

# A Study on the Benefits & Opportunity of Organic Foods & Products in Aizawl, Mizoram.

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## **Abstract:**

The organic farming sector is rapidly expanding globally and in India, driven by demands for chemical-free, nutritious food that supports environmental sustainability, public health, and rural economies. This study examines organic farming in Mizoram, focusing on Aizawl, where traditional jhum cultivation has given way to innovative schemes like Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCD-NER) and Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM). Key crops such as high-curcumin turmeric, pungent ginger, G.I.-tagged Mizo chilli, and chemical-free tea highlight the region's potential for export and local markets, supported by service providers like Angel Business Promoters of Mizoram and One Organic Partnership.

**Keywords:** Organic, cultivation, environment, farmers, agriculture.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The organic farming sector has been expanding with new marketing techniques and persevering for the sake of preserving the environment. The goal of organic agriculture is to produce nutritious, high-quality meals without the use of synthetic chemicals or pesticides. Thus, organic farming has a considerable impact on both the economics and the society of rural regions, in addition to protecting the environment and promoting public health. Both domestic and foreign items are in greater demand. Due to consumer concerns about food safety, health, and the social environment, interest in organically grown foods has surged among both consumers and governmental institutions, especially in more economically developed states. Manufacturing and exporting organic agricultural products has become a significant sector in developing nations and is a key tactic for promoting sustainable development.

## **2. Research Design**

### **2.1 Objectives of the study**

1. To understand and suggest measures on how the consumption of organic food can be spread wider.
2. To promote the benefits of organic products/foods in Aizawl.

### **2.2 Research methodology**

#### **2.2.1 Statement of the problem**

The idea of organic agricultural products has been evolving, and consumer behavior is always changing to maintain and improve health. In order to prevent and lessen numerous diseases in our economy, the Indian government has been adopting more proactive measures and raising awareness. The majority of illnesses and diseases in society are brought on by unhygienic diets. It is vital that customers are

choosing foods cultivated organically because they are more concerned with the safety, nutritional content, and environmental consequences of their food and its production.

### 2.2.2 Data collection

Primary Data was collected using a structured questionnaire from the chosen sample respondents in Aizawl in order to complete the current research. Secondary Data was collected from a variety of sources, including books, magazines, journals, websites, and articles.

## 3. Literature Review

For the research, the following insightful literature reviews were used –

- **Lakshmi Prabha S. and M.Sindhuja, (2019)** Nowadays, consumers are growing increasingly used to organic products, changing their eating habits. Customers are eager to buy organic items since they are healthier and produced with natural pesticides. This study shows that customers attitudes about organic goods are related to their health benefits. It was also shown that customers are aware of organic products and behave favorably while buying them.
- **Venkatakrishnan.D.T (2017)** It is crucial that people understand the significance of eating organic foods and that they should focus on doing so in order to preserve their health. People in this day and age are highly conscious of their health problems and frequently take precautions to keep themselves healthy. The study comes to the conclusion that consumer knowledge is a key factor in assessing the purchasing behaviour related to choosing organic food goods.

## 4. Theoretical Aspects

### 4.1 Overview of Mizoram's Organic Farm Product Services

Decade ago, Mizoram politicians and bureaucrats have found the idea of organic farming, permanent and sustainable agriculture, and its significance in light of the state of our planet's soil and environment today to be quite alarming. The Department of Agriculture launched the Organic Farming Project in 1996 and tested it out in the village of Lungmuat. Here, contour trench farming and organic farming were tested, and the results look very promising. Vermi-culture likewise got its start by bringing in beneficial kinds of earthworm. A sizable number of communities received instruction on bio-composting techniques. The Mizoram Legislative Assembly unanimously approved the Mizoram Organic Farming Bill-2004 in July 2004. Mizoram, a hilly state, is surrounded by verdant, dense woods that are rich in flora and animals. The abundant biodiversity and massive, lush woods elegantly adorn the state. With an average annual rainfall of 250 cm and a subtropical environment with temperatures ranging from 110 to 210 C in the winter and 200 to 300 C in the summer, the soils have a high organic matter quality. The terrain and slope of Mizoram, however, now vary more widely due to the landscape structure. Jhumming is widespread, and the majority of farmers still use this traditional slash-and-burn technique of farming. Soil deterioration and soil erosion are commonplace in the state as a result of Jhum production techniques.

Organic farming in Mizoram is the best sustainable approach for improving the agricultural sector, providing food security with the least negative environmental implications, as well as solutions for good rural development, providing healthy food, and creating jobs. Furthermore, by incorporating highly diverse farming systems, organic farming reduces farmers' vulnerability to climate change and variability, increasing the diversity of income sources and flexibility to cope with adverse effects of climate change and variability, such as changed rainfall patterns. Organic farming will lead to greater

economic and ecological stability through improved ecological balance, as well as a low-risk farming strategy with lower input costs and, as a result, lower risks of crop failure due to extreme weather events or changed conditions caused by climate change and variability.

### **Organic Farming Scheme in Mizoram:**

#### **Mission Organic Mizoram**

Recognizing the potential of organic farming in the country's North Eastern Region, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare has launched a Central Sector Scheme titled "Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region" for implementation during the 12th plan period in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. Under MOVCDNER, assistance is provided to the farmers in a value chain mode starting from formation of Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs), on/off farm input production, supply of seeds/planting materials, post-harvest infrastructure including collection, sorting, grading facilities, establishment of integrated processing unit, refrigerated transportation, pre-cooling/ cold storage chamber, branding, labelling and packaging, etc.

#### **Main Crop**

##### **Turmeric:**

Turmeric, a spice crop with a short gestation period, is an ideal crop for impoverished farmers and is doing well in Mizoram. Mizoram's turmeric is of the highest grade in India, having a high Curcumin concentration of 4.5% - 5.5%. RCT-I, an indigenous cultivar, and other popular types have been grown in Mizoram.

##### **Ginger:**

Ginger, an essential culinary spice, is grown in many places of Mizoram and provides a major source of revenue for farmers. Ginger is harvested and marketed not just inside the state, but also outside of it. Ginger in Mizoram has a strong pungency and a lengthy shelf life.

##### **Mizo Chilli:**

Mizo Chilli is already G.I, tiny in size and quite pungent, with a greater amount of seeds, making it ideal for the snack sector. It is one of the hottest chillies in the world, with a tiny size and green colour that becomes red when ripe. They are consumed as chutney, pickled, or dried and crushed flakes. The market is robust since demand is high, and it has been a solid source of money for farmers.

##### **Tea:**

On September 14, 2018, the Darbilhi Orthodox Tea Processing Unit with a capacity of 320 kg produced tea was created and commissioned. Tea growing began in Darzo, Lunglei District, and its neighbouring villages in the 1920s, when the British soldiers arrived and signed a peace treaty with the local chief, Mrs. Darbilhi. Since then, no chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or weedicides have been utilized in these regions, and China Type varieties have been planted.

### **Organic farm product services in Aizawl district**

#### **Service Provider/Certifying Agency/Entrepreneurs under MOM in Aizawl**

**Angel Business Promoters of Mizoram**, Angel Business Promoters of Mizoram (ABPM) is a Society registered under Firms and Society Mizoram. It was established in the year 2017 with the interest in promoting farmers, farmers group, FPOs, FPCs. Entrepreneurship and any kinds of small businesses that falls under MSME category. Their main motive for their service is to uplift the farmers and businesses in

Mizoram who has and will further have a great impact in the improvement of the state’s economy.

Angel Business Promoters of Mizoram have been the service provider for Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCD-NER) during 2017 - 2021 in which Mission Organic Mizoram (MOM) is the State Lead Agency for Mizoram and handled by the Department of Agriculture, Government of Mizoram.

**One Organic Partnership**, One Organic Partnership is a company that specialises in the marketing, processing, and manufacture of organic and natural Mizoram food. It is supported by Mizoram Angel Business Promoters and fostered by Mizoram University Incubation Centre. It is Mizoram's sole private enterprise dealing with products under the Mission Organic Value Chain Development of North East Region (MOVCD-NER) Scheme.

One Organic has been primarily concerned with the manufacturing and sale of spices and beverages.

## 5. Data Analysis

### 5.1 Reasons for using organic products

SL.No.	Reasons	Percentage				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	It is rich in nutrients.	17.3	58.2	24.5	0	0
2.	To help and support Mizo organic farmers.	7.3	10	71.8	10.9	0
3.	It tastes better than conventional foods.	36.4	41.8	12.7	9.1	0
4.	Quality of the organic food store.	20	50.9	20.9	8.2	0
5.	It is good for children and elderly people.	14.5	53.6	31.9	0	0
6.	It is less expensive.	0	1.8	10.9	69.1	18.2
7.	It is without chemical treatment.	28.2	50.9	20.9	0	0
8.	It contains fewer preservatives.	37.3	38.2	24.5	0	0
9.	It is available in more varieties.	3.6	29.1	61.8	5.5	0
10.	It is nature friendly and without artificial ingredients.	21.8	50.9	17.3	0	0
11.	I am aware of the organic benefits.	28.2	53.6	12.7	5.5	0
12.	I want my family to eat healthy foods.	3.6	20.9	75.5	0	0
13.	It is clean food.	21.8	58.2	20	0	0

14.	Organic shops available in the vicinity.	5.5	20.9	22.7	33.6	17.3
15.	It is expensive but I don't mind paying more.	4.5	30.9	27.3	35.3	1.8
16.	Doctor's recommendation.	2.7	6.4	30.9	46.4	13.6
17.	Friends/relatives recommendation.	17.3	34.5	20.0	17.3	10.9

**Table 1: Reasons for using organic products**

**Interpretation:**

The above table shows that the majority of respondents (75.5 %) are in agreement with the statement that organic foods are rich in nutrients, while the rest 24.5 percent of the respondents are neutral about the statement.

**6. Findings**

1. Most respondents came to know about organic products from their families, relatives or their friends. Overall the 'Never' or least awareness about organic products total percentage from the respondents is 431.9 percent. The 'Somewhat' awareness total percentage is 344.5 percent. And the 'Very Much' or most awareness total percentage is only 223.6 percent. This shows that the total awareness about organic products is still pretty low in Aizawl District.
2. Results indicated that a little less than half of the respondents (48.2 %) have been using organic products for 1-3 years.
3. For reasons of buying, The claim that "organic food is rich in nutrients" greatly affected about 75.5 percent of the respondents. The claim that "the taste of organic food is superior to conventional food" greatly affected about 78.2 percent of respondents. About 70.9 percent of respondents said that "qualities of the shops/stores selling organic food" had a significant impact on their decisions.

**7. Conclusion:**

Today, the success of organic farming is based on a mix of experience, innovation, education (farming and marketing skills), interest, and social commitment, i.e. it is dependent on combining our country's traditional agricultural methods with modern marketing approaches. The success of organic farming is dependent not only on organic farmers, but also on the government, which must take initiatives to raise awareness about organic farming among farmers, allowing them to adopt organic farming, as well as among consumers about the importance of healthy organic farm products.

Our government is in a position to promote organic farming since the more developed states are moving towards it now, and customers all over are switching to buying organic farm products. Furthermore, to encourage farmers to practise organic farming. The government should also take required actions in order to make organic agricultural goods available at a price that is affordable to all socio-economic groups. Besides generating profits, farmers and the general public have a social responsibility to preserve the environment, pass it on to the next generation in a better state, and enhance the health of that generation.

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