



Emerging Opportunities and Challenges in the Organic Products demand: Uttarakhand

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Abstract:

The demand for organic products has been increasing globally, driven by growing concerns about health, environment, and sustainability. Uttarakhand, a state in northern India, is known for its rich biodiversity and organic farming practices. This study aims to explore the demand for organic products in Uttarakhand, identifying the key drivers, challenges, and opportunities in the organic market. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collects data through different platforms like surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with organic farmers, consumers, and stakeholders.

The findings reveal a growing demand for organic products in Uttarakhand, driven by factors such as health consciousness, environmental awareness, and government initiatives. However, the study also highlights challenges such as limited awareness, high prices, and inadequate infrastructure. The study provides insights for policymakers, marketers, and entrepreneurs to tap into the emerging organic market in Uttarakhand, promoting sustainable agriculture and contributing to the state's economic growth.

Key points – Organic products, demand , organic farming, uttarakhand.

Introduction :

Uttarakhand is renowned as the land of gods and it is situated into the amidst nature. The heightened environmental and health consciousness among the new generation, over the quality issues and chemical contamination and their hazards effect on human health along with the escalating need for safer food options, has become the organic products category one of the fastest growing sectors in food industries. According to the Organic India Market



Report (2022), the organic products market has grown by 25% year on year, demonstrating Indian consumers' increasing awareness and demand for organic alternatives. The market for organic food alone is expected to reach Rs 64 billion by 2025.

Organic products are grown or manufactured using methods that are environmentally and socially responsible, they are grown without synthetic chemicals, genetically modified components, antibiotics, or hormones. They also respect nature's cycle and animal welfare. Organic products can include vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy products, processed products, and organic clothing manufactured with organic cotton or other organic raw materials. This growing demand has given way to a new stream of agriculture, commonly known as Organic Agriculture.

Agriculture or Horticulture commodity

"agricultural or horticultural commodities" refers to commodities produced by the use of agricultural or horticultural processes. In the context of soil products, the word refers to commodities planted and cultivated by humans. Grains, forage crops, fruits, vegetables, nuts, sugar crops, fiber crops, tobacco, and nursery products are all examples of such commodities. Thus, personnel who raise wheat, corn, hay, onions, carrots, sugar cane, seed, or any other agricultural or horticultural commodity are involved in "agriculture." The phrase also refers to domesticated animals and their products such as milk, wool, eggs, and honey, in addition to soil-produced goods. However the term includes domesticated animals.

Benefits of organic products

- 1. Improved health** – Organic products do not include poisonous pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), all of which can be harmful to human health. Organic products have no adulteration and are completely pure and fresh, which improves the product's quality as well as consumers' health and immunity.
 - 2. Environmental sustainability** – The use of organic products and cultivation practices eliminates the use of synthetic chemicals fertilizer and chemicals that pollute the environment. On the other hand, the use of eco-friendly organic farming methods increases soil fertility, the number of microorganisms, and does not create unfavorable conditions. Organic farming practices enhance the soil fertility, soil health, conserve soil & water and reduce air & water pollution thereby protect the environment. Organic farming reduces water pollution by 20% compared to conventional farming.
 - 3. Increased Nutritional Value-** Organic products have a higher nutritional value because they are grown in well-balanced soil, with organic manures, biofertilizer, and no artificial additives.
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4. **Better quality & taste** – Organic products have been referred to as having a more natural, fuller flavor. They give both macro and micro nutrients in the field, resulting in production and a higher grade of product.

5. **Supports local farmers** – Purchasing organic food from local farms benefits the local economy and encourages sustainable agriculture. Local farmers play an important role in supplying fresh organic vegetables, fruits, and other things. Organic products will be an excellent option for farmers looking to quadruple their revenue because organic items are in high demand.

6. **Reduced Exposure to Toxins**- Organic products are free of hazardous chemicals, which can decrease the risk of diseases such as cancer, neurological disorders, diabetes, high blood pressure, digestive issues, and reproductive problems.

7. **Promotes biodiversity** – Organic agricultural approaches increase biodiversity by relying on natural pest and disease management methods. Using biological procedures such as jivamrit, bijamrit, agni astra, nima astra, and brahma astra, natural predator ,

8. **Animal welfare** – Organic agricultural approaches improve animal welfare by allowing animals access to natural light, fresh air, and grass.

Table: 01 Daily use Table content of Organic products

TYPE OF PRODUCT	PRODUCT
1) Commodity	Tea, rice, wheat, Shree anna
2) Organic Spices	Chili, coriander, turmeric, Fenugreek, fennel, white pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg,
3) Organic Pulses	Gram, pigeon pea, red gram, black gram
4) Organic Fruit	Apple, kiwi, malta, passion fruit, dragon fruit, cashew nut, hazelnut, orange
5) Organic Vegetable	Okra, brinjal, garlic, onion, Tomato, potato, cole crops and many other underexploited vegetable
6) Organic seeds	Mustard, sesam, castor, sunflower
7) Others organic items	Cotton ,herbal extracts
8) Daily organic Accessories	Toothbrush, toothpaste, honey, natural cosmetic, herbal juice, processed products



9) Organic Supplement	Ashwagandha tablet, safed musli tablet, plant origin protein supplement, Multivitamin tablet
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Figure:01 Data Source – Agriculture & processed food products export development authority(APEDA) Scope of organic products in Uttarakhand

The demand for organic products in Uttarakhand is on the rise, driven by increasing consumer awareness about the benefits of organic farming after the covid-19 pandemic people are conscious about their health, food, and change their mindset to adopt more organic products in their daily lives, and the state government’s efforts to promote organic agriculture. Uttarakhand has been actively promoting organic farming, with the state government optimistic to make it the “Organic Capital of India.” The Uttarakhand Organic Commodity Board (UOCB) was founded to promote organic farming techniques, train farmers, and facilitate market linkages.

Several factors influence the demand for organic products in Uttarakhand, such as:

Despite the increased demand for organic products, various hurdles remain to be overcome before organic farming in Uttarakhand can completely realize its promise.

- 1. Growing consumer awareness** – Currently, the younger generation is quite engaged in their exercise activities, as well as their daily diet and calorie management. Organic products are more popular due to their health benefits and environmental
- 2. Tourism and International Exposure** – Uttarakhand is a renowned tourist destination, with millions of visitors each year. Many of these tourists, particularly those from cities and overseas places, have larger disposable incomes and are becoming more interested in buying organic items. The inflow of travelers seeking natural and organic eating experiences adds to the demand for these products. Furthermore, Uttarakhand’s organic products are sold to international markets, creating a significant demand worldwide.
- 3. Rising Urbanization** – Consumption patterns have shifted as metropolitan centers in Uttarakhand have grown, including Dehradun, Nainital, Haridwar, and Rishikesh. Because of increased health and wellness consciousness, urban customers are more likely to purchase organic items. Organic food sales are increasing in retail chains, supermarkets, and online stores, highlighting the growing demand in cities.
- 4. Education & internet factor** – People are aware of the adulteration because of the increase in literacy rates. They are now very picky about their balanced diet, not just choosing foods to satisfy their hunger but also being more conscious of their entire nutritious diet, which includes protein, fiber, antioxidants, fats, sugar, and good fats. Additionally, social media and high-speed internet are helpful since they spread the word about nutrition, fitness, and organic products.



5. Availability of organic products – The availability of organic products in Uttarakhand has grown in recent years, making it easier for customers to obtain them.

6. Government support- The state government’s efforts to promote organic agriculture, including the establishment of the UOCB, have helped to increase demand for organic products.

- **Uttarakhand Organic Act:** In 2019, the state became the first to enact an organic farming law at the state level. The act governs organic operators and the sale of chemical fertilizers.
- **Uttarakhand State Seed and Organic Production Certification Agency (USS & OPCA):** The agency provides certification services for organic products. They assure the quality and parameters of the organic products.
- **Role of the Uttarakhand Organic Commodity Board (UOCB)** The board has set up supply channels from farmers to markets. The board promotes transparency in the buy-sell process and has contributed to the certification of organic processing units.

7. Export opportunities – The growing demand for organic products in the state and across India, as well as many other countries, means that a large number of consumers are willing to pay a premium for organic products, but the availability of organic products in the market is limited, opening the door to exporting high-quality organic products. Organic products provide a good opportunity for entrepreneurs and industrialists to make big profit from this business and create a huge phenomenon.

8. Export promotion: Organic exports are encouraged by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA). The state government and the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) intend to construct mandis, or marketplaces, for organic produce.

Some of the most in-demand organic products in Uttarakhand include:

1. Organic basmati rice: Uttarakhand is known for its high-quality basmati rice, and organic basmati rice is in high demand.

2. Organic herbs and spices: Uttarakhand is home to a diverse range of herbs and spices, including turmeric, ginger, and cinnamon, which are in high demand.

3. Organic tea: Uttarakhand is known for its tea plantations, and organic tea is in high demand. In current, Scenario lemon grass tea, hibiscus flower tea, tulsi ginger turmeric tea etc.

4. Organic fruits & Vegetables – Uttarakhand has a wide range of temperate fruit growing climates, which is very rare in other states, so it is an excellent opportunity for the state to grow more organic fruits. Uttarakhand also grows a wide range of vegetables that are very high in nutrition quality and contain export quality material.

Factors affecting organic food industry in Uttarakhand

- 1. Price differentiation** – Organic items are more expensive than conventional food products because of their cultivation procedures, and materials are high in cost due to the poor availability of organic products, which can deter buyers.
- 2. Economic downturn** – In 2022-23, Uttarakhand dropped to 97 tons worth 4.2 crore (\$0.5 million). Organic exports decreased by 66% from the previous year’s 285 tonnes worth ₹11.6 crore (\$1.7 million). Organic exports have declined due to the global economic slump and the European Union’s delisting of certification bodies. Supply-side challenges include rising certification prices and pest damage to crops.
- 3. Certification** – Obtaining organic certification is complex and expensive, particularly for smallscale farmers; the method is also quite tough, thus they have a lack of knowledge about the producers and laws.
- 4. Infrastructure** – While demand for organic products is increasing, the state still has little market infrastructure. The



lack of well-established supply chains, storage facilities, and distribution networks makes it difficult for organic farmers to access larger markets, both in India and abroad.

- 5. Climate Change and Soil Degradation-** Uttarakhand, like many other regions, is experiencing the negative consequences of climate change. Irregular rainfall, shifting temperature patterns, and soil erosion all provide substantial problems to organic farming. Farmers must use inventive strategies to offset these consequences while maintaining the productivity and quality of organic crops.

Conclusion

The demand for organic products in Uttarakhand is elevating as consumers become more aware of the benefits of organic farming and the state government’s efforts to encourage organic agriculture. Uttarakhand, with its rich



BioThink E – Magazine, Vol. -3, Issue -2, April 2026

ISSN No. – 3048- 7943

www.biobhink.in

biodiversity and ideal climate, has the potential to become India's largest producer of organic products. As the demand for organic products grows, it is critical that farmers, policymakers, and other stakeholders collaborate to promote sustainable and equitable organic farming techniques that benefit both the environment and local communities. By doing so, Uttarakhand can capitalize on the growing demand for organic products and establish itself as a leader in India's organic industry or a global exporter.