

# Study on food products buying behaviour of consumers

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The present study was undertaken to find out buying behaviour of consumers regarding food products. Two hundred consumers from four different professions such as doctor, lawyer, businessman and professor, 50 in each group were selected from Parbhani city of Maharashtra state. It was observed that all the selected consumers gave importance to quality followed by price of the product while buying. A very high per cent of doctors (98) and professors (96) were reading the information given on food label in regard to safety and health hazards. On the other hand, price and taste of the product were mostly noticed by lawyers and businessmen during purchasing of food products. It was noticed that significantly more per cent of lawyers had the practice of purchasing new food products regularly than other selected consumers. Whereas occasional purchasing of new food products was more common among all the selected consumers. More than 90 per cent of the selected consumers reported that when product was not available in regular shop then it was searched in other shop. It was also noticed that more than 70 per cent doctors and businessmen and more than 60 per cent lawyers and professors were postponing the buying due to unavailability of the product of particular brand. Results indicated that more number of professors (96%) preferred particular shop for purchasing due to ease of shopping, easily accessible and good quality of the product.

**Key Words :** Food label, Consumers, Buying practices

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## INTRODUCTION

Labelling is any written, electronic or graphic communications on the packaging. Food label comprises of printed, symbolic or graphical information which is accompanied by food (Asiamah, 2006). Product differentiation strategy by Food Company has gained importance in the recent past across the globe (Kim *et al.*, 2000 and Marks, 1984). 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). 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-purchase and post-purchasing decision making (Van der *et al.*, 2014). Also food labelling encourages the food manufactures to improve the quality of their product and formulate the relevant marketing strategy to attract potential consumers (AMEinfor.com 2008). This will result in benefiting situation for both consumers and manufactures.

## METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional study was conducted. A total sample of 200 consumers from four different professions such as doctors, lawyers, professors (university / college)

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and businessmen 50 in each group were selected by purposive random sample technique from Parbhani city. They were between 30 and 60 years of age. All the selected consumers were personally interviewed by investigator using pre planned structured questionnaire so as to elicit the information on food buying practices and how far the information written on food label was used in choosing different food items by the respondents. The collected data was consolidated, tabulated and analysed statistically (Panse and Sukhatme, 1985).

### OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

Various aspects of food labels viewed by the consumers before buying the food items are given in Table 1. It was observed that all the selected consumers gave importance to quality followed by price while purchasing of food products. It was found that significantly more per cent of doctors (98) and professors (96) were noticing information written on food label in regard to safety and health hazards followed by price and taste as compared to lawyers and businessmen while buying the food products. The brand image of products was noticed by more per cent (72) of businessmen followed by professors (60) lawyers (56) and doctors (54).

Fifty per cent businessmen and 32 per cent professors were noticing discount written on food labels

during purchasing of food products. It was significantly more per cent among businessmen than that of doctors and lawyers. The results of the present study are in line with the results of the study conducted by Koutroulou and Tsourgiannis (2011). They reported that, factors such as taste, quality, price and health safety found to be influenced on purchasing behaviour of consumers. Even the study conducted by Ward *et al.* (2012) indicated that, majority of the respondents paid more for food if its taste is better.

Buying practices for new or other brand products by the selected consumers are given in Table 2. It was found that 32 per cent of lawyers, 12 per cent professors and four per cent doctors were purchasing regularly new food items or other brand products. However significant difference was observed between lawyers (32%) and doctors (4%). A relatively more per cent of doctors (92), businessmen (92) and professors (88) were purchasing occasionally new or other food products than that of lawyers (68). But it was not significant statistically. On the other hand, only four per cent of doctors and eight per cent of businessmen were reported to be not purchasing new food products.

On the whole, significantly more per cent of lawyers had the practice of purchasing new food products regularly than that of other selected consumers. Whereas

**Table 1 : Various aspects of food labels viewed by the consumers before buying the foods**

Particulars	Lawyers (%) a	Doctors (%) b	Businessmen (%) c	Professors (%) d	't' value					
					a vs b	a vs c	a vs d	b vs c	b vs d	c vs d
Quality	100 (50)	100 (50)	100 (50)	100 (50)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Price	86 (43)	94 (47)	94 (47)	86 (43)	0.423 <sup>NS</sup>	0.423 <sup>NS</sup>	NS	NS	0.423 <sup>NS</sup>	0.423 <sup>NS</sup>
Discount / free	14 (7)	14 (7)	50 (25)	32 (16)	NS	3.232 <sup>**</sup>	1.918 <sup>NS</sup>	3.232 <sup>**</sup>	1.918 <sup>NS</sup>	1.423 <sup>NS</sup>
Taste	54 (27)	82 (41)	68 (34)	74 (37)	1.710 <sup>NS</sup>	0.903 <sup>NS</sup>	1.259 <sup>NS</sup>	0.813 <sup>NS</sup>	0.455 <sup>NS</sup>	0.358 <sup>NS</sup>
Safety and health hazards	70 (35)	98 (49)	74 (37)	96 (48)	1.536 <sup>NS</sup>	0.237 <sup>NS</sup>	1.435 <sup>NS</sup>	1.301 <sup>NS</sup>	0.102 <sup>NS</sup>	1.200 <sup>NS</sup>
Brand images	56 (28)	54 (27)	72 (36)	60 (30)	0.136 <sup>NS</sup>	1.007 <sup>NS</sup>	0.264 <sup>NS</sup>	1.143 <sup>NS</sup>	0.400 <sup>NS</sup>	0.744 <sup>NS</sup>
Friends Recommendation	26 (13)	20 (10)	34 (17)	38 (19)	0.639 <sup>NS</sup>	0.742 <sup>NS</sup>	1.077 <sup>NS</sup>	1.372 <sup>NS</sup>	1.700 <sup>NS</sup>	0.338 <sup>NS</sup>

Figures in parenthesis indicate number

\* and \*\* indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

NS=Non-significant

**Table 2 : Buying practices for new or other brand products by the selected consumers**

Particulars	Lawyers (%) a	Doctors (%) b	Businessmen (%) c	Professors (%) d	't' value					
					a vs b	a vs c	a vs d	b vs c	b vs d	c vs d
Regular	32 (16)	4 (2)	-	12 (6)	3.395 <sup>**</sup>	NS	2.182 <sup>*</sup>	NS	1.511 <sup>NS</sup>	NS
Occasional	68 (34)	92 (46)	92 (46)	88 (44)	1.350 <sup>NS</sup>	1.350 <sup>NS</sup>	1.139 <sup>NS</sup>	NS	0.211 <sup>NS</sup>	0.211 <sup>NS</sup>
Not at all	-	4 (2)	8 (4)	-	NS	NS	NS	0.894 <sup>NS</sup>	NS	NS

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occasional purchasing of new food products or other products was more common among all the selected consumers.

Consumer response for purchase of new or other brand food products is given in Table 3. It was observed that while purchasing new food products or other brand products whenever it was not available in regular shop a relatively very high per cent of consumers found to be searching in other shop. The practice of postpone buying was also noticed in more number of doctors (38) followed by businessmen (36). On the other hand, less than 30 per cent respondents had a practice of buying the available brand products. But it was statistically significant only in doctors and businessmen.

In nutshell, more than 90 per cent of the selected lawyers, doctors, professors and businessmen had the practice of searching in other shop. Around 30 per cent of consumers were buying the available branded food products. It was also noticed that, more than 70 per cent doctors and businessmen and more than 60 per cent lawyers and professors had the practice of postpone the buying of particular product.

Table 4 shows the reasons for preferring only particular shop by the selected consumers for buying. Results indicated that ease of shopping was the reason expressed by significantly more number of professors (96%), businessmen (90%) and doctors (86%) than that of lawyers (44%) for preferring only particular shop for

buying. A relatively higher percentage of doctors (94) and professors (94) preferred only particular shop for purchasing than that of lawyers (80%) and businessmen (76%) due to easily accessible. But the difference was not significant statistically. On the other hand, habitual buying (48) was the reason given by significantly more per cent of businessmen for preferring particular shop for buying as compared to doctors (20). Even same reason was expressed by 38 per cent professors and 32 per cent lawyers. It was found that good quality was the reason expressed by more professors (100%) followed by businessmen (98%), lawyers (96%) and doctors (92%) for preferring only particular shop for purchasing. Good salesman was the reason given by 30, 52, 48 and 44 per cent lawyers, doctors, businessmen and professors, respectively.

On the whole results indicated that more number of professors as compared to consumers of other professions preferred particular shop for purchasing because of ease of shopping, easily accessible and good quality of the products.

### Conclusion :

It was found that all the selected consumers gave importance to quality followed by price of the product. Information disclosed on food label such as safety and health hazards by the doctors and professors whereas price and taste of the product by the lawyers and

**Table 3 : Consumer's response for purchase of new or other brand food products**

Particulars	Lawyers (%) a	Doctors (%) b	Businessmen (%) c	Professors (%) d	't' value					
					a vs b	a vs c	a vs d	b vs c	b vs d	c vs d
Search in other shop	98 (49)	94 (47)	96 (48)	88 (44)	0.205 <sup>NS</sup>	0.102 <sup>NS</sup>	0.521 <sup>NS</sup>	0.103 <sup>NS</sup>	0.316 <sup>NS</sup>	0.419 <sup>NS</sup>
Buy the available brand	20 (10)	10 (5)	30 (15)	26 (13)	1.336 <sup>NS</sup>	1.020 <sup>NS</sup>	0.639 <sup>NS</sup>	2.294*	1.940 <sup>NS</sup>	0.384 <sup>NS</sup>
Postpone buying	62 (31)	76 (38)	72 (36)	60 (30)	0.848 <sup>NS</sup>	0.615 <sup>NS</sup>	0.129 <sup>NS</sup>	0.234 <sup>NS</sup>	0.977 <sup>NS</sup>	0.744 <sup>NS</sup>

Figures in parenthesis indicate number

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**Table 4 : Reasons for preferring only particular shops by the selected consumers for buying**

Particulars	Lawyers (%) a	Doctors (%) b	Businessmen (%) c	Professors (%) d	't' value					
					a vs b	a vs c	a vs d	b vs c	b vs d	c vs d
Easy shopping	44 (22)	86 (43)	90 (45)	96 (43)	2.124*	2.831**	3.058**	0.214 <sup>NS</sup>	0.511 <sup>NS</sup>	0.303 <sup>NS</sup>
Easily accessible	80 (40)	94 (47)	76 (38)	94 (47)	4.949**	0.227 <sup>NS</sup>	0.754 <sup>NS</sup>	0.981 <sup>NS</sup>	NS	0.981 <sup>NS</sup>
Habit	32 (16)	20 (10)	48 (24)	38 (19)	NS	1.281 <sup>NS</sup>	0.514 <sup>NS</sup>	2.437*	1.70 <sup>NS</sup>	0.771 <sup>NS</sup>
Good quality	96 (48)	92 (46)	98 (49)	100 (50)	NS	0.102 <sup>NS</sup>	0.203 <sup>NS</sup>	0.309 <sup>NS</sup>	0.410 <sup>NS</sup>	0.101 <sup>NS</sup>
Good salesman	30 (15)	52 (26)	48 (24)	44 (22)	1.1 <sup>NS</sup>	1.459 <sup>NS</sup>	1.166 <sup>NS</sup>	0.285 <sup>NS</sup>	0.583 <sup>NS</sup>	0.298 <sup>NS</sup>

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businessmen were mostly noticed during purchasing of food products. Results showed that 96 per cent professors were preferring particular shop for purchasing due to ease of shopping, easily accessible and good quality of the product.

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