

## A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS FOOD LABELING AND PACKAGING

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### **Abstract**

*Food labeling and packaging play a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing behaviour and promoting healthy food choices. The present study examines consumer awareness and attitudes towards food labeling and packaging in the districts of Saharanpur, Chandausi, and Sambhal. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to consumers from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and occupations. The study evaluates consumers' understanding of food labels, nutritional information, expiry dates, ingredients, and packaging attributes that influence purchasing decisions. The findings reveal that although consumers are attracted by attractive packaging and branding, many still have limited knowledge of interpreting nutritional information correctly. Educational level and awareness significantly affect consumers' label-reading behaviour. The study concludes that effective labeling practices, transparent packaging, and consumer education programmes can improve informed purchasing decisions and promote healthier food consumption. The findings provide useful suggestions for policymakers, food manufacturers, and regulatory authorities to strengthen food labeling standards and enhance public awareness.*

### **Keywords**

*Consumer Awareness, Food Labeling, Food Packaging, Consumer Attitude, Nutritional Information, Purchasing Behaviour, Food Safety, Healthy Food Choices.*

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## **Introduction**

Food labeling and packaging have become essential components of modern food marketing and consumer protection. Food labels provide valuable information regarding ingredients, nutritional value, manufacturing date, expiry date, storage instructions, allergen information, and usage instructions. This information enables consumers to make informed purchasing decisions and encourages healthy food consumption.

Packaging is no longer limited to protecting food products from damage during transportation and storage. It has become an effective marketing tool that attracts consumers through attractive colours, innovative designs, brand image, and convenient product presentation. Well-designed packaging creates a positive perception of product quality and increases consumer confidence.

In recent years, increasing health consciousness, changing lifestyles, and growing awareness about nutrition have encouraged consumers to pay greater attention to food labels before purchasing packaged food products. However, many consumers still do not read or correctly understand nutritional information, which often results in unhealthy purchasing decisions.

Consumer awareness regarding food labeling is influenced by several factors, including education, income, age, nutritional knowledge, and purchasing habits. Consumers who understand food labels are more likely to compare products, evaluate nutritional value, and select healthier food options. Therefore, improving consumer awareness is essential for promoting public health and responsible food consumption.

The present study focuses on examining consumer awareness and attitudes towards food labeling and packaging in the districts of Saharanpur, Chandausi, and Sambhal. The study also evaluates how food labels and packaging influence purchasing behaviour and identifies measures to improve consumer awareness. The findings will be useful for policymakers, food manufacturers, regulatory authorities, and consumer organizations in strengthening food labeling practices and promoting healthier food choices.

Furthermore, rapid urbanization, changing food consumption patterns, and the increasing availability of packaged food products have made food labeling more important than ever before. Consumers are now exposed to a wide variety of domestic and international food products, making it essential for them to understand label information before making purchasing decisions. Proper knowledge of nutritional values, serving size, food additives, and certification marks enables consumers to compare products and select healthier alternatives. In addition, transparent labeling

practices enhance consumer confidence and strengthen the relationship between manufacturers and consumers. Therefore, improving food label literacy is essential for protecting consumer rights, ensuring food safety, and encouraging responsible food consumption. The present study aims to contribute to this area by providing evidence-based findings from the selected study region.

### **Literature Review**

Several researchers have examined consumer awareness and attitudes towards food labeling and packaging. Kotler and Keller (2012) stated that packaging is an important marketing tool that attracts consumers, creates brand value, and influences purchasing behaviour. Attractive packaging enhances product visibility and positively affects consumer perception.

Schiffman, Kanuk, and Hansen (2014) explained that consumer behaviour is influenced by psychological, social, cultural, and personal factors. Food labels provide valuable information that enables consumers to evaluate product quality, nutritional value, and safety before making purchasing decisions.

According to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI, 2022), food labels should clearly mention ingredients, nutritional value, manufacturing date, expiry date, allergen information, and storage instructions. Proper food labeling improves consumer awareness and supports healthier food choices.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) emphasized that effective food labeling helps consumers identify healthier food products and reduces the risk of diet-related diseases. Simple and easy-to-understand labeling systems encourage informed purchasing decisions.

Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of food labeling and packaging, limited research has focused on consumer awareness and attitudes in the districts of Saharanpur, Chandausi, and Sambhal. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this research gap by examining consumer awareness, purchasing behaviour, and attitudes towards food labeling and packaging in the selected study area.

Recent studies have also highlighted that digital technology and social media have significantly influenced consumer awareness regarding food labeling and packaging. Consumers frequently search online for product reviews, nutritional information, and health recommendations before purchasing packaged food products. The increasing use of smartphones and digital applications has enabled consumers to compare products more effectively and make informed purchasing decisions. Researchers have suggested that improving digital awareness along with proper

food labeling practices can strengthen consumer confidence, encourage healthy eating habits, and promote greater transparency in the food industry. These findings support the importance of continuous consumer education and effective implementation of food labeling regulations.

### **Objectives of The Study**

1. To examine the level of consumer awareness regarding food labeling.
2. To analyze consumer attitudes towards food packaging.
3. To evaluate the influence of food labels on consumers' purchasing decisions.
4. To assess consumers' understanding of nutritional information provided on food labels.
5. To identify the factors affecting consumer awareness and label-reading behaviour.
6. To suggest suitable measures for improving consumer awareness regarding food labeling and packaging.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based primarily on primary data. The study was conducted in the selected districts of Saharanpur, Chandausi, and Sambhal to examine consumer awareness and attitudes towards food labeling and packaging.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to consumers belonging to different age groups, educational qualifications, occupations, and income levels. Random sampling was adopted to select the respondents to ensure fair representation of the study population.

The questionnaire included questions related to food label reading habits, awareness of nutritional information, packaging preferences, purchasing behaviour, and consumer attitudes towards packaged food products. The collected data were classified, tabulated, and analyzed using percentage analysis and simple statistical techniques. The results were interpreted to understand consumer behaviour and achieve the objectives of the study.

The study maintained ethical standards throughout the research process. The confidentiality of respondents was protected, participation was voluntary, and the information collected was used only for academic purposes. Every effort was made to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the collected data.

To improve the reliability of the study, respondents were selected from different demographic backgrounds, including students, working professionals, homemakers, and businesspersons. This diversity helped in obtaining a broader

understanding of consumer awareness and attitudes towards food labeling and packaging. The responses were carefully verified before analysis to minimize errors and improve the accuracy of the research findings. The adopted research methodology ensured that the collected information was relevant, reliable, and suitable for achieving the objectives of the study.

### **Results and Discussion**

The findings of the study indicate that consumer awareness regarding food labeling and packaging is gradually increasing. Most respondents reported that they examine important information such as the manufacturing date, expiry date, ingredients, and nutritional value before purchasing packaged food products. However, a significant number of consumers still do not read complete nutritional information or understand technical terms mentioned on food labels.

The study further reveals that packaging plays an important role in influencing consumer purchasing behaviour. Attractive product design, colour combinations, brand image, and convenient packaging positively affect consumer perception and increase purchase intention. Consumers generally associate attractive packaging with better product quality and safety.

The analysis also shows that educational level, income, and nutritional knowledge significantly influence food label reading behaviour. Consumers with higher educational qualifications were found to pay greater attention to nutritional information and ingredients before making purchasing decisions. In contrast, less educated consumers relied mainly on brand image and product appearance.

The study further suggests that awareness programmes, consumer education campaigns, and transparent labeling practices can significantly improve consumers' understanding of food labels. Government agencies, food manufacturers, and educational institutions should work together to encourage consumers to read and correctly interpret food labels before purchasing packaged food products.

Overall, the findings conclude that effective food labeling and responsible packaging not only influence consumer purchasing behaviour but also promote healthier food choices, improve consumer confidence, and contribute to better public health.

The study also reveals that consumer awareness is gradually improving due to increased access to health-related information through television, newspapers, social media, and digital platforms. Many respondents expressed their willingness to purchase products with clear nutritional labeling and certified quality standards. Consumers also believed that simplified food labels with easy-to-understand symbols

and nutritional information would help them make healthier purchasing decisions. Furthermore, stronger implementation of food safety regulations and regular public awareness campaigns can enhance consumer confidence in packaged food products. These findings indicate that improving food label literacy and promoting transparent packaging practices are essential for protecting consumer interests and encouraging sustainable and healthy food consumption.

### **Suggestions and Practical Implications**

Consumer awareness programmes should be organized regularly to educate people about the importance of reading food labels before purchasing packaged food products.

Food manufacturers should provide clear, accurate, and easy-to-understand labeling information, including nutritional value, ingredients, allergen details, manufacturing date, and expiry date.

Government agencies and regulatory authorities should strengthen monitoring systems to ensure compliance with food labeling standards and protect consumer interests.

Educational institutions and healthcare organizations should promote nutritional literacy through seminars, workshops, and public awareness campaigns.

Consumers should be encouraged to compare food products based on nutritional information rather than relying only on attractive packaging and brand image.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that food labeling and packaging play a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing behaviour and promoting informed food choices. Although consumer awareness regarding food labels has improved in recent years, many consumers still face difficulties in understanding nutritional information and interpreting food labels correctly.

The findings indicate that attractive packaging strongly influences purchasing decisions, while educational level and nutritional knowledge determine the extent to which consumers use food label information. Therefore, improving consumer awareness through educational programmes, transparent labeling practices, and effective government regulations is essential.

The study recommends that food manufacturers provide accurate, clear, and consumer-friendly labeling information. Government agencies should strengthen food labeling regulations and conduct regular awareness campaigns to encourage healthy food choices. Future researchers may extend this study to other regions

with larger sample sizes for more comprehensive findings. Overall, improved food labeling practices and greater consumer awareness will contribute to healthier lifestyles, informed purchasing decisions, and better public health.

The study also emphasizes that continuous consumer education, effective implementation of food safety regulations, and cooperation between government agencies, educational institutions, and food manufacturers are essential for improving consumer awareness. Such initiatives will strengthen consumer confidence, encourage healthier purchasing behaviour, and contribute to sustainable public health development.

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