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## Research Article

# CONSUMER AWARENESS OF URBAN WOMEN TOWARDS READY TO EAT SELECTED PACKAGED FOOD

Garima Babel<sup>1\*</sup> and Madhu Chauhan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Home Science, Faculty of Social sciences and Humanities, Bhupal Noble's University Udaipur Rajasthan, India

<sup>2</sup>Faculty Social Sciences and Department of Home Science, Mohanlal Sukhadia University Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

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### ABSTRACT

Today consumers have many options and are much better equipped with information to choose from these available options. The consumer now exhibits a totally different buying behavior what they used to do in a regulated market. Women are most powerful consumers in the world as they control almost 80 percent of the household spending. And no longer can the women's spending powers and influence be neglected. The role of women in the society and their effects has changed. In the modern days, where the life is at fast pace time has become very valuable to every person & hence "Packaged Foods" play an important role in everyone's day-to-day life. Also, the food habits in India have changed due to the Western influence and the usage of these foods is on the rise. The aim of this paper was to explore and understand consumer awareness of urban women with special reference ready to eat selected packaged food. These foods are widely used in catering industries as well as at homes. There are varieties of ready-to-eat foods available in the market to choose from and they have become a part of everyday life. The packaged food products are not only easy to cook but also have a significant role and place in the celebration of the family functions and religious functions of the people. Hence the research has been conducted in the area of Kota city of Rajasthan. Thus it can be concluded that working women consumers are more aware, better knowledge and better purchasing decision and buying behavior of consumers regarding packaged food products.

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### INTRODUCTION

The need for of consumer awareness as a class cannot overemphasize and is already well recognized all over the world. The level of awareness of the consumer can be taken as an indicator of the progress of a country. In India, women form a significant part of the consumer force. The nature of the consumer products under the capitalistic system makes consumption dependent on the purchasing power of the population. The buying behavior is vastly influenced by awareness and attitude towards the ready to eat packaged food. Commercial advertisements over television was said to be the most important source of information, followed by displays in retail outlets. Consumers do build opinion about a brand on the basis of which various product features play an important role in decision making process. A large number of respondents laid emphasis on quality and felt that price is an important factor while the others attached importance to image of manufacturer. (Topoyan *et al.*, 2008) Mitul Deliya & Bhavesh Parmar (2012) has studies the "Role of Packaging on Consumer Buying

Behavior – Patan District". The aim of this article is to get the A study to point towards role of packaging on consumer buying behavior. The basic purpose of this it is to find out how such factors are behind the success of packaging. The purpose of this research is to know the relationship between independent variable and dependent variables. The research is based in Patan District of Gujarat (India). The packaging is the most important factor. The consumer buying behavior is dependent on the packaging and on its features. Packaging elements like Packaging color. Background Image, Packaging Material, Font Style, Design of wrapper, Printed Information and Innovation is taken as predictors. Due to increasing self-service and changing consumers' lifestyle the interest in package as a tool of sales promotion and stimulator of impulsive buying behavior is growing increasingly. So package performs an important role in marketing communications, especially in the point of sale and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision.

\*Corresponding author: Garima Babel

Department of Home Science P. G. Girls College, B.N University Udaipur

**Objective**

To find the level of awareness of urban women consumers working and non working towards packaged food.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Preliminary discussions were held with the urban women consumers about the ready- to- eat food products preferred in the study area to gather information on the products to be selected for the study. Based on the discussions, the most commonly available and used products in the study area were selected. The particular products were selected in such a way as to represent one product from each food group like snacks, bakery, preservative, beverages and milk and milk products. The Sample size of the study comprised total 240 urban women consumers. Total sample was divided into two categories of 120 working and 120 from non working women. The age group selected for working and non working urban women consumer will be 35-40 years they are from upper middle class family group (Monthly Income of Rs. 60,000/ to 90,000/). The working women were selected from educational organization/institution which is divided into N160 N2 60 and N3 60 samples and non working urban women consumers from consumer shops of Kota city like big bazaar, Ganesh Mart and retail shops which is further divided into N160, N2 60 and N3 60 samples. To study the buying behavior of urban women consumers towards packaged food products, random sampling technique and convenience sampling technique was adopted. Convenience and random sampling method will be used for this study.

The present study will be undertaken in the area of Kota city of Rajasthan. Interview method was advocated to study the present trends in consumer buying behavior of urban women consumers.

The method of collecting information through personal interview is usually carried out in a structured way. To enable the investigator to put forth questions in a coherent manner, later explained the purpose of the study and collected relevant information from the urban women consumers. The collected data were systematically consolidated and analyzed. The data collected for the study was processed and analyzed by using suitable statistical techniques. Frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ Test techniques were used to present the collected data.

**RESULTS**

This study explore the awareness of urban working and non working women consumers regarding ready to eat various packaged foods was classified into five parts like snacks, bakery products, preservative products, Beverages & Milk & Milk Products From the Literature review and experts opinion various Possible urban women consumer’s awareness measures were identified and then respondents were requested to freely contribute to their adopted buying practices for consumer awareness of urban women.

**Respondents’ Awareness about Ready to Eat Packaged Food**

Table 1 is representing the respondents’ awareness about ready to eat packaged food products.

**Table 1** Respondents’ Awareness about Ready to Eat Packaged Food

Ready to Eat	Working Women					Non-Working Women				
	Response	N	Percentage	Score	Average Awareness Score	Response	N	Percentage	Score	Average Awareness Score
Snacks	Biscuits	Yes	113	94.2	113	No	118	98.3	118	94.3
		No	7	5.8			2	1.7		
	Potato Chips	Yes	113	94.2	113	No	91	75.8	91	
		No	7	5.8			29	24.2		
Bakery	Kurkure	Yes	80	66.7	80	No	74	61.7	74	
		No	40	33.3			46	38.3		
	Cakes	Yes	57	47.5	57	No	61	50.8	61	
		No	63	52.5			59	49.2		
Preservative Products	Bread	Yes	117	97.5	117	No	116	96.7	116	86.0
		No	3	2.5			4	3.3		
	Toast	Yes	103	85.8	103	No	81	67.5	81	
		No	17	14.2			39	32.5		
Beverages	Jam	Yes	115	95.8	115	No	103	85.8	103	
		No	5	4.2			17	14.2		
	Jelly	Yes	58	48.3	58	No	44	36.7	44	71.7
		No	62	51.7			76	63.3		
Milk & Milk Products	Catch up	Yes	86	71.7	86	No	68	56.7	68	
		No	34	28.3			52	43.3		
	Horlicks	Yes	116	96.7	116	No	114	95.0	114	
		No	4	3.3			6	5.0		
Milk & Milk Products	Cold Drinks	Yes	78	65.0	78	No	74	61.7	74	75.0
		No	42	35.0			46	38.3		
	Canned Juices	Yes	50	41.7	50	No	37	30.8	37	
		No	70	58.3			83	69.2		
Milk & Milk Products	Flavored Milk	Yes	31	25.8	31	No	45	37.5	45	
		No	89	74.2			75	62.5		
	Cheese	Yes	42	35.0	42	No	50	41.7	50	69.3
		No	78	65.0			70	58.3		
Butter	Yes	115	95.8	115	No	113	94.2	113		
	No	5	4.2			7	5.8			

On the basis of average awareness score it can be concluded that 80% of the working women (Score=102) know that snacks comes under packaged food product while this score is 94.3 in the case of non-working women.

Yee and Young (2001), aimed to create awareness of high fat content of pies, studied consumer and producer awareness about nutrition labeling on packaging. For this, seven leading pie brands were analyzed for fat content and are ranged from 7.1 to 19.2% fat. Potato topped or cottage pies had the lowest fat content (7.1-9.2% fat). Most pies did not display nutritional labeling on packaging. Over half of the consumers (52%) who responded to the survey (42% response rate) were aware of the campaign. The study was successful at raising consumer awareness about the high fat content of pies and influencing the food environment with a greater availability of lower fat pies. It is possible to produce acceptable lower fat pies and food companies should be encouraged to make small changes to the fat content of food products like pies. Potato topped pies are lower in fat and are widely available. Regular pie eaters could be encouraged to select these as a lower fat option. Significant number of working women indicated their awareness for bakery (Score=92.3), Preservative products (Score=86.3) and beverages (Score=81.3).

Nandagopal and Chinnaiyan (2003) concluded that the level of awareness among the rural consumers about the brand of soft drinks was high which was indicated by the mode of purchase of the soft drinks by "Brand Name". The major source of brand awareness was word of mouth followed by advertisements, family members, relatives and friends. Almost the similar results bakery (Score=86.0), Preservative products (Score=71.7) and beverages (Score=75) were observed in non-working women category.

In ready to eat packaged food category the awareness score for working (Score=62.7) as well as non-working women (Score=69.3) was found comparatively low, which indicates that approximately half of the respondents do not know that milk & milk products comes under ready to eat packaged food category.

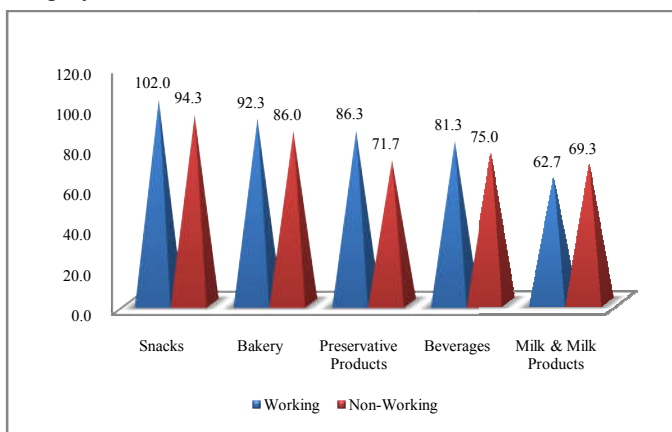


Chart 1 Respondents' Awareness about Ready to Eat Packaged Food

## CONCLUSION

The Social media is one area where these changes are significantly visible, targeting the urban women consumers and thus influencing their purchasing behavior. The urban consumer purchases various commodities for their basic needs in order to sustain life. Among the crucial needs in this earth, food is the most essential requirement. Thus, in order to make desirable changes in the knowledge and buying behaviour of the consumer, "consumer consciousness" is the need of the hour, which has to be promoted at the global level. This study is aimed to access the consumer's awareness and create empowerment of urban women consumer regarding the information on the health and safety information labels on packed food product and to identify whether these labels will help women consumers to take right decisions when choosing a ready to eat packaged food product for family. Thus it can be concluded that working women consumers are more aware, better knowledge and better purchasing decision and buying behavior of consumers regarding packaged food products.

## Recommendation

- Advocate the development of consumer information programmers through mass media to reach urban area.
- Consumer empowerment of urban women should become knowledgeable on better purchasing power.

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