

## Food Products Buying Behavior of Consumers : A study in Karnataka

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### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted with 200 respondents to elicit information on food buying practices and how far the information written on food label is used in selecting different food products by the respondents. A higher number of respondents looked to taste followed by safety and health hazards, brand images, discount/free on food products. The results of the study were statistically significant for the particulars on food label viz., discount/free, safety and health hazards and also for friends recommendation among consumers. 56 % of housewives, 42% teachers, 30% lawyers and 24% businessman purchased new/other brand products regularly. However, 74 % businessman, 64 % lawyers, 56 % teachers and 40% house-

wives also purchased new/brand products occasionally. A higher percentage of teachers postponed buying (64%) followed by businessman (48%), housewives (10%) and lawyers (4%) if the branded food product is not available in regularly purchased shop. Less than 40% of consumers purchased available branded food product.

**Keywords** Food label, Price, Quality, Consumer, Easy accessibility.

### INTRODUCTION

Food label is any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on or attached to a container of food. A label serves the following three primary functions namely basic product information, health, safety and nutrition information and it also acts as a vehicle for food marketing, promotion and advertising. In India, the food labelling act "Food safety and standards regulation", 2011, gives guidelines for packaging and labelling of food items. Food label is a legal requirement which has to be fulfilled by food processing companies for the consumer's better health and safety (Ababio *et al.* 2012). Although consumers

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**Table 1.** Particulars on food labels viewed by the consumers before buying the food. Figure in paranthesis indicate percentage\* Significant at 5% level.

Particulars	Lawyers	Housewives	Businessman	Teachers	X <sup>2</sup> value
Quality	50 (100)	50 (100)	50 (100)	50 (100)	16.5*
Price	42 (84)	48 (96)	45 (90)	48 (96)	6.36
Discount/Free	12 (24)	25 (50)	34 (68)	40 (80)	36.01*
Taste	32 (64)	42 (84)	36 (72)	38 (76)	5.40
Safety and health hazards	30 (60)	41 (82)	27 (54)	37 (74)	11.19*
Brand images	25 (50)	32 (64)	35 (70)	25 (50)	6.32
Friends recommendation	12 (24)	24 (48)	15 (30)	12 (24)	8.97*

value nutrition when deciding which foods to buy (Glanz *et al.* 1998), nutrition information on food labels is complex and does not always live up to its potential to communicate effectively (Drichoutis *et al.* 2009, Golan *et al.* 2007, Hager *et al.* 2009, Hieke and Taylor 2012, Lin and Yen 2010, Wills *et al.* 2009). Food label use could be a moderator of the association between nutrition knowledge and dietary behaviors (Cooke and Papadaki 2014, Fitzgerald *et al.* 2008, Satia *et al.* 2005). The food label is one of the most important and direct means of communication of product information between buyers and sellers. It helps the consumers in pre purchaser and post purchasing decision making.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 200 respondents were selected for the study consisting of lawyers, housewives, teachers and businessman in each 50 respondents. They were aged between 30-60 years of age. All the respondents were personally interviewed by using preplanned structured questionnaire. To elicit information on food buying practices and how far the information written on food label is used in selecting different food products by the respondents. The data was tabulated

and analyzed statistically.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Various aspects viewed by the consumers before buying food items on food label is given in Table 1.

It is noteworthy to note that all the consumers were particular in noticing quality of the food product. They were concerned about price than other particulars on food label. A higher number of respondents looked to taste followed by safety and health hazards, brand images, discount/free on food products. It is interesting to note 84% of housewives looked to taste of a product. However, 70% of businessman were noticing brand image of a product. The results of the study were statistically significant for the particulars on food label viz., discount/free, safety and health hazards and also for friends recommendation among consumers. Koutroulou *et al.* (2011) found that taste, quality, price and health safety influenced on purchasing behavior of consumers. Majority of the respondents paid more for food if its taste is better (Ward *et al.* 2012).

Buying practices for new/other brand products is given in Table 2. It is seen from the table that 56 % of housewives, 42% teachers, 30% lawyers

**Table 2.** Buying practices for new/other brand products by the consumers. Figure in paranthesis indicate percentage\* Significant at five per cent level.

Particulars	Lawyers	Housewives	Businessman	Teachers	X <sup>2</sup> value
Regular	15 (30)	28 (56)	12 (24)	21 (42)	12.73*
Occasional	32 (64)	20 (40)	37 (74)	28 (56)	12.75*
Not at all	03 (06)	02 (04)	01(02)	01 (02)	1.63

**Table 3.** Consumers response for purchase of new or other branded food products. Figure in paranthesis indicate percentage\* Significant at five per cent level.

Particulars	Lawyers	Housewives	Businessman	Teachers	X <sup>2</sup> value
Search in other shop	45 (90)	49 (98)	48 (96)	48 (96)	3.79
Buy the available brand	15 (30)	20 (40)	15 (30)	20 (40)	2.20
Postpone buying	02 (04)	05 (10)	24 (48)	32 (64)	59.02*

and 24% businessman purchased new/other brand products regularly. However, 74 % businessman, 64 % lawyers, 56 % teachers and 40% housewives also purchased new/brand products occasionally. Less than 6% of the respondents do not purchase new/other brand products at all. Results were significant among the respondents when they purchased regularly and occasionally.

Consumer's response for purchase of new or other brand food products is given in Table 3. It is evident from the table that a higher percentage of consumers searched for branded food products in other shop, if not available in regular shop in which they purchased. A higher percentage of teachers postponed buying (64%) followed by businessman (48%), housewives (10%) and lawyers (4%) if the branded food product is not available in regularly purchased shop. Less than 40% of consumers purchased available branded food product. Results were statistically significant when the consumers postpone buying, if the branded food product is not available in the shop.

Reasons for preferring particular shop by consumers for buying is presented in Table 4. More than 95% of consumers indicated easy shopping was the reason for preferring only particular shop for buying. Higher percentage of housewives (92%) preferred

particular shop for buying followed by businessman (90%), teachers (88%) and lawyers (80%) for easy accessibility. A higher percentage of lawyers (42 %) opined habit for preferring particular shop followed by businessman (34%), teachers (32%) and housewives (30%). More than 96% of consumers preferred particular shop for purchasing because of good quality products. Only around 44% of housewives, 34% of businessman, 30 % of lawyers and 28% teachers preferred particular shop because of good salesman. Results indicated higher percentage of housewives preferred particular shop for easy accessibility. Good quality of the product and for easy shopping.

## CONCLUSION

All the consumers were particular in noticing quality of the food product. They were concerned about price than other particulars on food label. A higher number of respondents looked to taste followed by safety and health hazards, brand images, discount/free on food products. Less than 6% of the respondents do not purchase new/other brand products at all. Higher percentage of consumers searched for branded food products in other shop, if not available in regular shop in which they purchased. Higher percentage of housewives preferred particular shop for easy accessibility, good quality of the product and for easy shopping.

**Table 4.** Reasons for preferring particular shop by consumers for buying. Figure in paranthesis indicate percentage.

Particulars	Lawyers	Housewives	Businessman	Teachers	X <sup>2</sup> value
Easy shopping	48 (96)	49 (98)	48 (96)	48 (96)	0.44
Easily accessible	40 (80)	46 (92)	45 (90)	44 (88)	3.79
Habit	21 (42)	15 (30)	17 (34)	16 (32)	1.84
Good quality	48 (96)	49 (98)	49 (98)	48 (96)	0.69
Good salesman	15 (30)	22 (44)	17 (34)	14 (28)	3.39

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