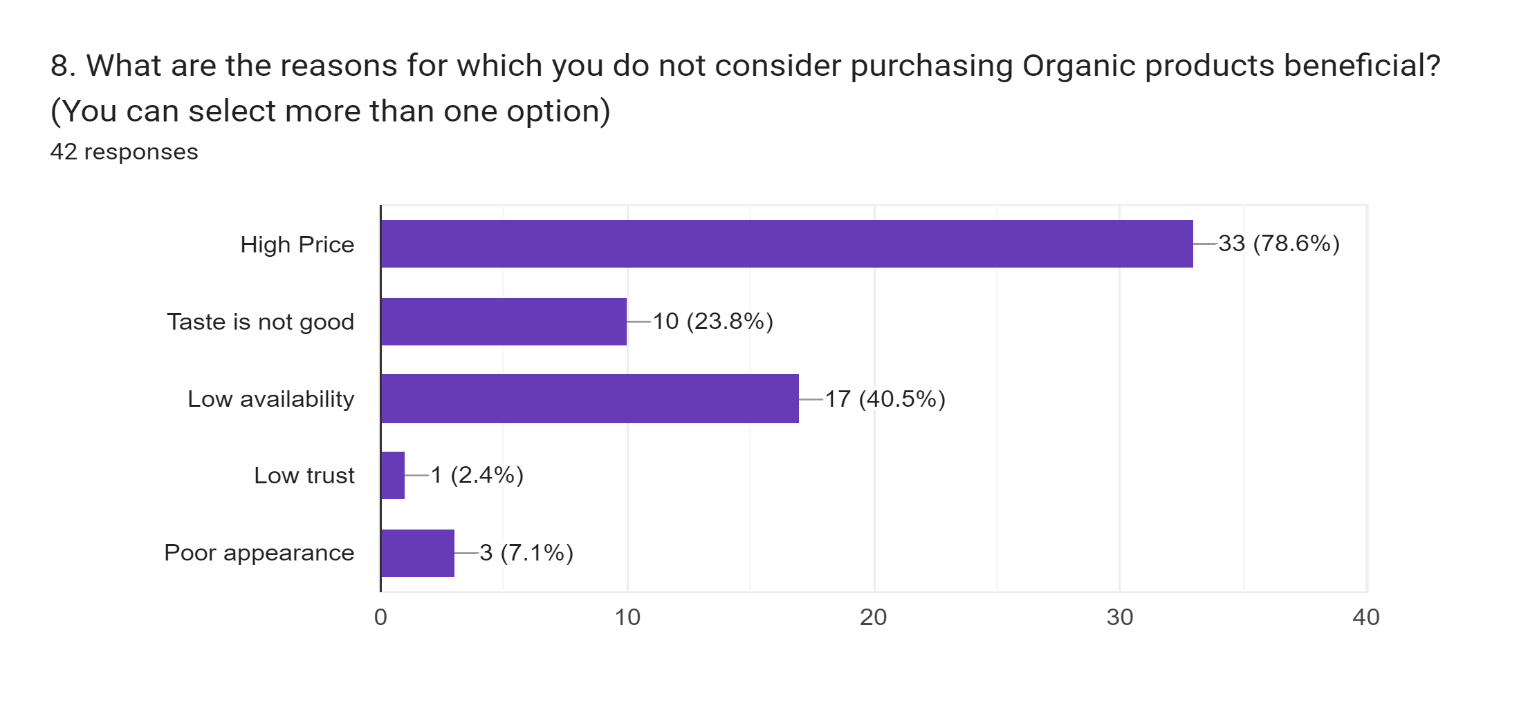
From the above data, it is clear that 28.6% respondents have been interested in Organic products from 0-6 months, 11.9% respondents have been interested from 6-12 months, 31% respondents have been interested from 01-03 years, 28.6% respondents have been interested for more than 03 years.

**From where Consumer first heard about Organic food products**

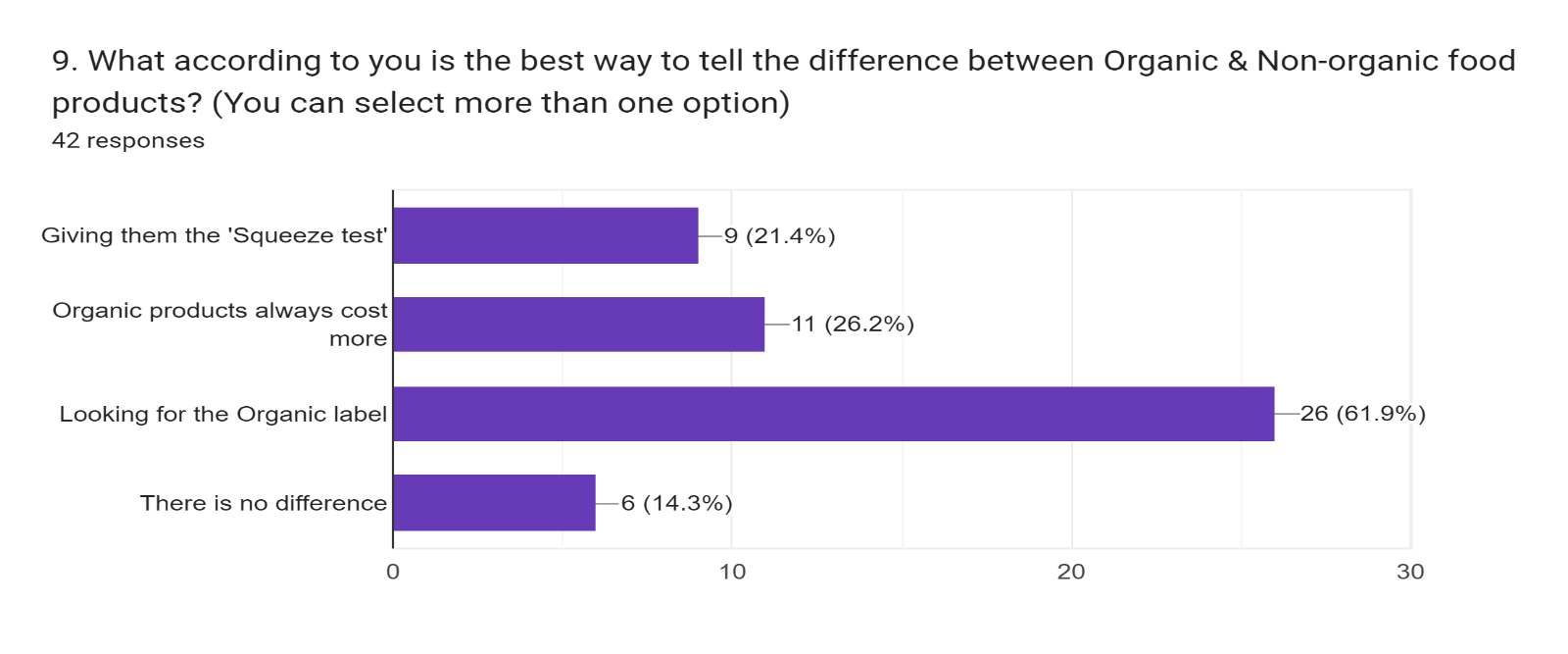
From the above data, it is seen that 26.2% respondents got to know for the very first time about organic food products from advertisements, 4.8% respondents heard about them through magazines, 7.1% respondents heard about these products from newspapers and 61.9% respondents have heard about such products from their friends or via internet.

**According to Consumer, the most important factors that will influence them to buy organic foods instead of non-organic foods**

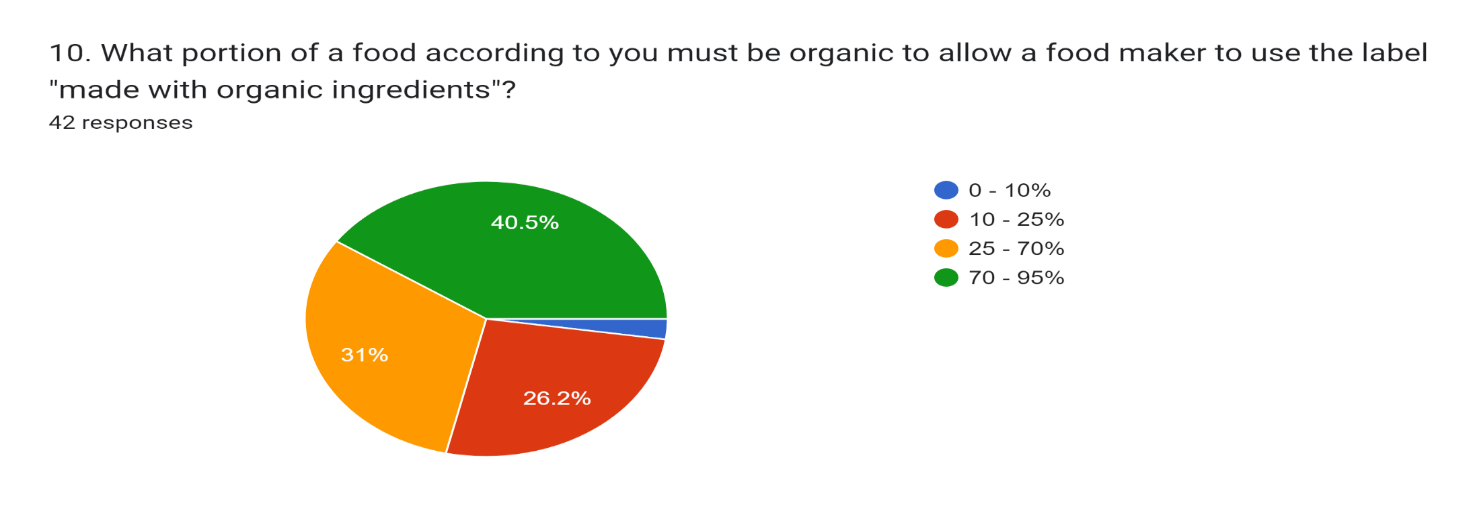
From the above data, it is observed that 54.8% respondents consider Benefits of organic food products as important motivation that will persuade them to buy such products, 14.3% respondents consider Packaging & Price as important motivating factor for the purchase of organic food products, 40.5% respondents consider Taste and Quality as their main reason for the attraction towards organic food products, 4.8% respondents consider their Friends as important motivational factor that will encourage / persuade them to buy these products without any doubt or hesitancy and 83.3% respondents are very conscious about their health and in order to remain fit and healthy, they will prefer organic products in comparison to non-organic food products which are not good for their health.

**Various reasons for which Consumer do not consider purchasing Organic products beneficial**

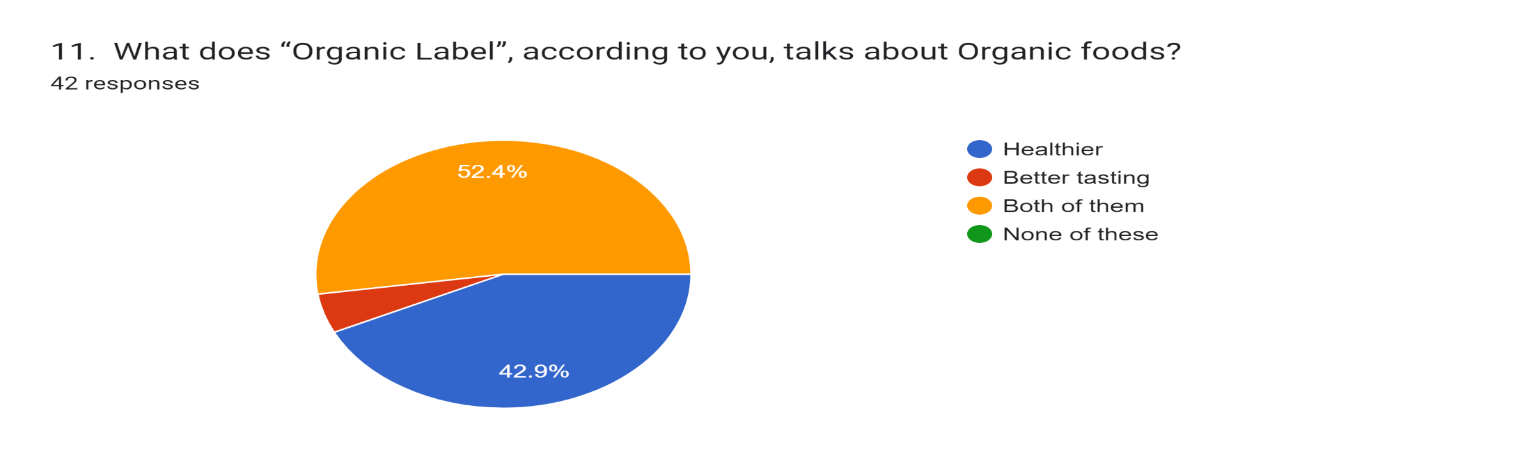
From the above data, it has been extracted that 78.6% respondents mentioned High price as their primary reason for not purchasing organic food products, 23.8% respondents mentioned Bad taste as one of the important reasons for not purchasing these products, 40.5% respondents indicate Lesser availability of these products at the time of need as their main reason for not purchasing these products, 2.4% respondents indicate lack of trust as the reason for not purchasing organic products and 7.1% respondents indicate poor appearance of these products because of which they do not consider purchasing such products.

**According to Consumer, the best way to identify the difference between Organic & Non-organic food products**

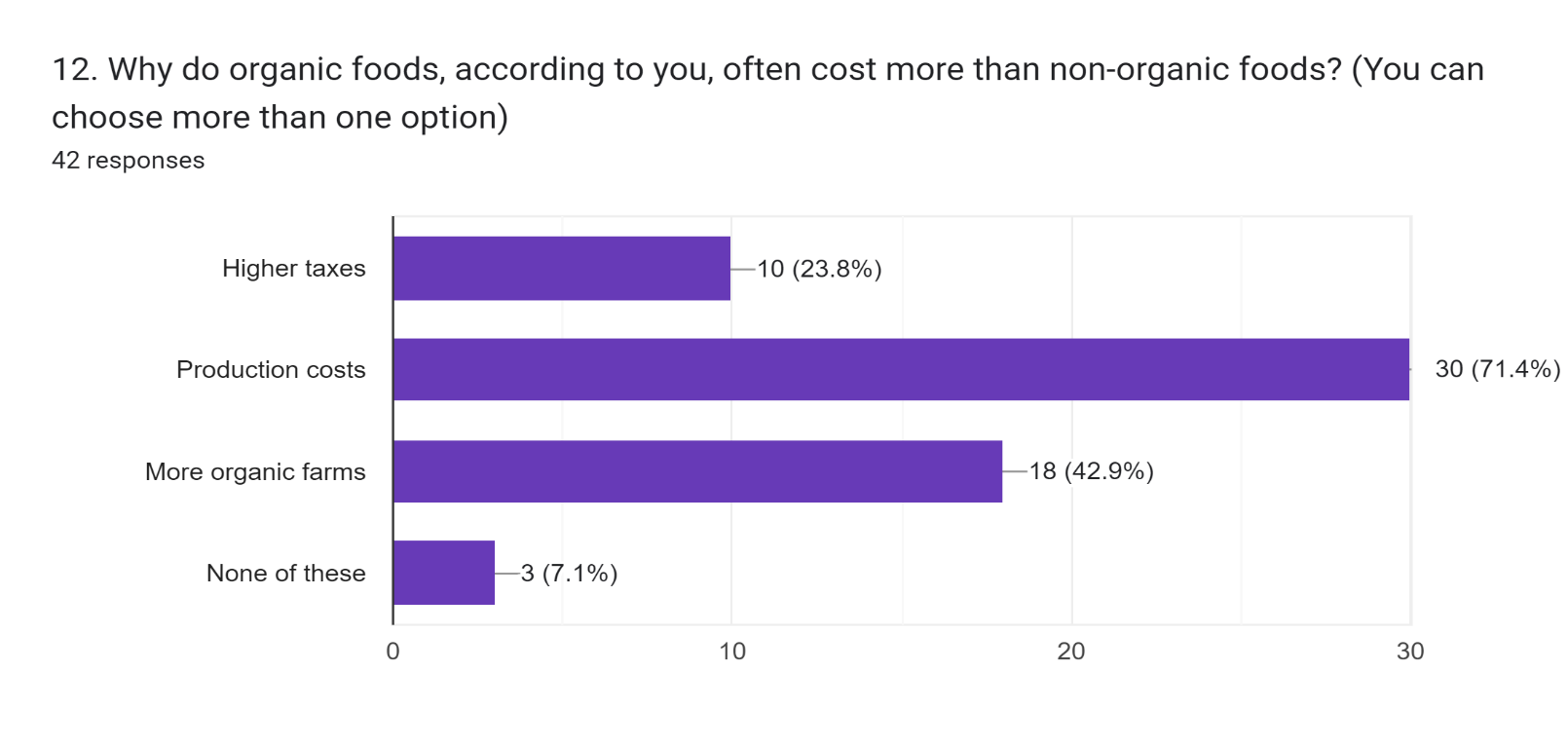
From the above data, it is observed that as per 21.4% respondents, by the use of ‘Squeeze test’, one can easily distinguish between the organic and non – organic food products. As per 26.2% respondents, purchasing organic products often cost more as compared to other non – organic food products. As per 61.9% respondents, in order to understand the difference between organic and non- organic food products, simply look for the organic label on the products. If there is an organic label on the product, then it is organic otherwise it is non – organic product. Finally, as per 14.3% respondents, there is no difference between organic and non – organic food products.

**From Consumer perspective to use the label "made with organic ingredients “what portion of a food must be organic so that the food maker can use the albel**

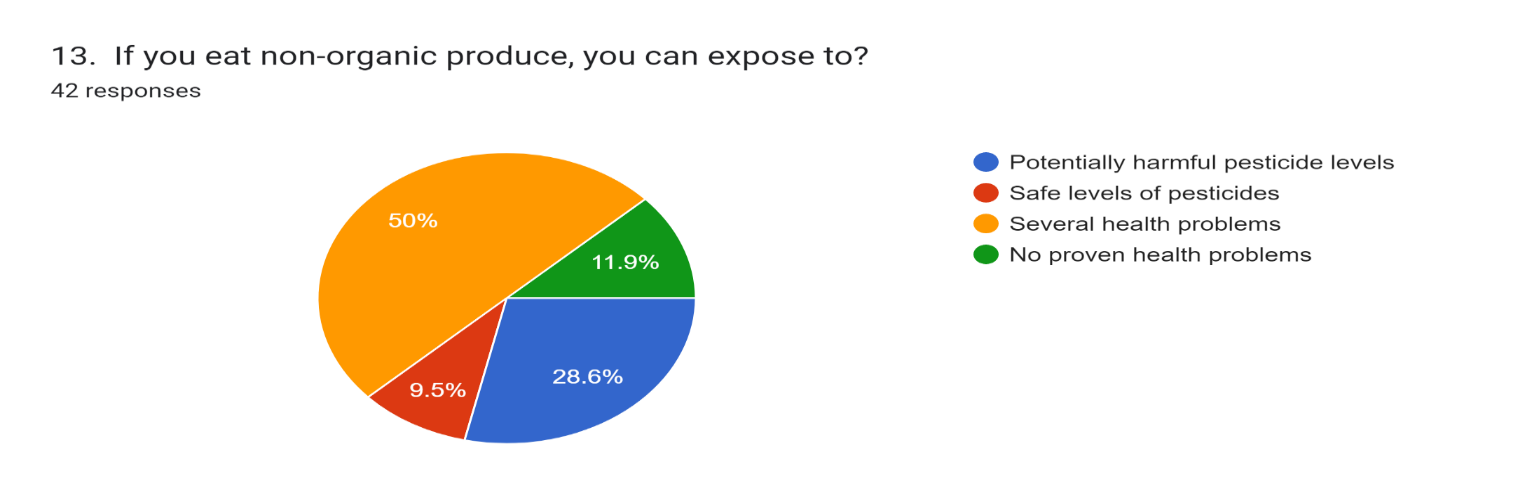
From the above data, it has been extracted that in order to use the label ‘made with organic ingredients’ 2.4% respondents think up to 10% portion of food must be organic, 26.2% respondents think 10 – 25% portion of food must be organic, 31% respondents think 25 – 70% portion of food must be organic and 40.5% respondents think 70-95% portion of food must be organic.

 **“Organic Label” according to Consumer, talks about Organic foods**

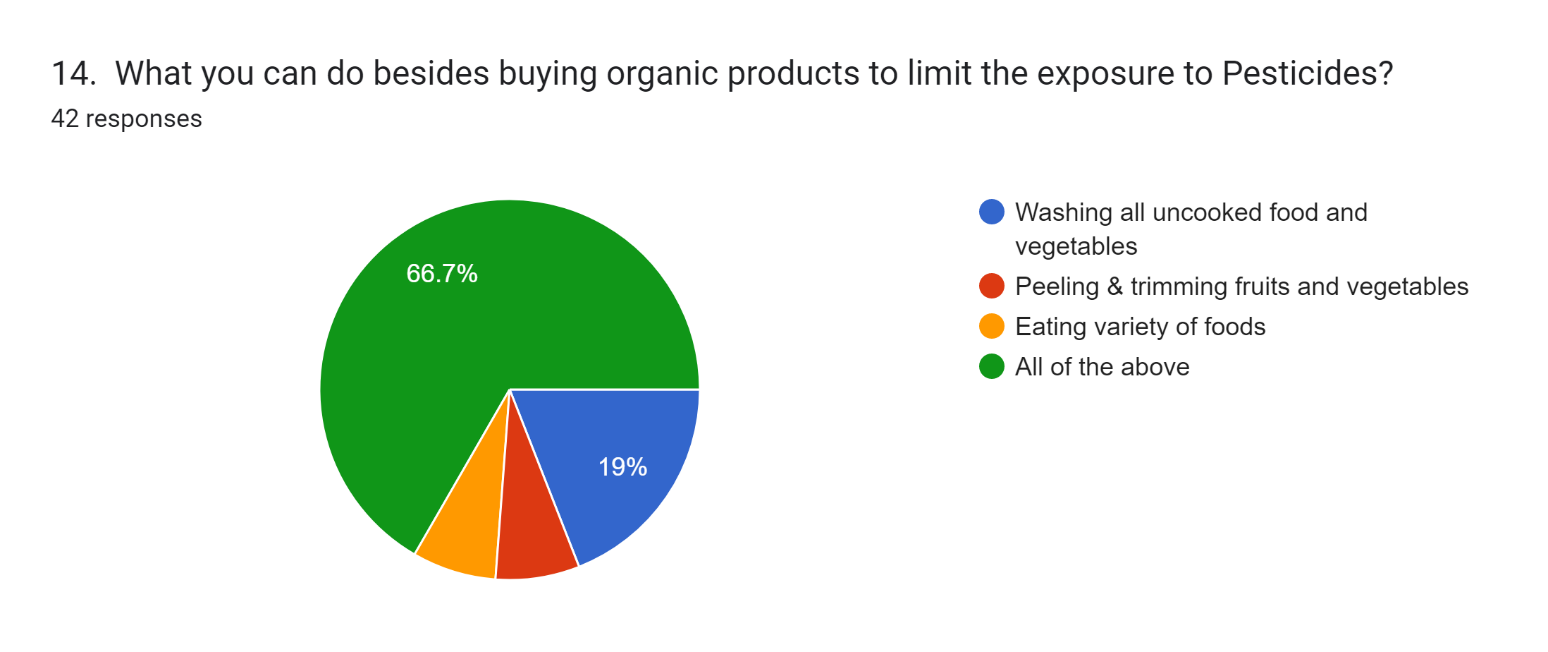
From the above data, it can be observed that 42.9% respondents perceive Organic label on organic food products as Healthier, 4.8% respondents perceive Organic label as indicating better taste of these products whereas 52.4% respondents perceive Organic label not only as Healthier but also of good taste on the organic food products.

 **Organic foods, according to Consumer, often cost more than non-organic foods**

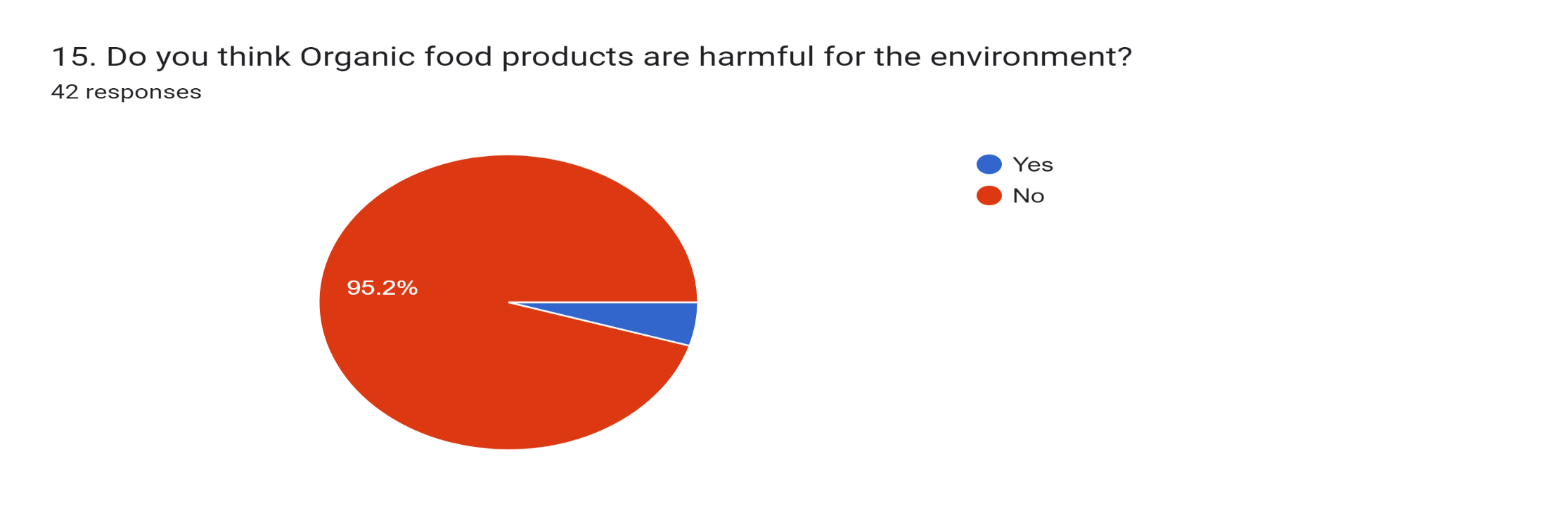
The results indicate that 23.8% respondents think organic food products are costlier than non – organic food products because of Higher taxes on such products, 71.4% respondents think these products are costlier because of the costs involved in producing them, 42.9% respondents think organic products are costlier because of more organic farms that are engaged in producing such products and 7.1% respondents think none of the mentioned factors is responsible behind the increasing costs of Organic food products.

**If Consumer eats non-organic produce, they can be exposed to**

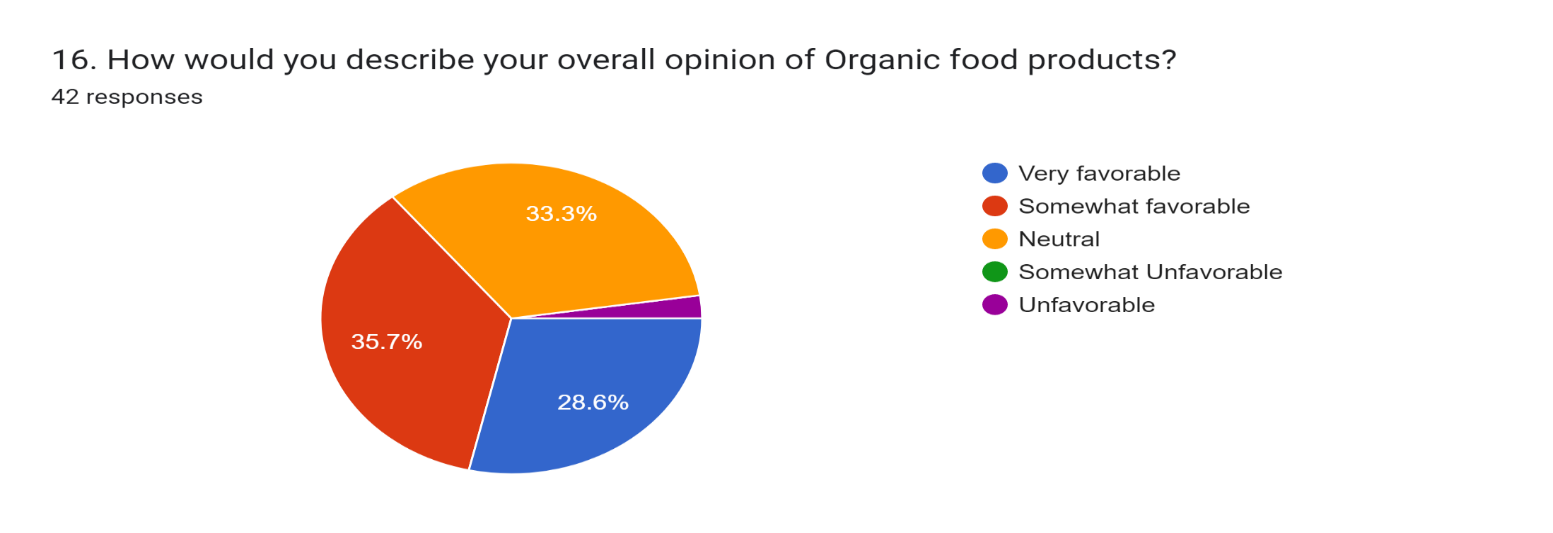
From the above data, it can be seen that different respondents have different perceptions regarding the consumption of non – organic food products such as 28.6% respondents feel that if they consume non - organic products, they can expose to potentially harmful pesticide levels, 9.5% respondents feel that if they consume non – organic produce, they can expose to safe levels of pesticides, 50% respondents feel that if they consume non – organic products, they can expose to several health problems which may become dangerous as well and finally, 11.9% respondents feel that if they consume non – organic products, they shall have no proven health problems.

**Other options available to Consumer, instead of buying organic products that restricts the exposure to Pesticides**

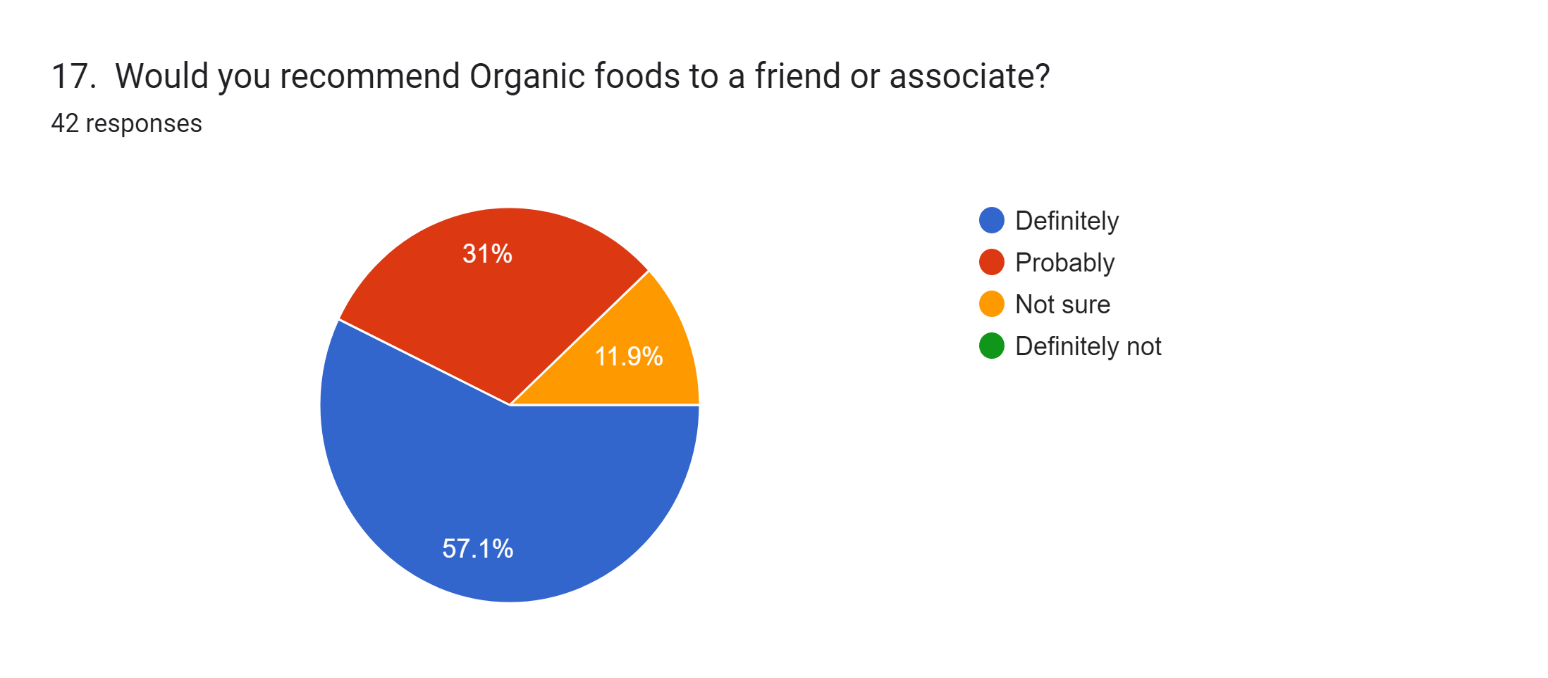
From the above data, it can be observed that 19% respondents think besides buying organic food products, we can wash all uncooked food and vegetables in order to limit our exposure towards pesticides, 7.1% respondents think we can peel and trim fruits and vegetables before their usage, 7.1% respondents think we can eat healthy and nutritious food cooked at home rather than junk food served at food outlets outside the homes and finally, 66.7% respondents think that by doing all of the mentioned steps, we can limit our exposure towards harmful pesticides.

 **According to Consumer, Organic food products are harmful for the environment**

From the above data, it can be concluded that 4.8% respondents think organic products are somehow harmful for the environment whereas 95.2% respondents think that these products are not harmful. They are in fact, good to the environment and to be used by everyone.

**Overall opinion of Organic food products, according to Consumer**

From the above data, we can observe the overall opinion of respondents regarding Organic food products, 28.6% respondents have an opinion regarding such products as very favorable, 35.7% respondents have an opinion of somewhat favorable for these products, 33.3% respondents have an opinion towards these products as neutral and 2.4% respondents have an opinion regarding such products as unfavorable.

**Consumer would suggest Organic foods to a friend or associate**

From the above data, it is observed that different respondents have their different viewpoints regarding their recommendations of the organic food products 57.1% respondents have a definite opinion to recommend organic food products to their friends or associates, 31% respondents have a probable opinion regarding the recommendation of such organic products to their friends or associates, And finally, 11.9% respondents are not sure whether they recommend these organic products to their friends or associates depending upon whether the respondents themselves are using the products or not.

**Limitations of the Study :**

The limitations of the study are as follows:

* Marketing and distribution channels are not efficient because organic food is produced in smaller amounts.
* Organic products have to go through tough certification processes.
* Some consumers though having knowledge of organic food products still resort to non-organic food products which may have some harmful effects on their health.
* There is lack of awareness among the consumers regarding the availability of organic food products in the market.
* As these products are produced in smaller quantities, they are very costlier because of which it is not possible for every consumer to opt for the same.
* Data on all age-group are not uniformly distributed.
* The distribution of data across different occupations is not uniform.
* The distribution of data for marital status is not uniform. The distribution of data for educational qualifications is not uniform.
* The distribution of data for sex (gender) is not uniform.
* The sample size is small.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, we can say that in today’s market, organic products must be available in excessive quantity so that more and more consumers can make use of such products. Over the past five years, the consumption of organic food has shown a noticeable increase, though it could have ideally grown even more. People are well-informed about organic food and its associated benefits, which contribute to a healthier and more fulfilling life. This awareness spans across all age-groups, income levels, and educational qualifications. However, some consumers are hesitant to fully transition to organic products due to limited availability in the market. The accessibility of organic items in nearby locations plays a significant role in influencing consumption patterns, especially in busy areas like Jammu. To address this challenge, online grocery apps offer a convenient solution by providing easy access to organic products. Many individuals have embraced organic food into their diets without completely giving up non-organic options. These consumers allocate about 27% of their food budget, on average, for organic items, while the rest is spent on non-organic alternatives. Only 17% of all consumers surveyed rely entirely on organic food products. Additionally, there are few individuals who have been dependent on organic products for more than a decade. Overall while the trend towards Organic consumption is on the rise, there is still room for future growth and integration of daily dietary choices of consumers. It can also be concluded from the study that awareness of organic food products should be made on a larger scale so that most of the people can have an idea regarding what these products are, what are their uses, how these products are going to benefit them in living a healthy life and what are the costs of these products. Today, almost everyone is exposed to non-organic food which can no doubt, tastes good as compared to organic food products but also, it can have several bad impacts on the health of human beings. So, consumption of home-made food is always advisable as it will not only contains several carbohydrates and other ingredients like proteins but also prevents us from several problems which can arise by the consumption of outside food like the junk food.

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