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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS INSTANT MILLET-BASED FOOD PRODUCTS: A MARKET STUDY

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#### Abstract

Millets are gaining increasing attention as nutritious and sustainable food grains. With the growing demand for healthy and convenient food options, instant millet-based food products have become popular among consumers. This study aims to analyze the buying behaviour of consumers towards instant millet-based food products and identify the factors influencing their purchase decisions. The research focuses on consumer awareness, preferences, health consciousness, price sensitivity, and availability of millet-based instant foods. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire from consumers, and the data was analyzed using statistical tools. The findings of the study reveal that health benefits, nutritional value, and convenience significantly influence consumer purchasing behaviour. The study also highlights the importance of marketing strategies and awareness programs in promoting millet-based products. This research provides insights for manufacturers and marketers to better understand consumer needs and encourage the adoption of millet-based foods.

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#### Introduction:-

Millets are traditional grains known for their high nutritional value, rich fibre content, and health benefits. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness among consumers regarding healthy eating habits and sustainable food choices. As a result, millet-based food products have gained popularity in the modern food market. Instant millet-based food products such as ready-to-cook mixes, instant dosa mix, millet noodles, and ready-to-eat snacks provide both convenience and nutrition for consumers with busy lifestyles. These products combine the health benefits of millets with the convenience of instant foods. Consumer buying behaviour plays a crucial role in determining the success of these products in the market. Understanding consumer preferences, attitudes, and purchasing decisions helps producers and marketers develop effective strategies to promote millet-based foods. This study aims to analyze the buying behaviour of consumers towards instant millet-based food products and identify the factors influencing their purchasing decisions.

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**Objectives of the Study:-**

- To study the buying behaviour of consumers towards instant millet-based food products.
- To analyze the factors influencing consumer purchase decisions.
- To examine the level of consumer awareness about millet-based foods.
- To identify the most preferred types of instant millet products.
- To provide suggestions for improving the marketing of millet-based food products.

**Research Methodology:-**

The researcher aims to measure the preferences of customers towards instant food products. Convenience sampling method is used to collect the data. The sample size of the study is 150 respondents. The data required for the study has been collected from the primary data source. The questionnaire consists of closed ended questions and multiple choice questions. The following statistical tools have been used to analyze the primary data.

- ❖ Percentage Analysis
- ❖ Chi-square test
- ❖ T-Test
- ❖ Anova
- ❖ Friedman’s Rank test

**Literature Review:-**

Binkey Srivastava (2024) conducted a study on the consumer buying patterns of processed food products in the National Capital Region of India. The study aimed to analyze consumer purchasing behaviour towards processed foods, identify the key factors influencing consumers’ purchase decisions, and examine changes in food preferences and buying patterns. The research used a convenience sampling method with a sample size of 300 respondents. Various statistical tools such as exploratory factor analysis, t-test, ANOVA, chi-square test, and regression analysis were applied for data interpretation. The findings indicated that changing lifestyles, external influences, health awareness, and quality concerns are the major factors influencing the consumption of processed food products.

Ramya and Gunaseelaprabhu (2023) conducted a study on consumer satisfaction towards instant food products. The primary objective of the research was to analyze the level of satisfaction among customers using different instant food items and to compare the demographic characteristics of respondents with various factors influencing their level of acceptance. For this purpose, data were collected from 150 respondents. The study concluded that expanding the distribution network would help improve product availability and enable brands to reach customers more effectively. The findings also revealed that most respondents were restaurant owners, the majority were male graduates, and a large proportion belonged to the age group of 36–45 years and were professionals. Research studies have also shown that factors such as health consciousness, product availability, taste, price, and brand image significantly influence consumer purchasing behaviour. Consumers are increasingly shifting towards convenient and ready-to-cook food products due to their busy lifestyles. Previous studies highlight that awareness campaigns and government initiatives promoting millets have positively influenced consumer acceptance. However, lack of awareness and limited availability in some markets still affect the purchase decisions of consumers. Therefore, understanding consumer buying behaviour towards instant millet-based food products is important for manufacturers and marketers to develop effective marketing strategies.

**Scope of the Study:-**

The study focuses on analyzing consumer preferences toward instant millet-based food products. It is conducted among randomly selected consumers who use instant food products. The research examines consumer satisfaction, purchasing behaviour, perceived benefits, and the difficulties faced by consumers while using instant millet-based food products.

**Factors Influencing of Instant Food Products Used by the Customer’s**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Easily available	150	1.00	4.00	1.9067	.72673

Convenience	150	1.00	5.00	2.2800	1.04348
Safety assurance	150	1.00	3.00	1.7733	.54523
Maintenance Of Quality	150	1.00	3.00	1.4800	.60998
Brand Image of the products	150	1.00	5.00	1.6867	.93505
Packaging of the products	150	1.00	5.00	2.1533	.94646
Retailer influence	150	1.00	5.00	2.3200	1.22786
Taste of the products	150	1.00	5.00	2.2733	1.12862
Special dietary requirement	150	1.00	5.00	2.6133	1.10391
General health interest	150	1.00	5.00	2.0933	1.00567
Fitness interest	150	1.00	5.00	2.3733	1.05262
Organic concern	150	1.00	5.00	2.4400	1.14388
Price of the products	150	1.00	5.00	2.5333	1.12128
Valid (list wise)	N 150				

Source of Data: Computed Data From the above table, it can be observed that respondents give the highest preference to special dietary requirements with a mean score of 2.61. This is followed by product price with a mean score of 2.53. Meanwhile, maintenance of quality receives a comparatively moderate level of preference with a mean score of 1.48.

#### Rank of the Factors Of The Consumer According To Their Preferences

S. No	PREFERENCE	MEANRANK	RANK
1	Brand	1.34	5
2	Quantity	1.87	4
3	Price	4.38	1
4	Quality	3.82	2
5	Packaging	3.59	3

From the above table it is observed that the respondents have given the rank according to their preferences by the customer's using instant food products and has given first rank to Price of the product, Second rank to Quality of the product, Third rank to Packaging of the product, Fourth rank to Quantity of the product and Fifth rank to Brand of the product.

Test Statistics	
N	150
Chi-square	469.537
Df	4
Aysmp.Sig	<.001
Friedmantest	

Ranking as per the above table is valid as the chi-square table values are statistically significant. All respondents have equally responded equally for the entire preference list.

**Comparison Of descriptive and Anova for the factors influencing used by the customers among demographic factors:**

FACTOR	CLASSIFICATION	N	MEAN	SD	F	Sig.	INFERENCE
AGE	15-20 years	48	1.9776	.57234	2.301	.080	NS
	21-30 years	64	2.1827	.67095			
	31-40 years	18	2.2350	.51261			
	Above 40 years	20	2.3692	.58402			
MONTHLY INCOME	Below10,000	43	1.9517	.56850	2.766	.044	S
	10,001-25,000	43	2.3059	.65969			
	25,001-45,000	35	2.2374	.60032			
	45,001 & Above	29	2.0981	.60075			
OCCUPATION	Student	55	1.9678	.51976	2.563	.041	S
	Employee	44	2.2605	.70388			
	Homemaker	13	2.3314	.51829			
	Professional	16	2.3894	.69457			

**Significance at 5% Level**

The table shows that respondents above 40 years highly prefer instant food products with a mean score of 2.3692, followed by respondents aged 31–40 years (2.2350), while respondents aged 15–20 years show moderate preference. The ANOVA result shows a significance value of 0.213 ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that there is no significant difference among age groups. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Respondents with a monthly income of Rs.10,001–Rs.25,000 highly prefer instant food products with a mean score of 2.3059, followed by those earning Rs.25,001–Rs.45,000 (2.2374), while respondents earning below Rs.10,000 (1.9517) show moderate preference. The significance value is 0.044 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a significant difference among income groups. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Professionals show the highest preference for instant food products with a mean score of 2.3894, followed by homemakers (2.3314), while students (1.9678) show moderate preference. The significance value is 0.041 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a significant difference based on occupation. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Respondents with more than five family members highly prefer instant food products with a mean score of 2.2769, followed by those with four members (2.2210). The significance value is 0.080 ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating no significant difference based on family size. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

**Findings:-**

- The age of the respondents does not show a significant difference with respect to the factors influencing the use of instant food products.
- The occupation of the respondents shows a significant difference in relation to the factors influencing instant food product usage.
- The monthly income of the respondents significantly influences the factors affecting the use of instant food products.
- The number of family members of the respondents does not show a significant difference with the factors influencing instant food product usage.
- The gender of the respondents does not significantly influence the factors affecting the use of instant food products.
- The Friedman Rank Test indicates that price is ranked first, followed by quality in the second position and packaging in the third position based on customer preferences.

**Conclusion:-**

Instant food products have become an essential part of modern daily life. In India, food consumption patterns have changed significantly due to western influence, leading to an increase in the use of instant food items. The growing consumption of instant food products is mainly driven by factors such as rapid urbanization, the decline of the traditional joint family system, busy lifestyles, convenience, time-saving benefits, and the rising income levels of the middle-class population. The easy availability of instant foods and the convenience they offer are major reasons for their increased consumption. Supermarkets and food outlets are the primary places where consumers purchase instant food products. In recent years, consumers' relationship with food and other everyday products has changed considerably, not only in the way they buy products but also in the way they consume them. Therefore, companies should focus on increasing awareness and promoting instant food products through effective marketing strategies, advertisements, and various media platforms in order to reach and attract different groups of consumers.

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