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# The impact of organic food products on environmental wellness: Health and wellbeing of people

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### Abstract

“Environmental Wellness” connect us with organic food products. Crops that are organically grown without any use of pesticides, fertilizers, any kind of synthetic herbicides or genetically modified organisms (GMOs) comes under organic food product. Food products grown through organic farming methods helps the environment to reduce the pollution, soil erosion, conservation of water enhances soil fertility and consumes less energy. Organically produced food products stimulates environmental wellness without leaving any toxic residue by replacing the conventional chemical fertilizers with natural alternatives that supports the human wellbeing the popularity of organic food products has been increased significantly but still it is less available in Indian food market. Many researchers have concluded that proponents of organic food have convinced that it is more beneficial to health and minimises the risk of diseases related to lifestyle such as overweight, cancers, heart attacks and many more. In India ‘Sikkim’ has managed to go 100% organic state. To be successful in Agri business, organic farming should create a balance between the cost it involved and its carbon footprints while taking into consideration the increasing demand by figuring out how to feed a growing population. The process of environmental wellness involves learning and contributing towards the health of the planet, establishing a sustainable lifestyle by protecting the natural resources and eliminating excessive waste. Environmental wellness plays active role in your community by creating awareness regarding 4R’s (reduce, reuse rethink, recycle) caring for energy conservation, eat locally produced food, increase the per capita income of local farmers and educating people on environmental issues. The purpose of this paper is to examine the current status of organic food products towards creating environment wellness the advantages and disadvantages of organic food products. Concluding, organic farmers, distributors and consumers should work together for formulation of well-established strategies for organic food products and provide a better place in environment.

**Keywords:** Organic food products, ecosystem, biodiversity, organic farming environmental wellness

### Introduction

Environmental Wellness is all about creating clean, healthy, secure and safe surrounding. As per National Institute for Health, Environmental Wellness focused on avoiding injuries, chemical exposures an infection in our environment. It encourages us to live in harmony by taking actions for protecting the planet “Earth”. We are quite famous with the terms of going green, eco-friendly living, sustainable living, 4R’s (reduce reuse rethink recycle) an environment sustainability. The consumers are ready to “Pay for the opportunity of buying green”. Environmental Wellness initiative influences our descendants and us to enjoy a healthy natural and high quality of life by keeping the environment clean and healthy. These programmes encourage customers to make good lifestyle choices and lead to better health. Organic food product induces people to be good steward of their own health Environmental Wellness not only focuses internally on individual health but it also focuses externally on the health of the ‘Planet’. Marketers are very keen to sell organic food products with increasing awareness in issues related with environment, naturopathy and green world. Our environment has a big impact on our health and wellbeing. The India government, the WHO nearly all major medical association warns us about the risk of living in unhealthy environment air pollution water pollution have deteriorated the quality of air and unhealthy water at local level has direct impact on the health of human beings. When employees are showing “Kindness to the planet means kindness to others “, they learn to appreciate our resources to keep our air, water and land clean. By using organic food products, they are supporting local farmers, local product and local business in their area which results in into making a local economy strong and reducing the transportation expenses and fuel.

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Customers who consume organically grown food are happier and more productive. As per Organic Food Production Act 1990, "Inside the provision of food that approaches from animal protein derived from animals, eggs, dairy category product the animal necessity is not by feeding them antibiotics for development hormones". Organic food products are those that are environmentally secure, produced by using environmentally sound methods not through the help of modern scientific inputs such as chemical fertilizers, genetically modified organism (GMOs) not processed using irradiation, industrial solvents, chemical food additives and pesticides without depleting the natural resources and harming the biodiversity. Organic farming is majorly considered to be more sustainable alternative when it comes to production of food. The farming done through conventional methods has been severely criticised for the harm it has caused to biodiversity, increase in water pollution and depletion of natural resources due to heavy uses of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides in the environment.

### Nature Heals, Nature Soothes and Nature Restores

Environmental Wellness is a process of learning about and contributing to the health of the planet. By eating locally grown fruit food product it establishes a sustainable lifestyle by protecting the natural resources, eliminating pollutant and excessive waste by playing an active role in our community and creating awareness in our surroundings. By consumption of 'organic certified' food product enhances our health and insures future health of our community and the world. According to environmental studies, farming done through organic methods are less damaging to the environment as compared with traditional agricultural method. Organic farming is one -of- a -kind technique that strikes a balance between consumer safety and environmental sustainability by developing a good client relationship with the consumers and protecting the environment. Organic farming methods includes holistic production system that involves no use of harmful chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers which result in less impact on environmental species. Soil health can be revived and yield growth can be achieved by this kind of farming which favour's the nature through extensive use of biological control pesticides, organic material and microbial fertilizers. Research reveals that environment can increase or reduce our stress through consumption of organic food product which in turn impact our bodies. What you are consuming at any moment is changing not only your mood, but how your nervous system, endocrine and immune systems are working. Stress from unpleasant environment can make us feel helpless sad depressed it elevates our blood pressure, heart rates, suppresses our immune system and weakens our muscles. Exposure to nature, viewings their greenery of nature reduces our stress hormones and contributes to physical wellbeing because human's find food inherently interesting, we can naturally focus on what we are experiencing by are eating naturally grown organic foods. Humans have a natural tendency of feeling more connected towards nature. Nature restores the quality of soil by rejection of use of synthetic fertilizers for up to three years so that the soil can revive its lost nutrients through green manures. Weeds and pest are controlled with organically approved herbicides and natural pesticides. Organic food products are free from artificial colours, preservatives,

flavouring substances and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

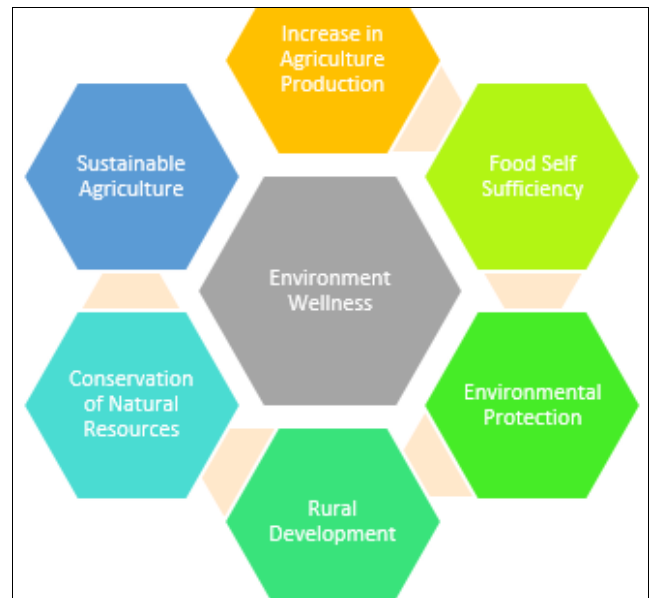


Fig 1: Elements of Environmental Wellness

### People, Planet, Profit

"Toxic" word often used to describe the food market in India and increasingly many parts of the world. Toxicity in the environment promotes obesity and eats away a healthy lifestyle. Government is generating revenues by increasing the taxes on unhealthy food products and granting subsidies on organic foods. Zonal regulations imposed by the government can help to bring organic food products to supermarkets and low the limit on fast food restaurants in the areas. Awareness and communication policy can restrict advertising of unhealthy food product to youth on social media platforms and replace the unhealthy products with a healthy one. The environment in which we are live has significant influence on our feelings your mental conditions, productivity, emotional wellbeing and overall health. Planet health encompasses not just our own personal space but also geographical areas, bigger communities and the entire environment. Harmony with the nature is developed after consuming the foods that are grown through organic farming practices. It covers all the dimensions of the Environmental Wellness by developing healthy habits and positive impact on physical and mental health of human beings and other species.

### How does consumption of organic food changes lifestyle?

Organic food products are rich in nutrition as it is produced through natural manures. "Nature is so smart to make food as medicines". Through the following ways organic food changes in lifestyle:

- Constant intake of organic food products reduces the health problems.
- Organic food products are having fewer toxic chemicals and pesticides.
- Better in taste and quality.
- Organically grown vegetables and fruits are higher in vitamins content.
- Consuming organically grown fruits and vegetables could increase your antioxidant levels by 20% to 40% making you live long and healthy.

- Grown on certified organic farms without GMOs.
- Boost immunity system and reduce the risk of cancers.

### Outlook of India Organic Food Market

- Organic food market of India stood at the value of USD 1238 million in 2022 and it is expected to grow at CAGR of about 22% in the forecasted period of 2022 and 2028 then it would reach at a value of about USD 4082 million by 2028.
- The major market drivers of organic food industries include rising disposable income, increasing population, rising health and consciousness, the consumer spending on the health and wellness products.
- The major regional market of organic food products is in Assam, West Bengal Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.
- The leading players of organic food product market are Suminter India organics, Nature Bio foods Ltd, Organic India Pvt Ltd.
- The dominant product of this industries are organic beverages, meat, poultry, dairy, spices, pulses cereals and food grain and fruits and vegetables.

The major channels of distribution for the organic food products includes supermarkets and hypermarkets, specialty stores, convenience stores and E-commerce. In India, organic food market is a niche market which is expected to see a wider penetration in the coming future years. Due to growing incidents of food toxicity through adulteration the demand for organic food product is anticipated to rise in the future coming years. E-commerce industries also appeals to the potential consumers by offering lucrative offers on social media platform. In major metropolitan towns companies offering organic food products is also opening a small kiosk, for increasing its market growth. The demand for organic tea in beverages have the greatest appeal, followed by pulses and milk products Government funding is also catalysing the market for organic food products in India by encouraging organic farming through financial assistance to farmers who are practicing organic farming under the various government schemes such as National Food Security Mission (NFSM), NMSA, Mission For Integrated Horticulture Development (MIDH) and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

### Role of Organic Farming in Environmental Wellness

In past few years our environment circumstances have observed massive destruction of environment. Humans reckless attitude and impulsive action have cost a lot to ecosystem and required to do the most dangerous in the next generation. There is an alarming call to preserve the nature and ecosystem quickly and efficiently. In the present scenario people liking organic agriculture have become the need of the hour rather than being secondary benefit main focus of organic agriculture is to grow crops healthier that maintains the strength of the soil unharmed. Organic food product provides enormous number of ecological benefits in biodiversity by opting and agriculture system that supports chemical free cultivation technique. The balance within the ecosystem is created by avoiding synthetic chemicals that promote protection of flora and fauna. As per journal Biological Conservation 2005, scientists have researched separate impact of organic and traditional farms on soil microbes, spiders, beetles, mammals, birds, earthworms

among others. The result of the study is demonstrated that search living organisms are in abundance amount in organic farms. Organic farming practices prevents soil and water contamination. Avoiding the use of synthetic chemicals in natural farming techniques keep the risk of underground water and soil contamination away as compared to conventional farming methods due to extensive use of toxic chemicals in the ecosystem. Organic farming practices don't eliminate the whole vegetation from the crop in result more soil is attached with vegetation which prevents the wind from carrying the top most fertile soil layer and preventing the soil erosion in the ecosystem. Due to increase in carbon dioxide levels in environment lead to global warming, organically grown foods are locally distributed as a result less fuel and energy is used in distribution in transportation which automatically decreases the Co2 level thus organic food production helps in preventing the global warming. Through sustainable agriculture we are maintaining and sustaining the quality of environment, conserving natural resources and satisfying changing human needs. Organic food product farming method has slowed the soil contamination genetic erosion and water shortage, etc. Organic farming methods for cultivation crops are pollinated free, protect bees and wildlife. Farmers don't rely on non-renewable oil-based fertilizers and pesticides for cultivation of crops. Fewer greenhouse gas emission is released in atmosphere which results in greater biodiversity.

### Significance of Organic Food Products during COVID - 19 time

COVID-19 attacks person with suppressed immune system and people of under and over age. Plant based organic food increases the intestinal bacteria and overall gut biome health which is present in the body up to 85%. The phenolic acid present in organic food products is rich in antioxidant content which plays an important role in prevention of free radicals. Various kind of disease of in childhood age group like atopic eczema, allergy is prevented by consumption of organic foods. Omega 3, fatty acids, iron, antioxidants are more present in organic foods as compared to conventionally grown food items. Organic milk has reported high level of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) which is beneficial for human health. The risk of health issues was less for the people consuming organic food products are more environmentally friendly, organic farming best commences from wildlife farmers, protection of ecosystem and finally to the end consumers. During the COVID-19-time people are more inclined towards organic food for the enormous benefits it offered like nutritive value, microbes' awareness, use of biotic compound in farming and are rich in antioxidant. In India there has been a paradigm shift post 2020 pandemic towards consumer to buy more organic foods. Beverages market particularly fruits and vegetables are highly influenced from organic farming. Many retailers all over the globe are adding more and more organic food products to their shelves due to the increasing demand of organic foods, they more accessible to consumers through speciality stores and retail outlets.

### Advantages of Cultivation of Organic Food Products for Environmental Wellness

- Sharp rise in health awareness- organic food products reduce the public health risk by minimising exposure to toxic chemicals on farm and in food, reduce soil and

water contamination. Children are more vulnerable to pesticides present in conventionally grown food that has been now replaced with organic one's.

- Foods grown organically are naturally rich in nutrients such as iron, Vitamin C, phosphorus, magnesium with less exposure to nitrogen pesticides when compared to conventionally grown foods products.
- Foods which are organically ripened provides better taste as it is given more time in farms to grow in natural ways.
- Organically produced foods are rich in antioxidant content prevents the people from vision problems, diabetes, obesity, cancers. Organic meat, milk and dairy products have desirable amount of Omega 3 fatty acids may reduce the risk related to allergies.
- Soil nutrients are maintained without using inorganic fertilizers pesticides in soil. Consumers have also begun to understand the importance of consuming organic food for environmental wellness.
- Organic farming methods include natural farming techniques that are environmentally friendly. It helps in reducing the CO<sub>2</sub>, slows down the process of climate change and prevent the hazardous effect of global warming.

### Myths about Organic Food Product

Organic food products are always the hot topic for discussion for the nutritional content and their demands to get fulfilled in all over the world. There are various invalid arguments which are raised against organic food products that needs clarification.

- **All organic labelling on food products is same:** in this case only the food products that has 95% of organic material are termed as 'organic'. If it is composed of only 70% of the organic ingredients then it will be termed as "Made with organic ingredients" label on the product.
- **Organically grown foods are costly:** this is a myth but in reality, naturally manufactured food may cause even less than conventionally grown food. Food grown through conventional practices have "sunk cost" attached to it as "health costs", remember our health is an investment not an expense.
- **Pesticides are not that much bad for health:** our body can't digest pesticides at all even after a long time of food ingestion not only they will survive in the body but also accumulates over the passage of time.
- **Feeding the entire world through organic farming practices:** this is a myth that organically grown crops need time and it can make a burning hole in the pocket of consumers due to its soar prices. Research has found that organically growing crops produce comparable yields to normal produce plus it enhances the quality of soil over the time. Research done through farming system trials, shows that organic 's can preserve biodiversity and Environmental wellness.
- **Organically grown food products are just creating a "market hype":** people living in metropolitan cities believe that organic food products are just "marketing hype" or earning sufficient amount of cash in the beginning but they are all myth organic food are composed of nutritional values antioxidant that assist in opting for healthy lifestyle. They are grown as per government norms and standards as compared to

inorganic food products.

### Conclusion

There is a strong need for climate friendly diet in our ecosystem. Our diet plays an important role in climate change as per UN Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) what people eat can prevent many deadly diseases. According to the reports published in EAT Lancet, "Transformation to healthy diets by 2050", it will require many dietary shifts like in consumption of fruits vegetables, pulses, grain should be doubled and the consumption of unhealthy diet items like intake of sugar, red meat, canned, processed food should be reduced to half. People diet should more comprised of plant-based food organically produced that improves the overall human health and confers to many environmental benefits on the ecosystem. Shifting towards a sustainable diet doesn't disrupt the plant growth pattern and allows them to grow at the pace organically that can be healthy in many aspects related to nutrition, economic, social and environmentally well. The report on climate change by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) elaborates the importance of plant-based diet, use of renewable energy, decrease in air, water and land pollution, investing more in energy efficient appliances that can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Nowadays, increase in vegan diet have significantly increased, they are environmentally friendly as they are produced by least amount of carbon emissions although they can be deficient in many vitamins and nutrients like vitamin b 12, iron, zinc, magnesium which are highly present in animal-based diet but vegan diets if carefully planned under the guidance of dietitians can help in achieving the nutrition required without harming many species on the planet. A well-planned organic diet can decrease the carbon footprints on the climate change and reduce the greenhouse gases emissions. Organically grown foods product are 'natural gift to us from Mother Nature' as they have endless benefits. Consuming natural product itself is a delight for human beings. We can do better job by persuading our young generations to focus more on organic diets and helping people to adopt good environmental practice for enjoying a high level of wellness. Our little contribution will make to keep our planet clean, safe and peaceful place to live. We still have miles to go to make our future where sustainable practice and environmental wellness are the norms.

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