

## **ABSTRACT**

Empirical research was conducted in the three most populated cities with respect to the urban population. The cities were Ahmedabad, Surat and Vadodara. The research focused on understanding consumer behaviour towards organic food products with respect to consumer involvement, consumer attitude and purchasing intention. Initially, a pilot study was conducted with a sample size of 250 respondents spread over the three cities. The purpose of this pilot study was to test and validate antecedents of consumer involvement, factors affecting consumer attitude, identify the major reasons for preference of organic food products and also to detect the major problems faced in consumption. By application of factor analysis, four antecedents of consumer involvement and 2 factors affecting consumer attitude were defined and then statistically tested and validated. Similarly, eight major reasons of preference and seven prominent issues or problems in consumption were also identified. Based on the results of the pilot study, the final construct was developed and a structured questionnaire was also designed to examine the objectives of this research.

For the final research, a total sample of 827 was considered valid from across the selected cities. The purpose of this research was to study the levels of consumer involvement, attitude formation and overall purchasing intention for organic food products. The research also analysed the inter-relationships between involvement, attitude and purchasing intention. Along with these variables, the study also tried to analyse the reasons for preference of organic food products and some of the major problems faced in consumption. Thus, the research covered multi-pronged analysis.

The research culminated in some important findings with respect to buying behaviour towards organic food products. The overall consumer involvement was moderately high. There was a favourable consumer attitude across the selected cities. Similarly, purchasing intention was positive. Correlation analysis revealed that there was a strong positive correlation between (i) antecedents of involvement and consumer involvement (ii) factors affecting attitude and consumer attitude (iii) consumer involvement and consumer attitude (iv) consumer involvement and purchasing intention (v) consumer attitude and purchasing intention and (vi) consumer involvement, consumer attitude and purchasing intention.

Through regression analysis, a statistical model was derived where purchasing intention was the dependent variable and consumer involvement and attitude were considered independent.

The results of regression modelling revealed that both, consumer involvement as well as consumer attitude had a direct impact on purchasing intention. The results also showed that consumer attitude had a slightly larger impact on purchasing intention when compared with consumer involvement.

Finally, the research analysed the major reasons for the preference of organic food products as well as the problems faced in their consumption. The three most prominent reasons for preference of organic food products were (i) good for health (ii) safer than conventional food products and (iii) richer nutrients. Similarly, the three most noteworthy problems faced in the consumption of organic food products were (i) high priced (ii) lack of availability and (iii) lack of reliability.