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An Analysis of Consumer Knowledge of Green FMCG Products in the Food and Drink Sectors with Special Reference to Delhi

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ABSTRACT

As customer awareness and demand for sustainable solutions grow, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms are increasingly offering green items. Consumer awareness in the food and beverage FMCG category was examined in this study using a special focus on Delhi Metro. Questionnaires were distributed to 300 consumers in Delhi Metro assessing awareness levels, perceptions, motivations, and purchasing behaviors regarding green FMCG products. Key findings show that while awareness exists regarding organic foods and ingredients, a comprehensive understanding of green products is limited. Health consciousness is the prime motivation for purchase rather than environmental reasons. Barriers include higher prices, limited availability, and confusion around labels/claims. Recommendations include consumer education programs, expanded distribution channels, government incentives for producers, and enforced labeling standards by regulators. In Delhi, focused efforts can increase consumer knowledge and use of green FMCG products, which will benefit industry participants, consumers, and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: food and drinks, FMCG, consumer awareness, green products, Delhi.

Introduction

Demand for eco-friendly and a sustainable product has increased significantly in recent years across all consumer sectors. Words like "natural," "organic," "recyclable," and "fair trade" are more becoming more prevalent in homes and businesses. Rising affluence, educational attainment, information availability, and—most importantly—increasing environmental consciousness about problems like pollution, climate change, health, and conservation are the main drivers of this trend.
The market for sustainable fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) is growing rapidly on a global scale. Low-cost, high-volume goods that sell quickly to customers at comparatively low prices are referred to as FMCG. The majority of FMCG categories are made up of food, drinks, personal care products, over-the-counter medications, and home care items.
Due to shifting consumer tastes, stricter laws, stakeholder pressures, and competitive dynamics, the worldwide green FMCG market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 7% from 2021 to 2027, reaching $1.1 trillion by 2027, according to Allied Market Research [1].
Although penetration is still lower in poorer nations than in industrialized ones, the differences are narrowing. Compared to the global average of 55%, 66% of customers in Asia-Pacific are now willing to pay more for sustainable products, according to Nielsen studies [2]. India also reflects growing demand. According to Technavio [3], the country's green FMCG market is expected to rise at a 17% CAGR until 2025 thanks to favorable regulations including FSSAI standards and rising exports.
Increasing consumer understanding of what makes "green" FMCG products important and what they are is a key component in sustaining this positive trend. Without adequate knowledge, customers are unable to identify such products in stores, critically assess claims, or sufficiently value their social and personal advantages to make a purchase. Them over less expensive, traditional substitutes. India's green FMCG sector will be able to realize its bright future if this awareness gap is closed and availability and affordability issues are resolved.
Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate consumer awareness of green FMCG items, with a particular emphasis on the high-opportunity food and beverage categories. It evaluates urban consumers'

levels of awareness, perceptions, motives, and actions with relation to green products. Additionally, as a subset, it examines these elements for customers in Delhi by gathering primary survey data.
Recommendations are made for various stakeholders to further raise consumer awareness in light of the findings. This can have a positive impact on consumption and behavior, leading to "healthier" results for consumers, producers, regulators, non-governmental organizations, and the environment.

Literature Review

Defining Green FMCG Products

Products made using methods that conserve energy and water and lower waste, emissions, and toxicity at every stage of the lifecycle are referred to as "green" consumer goods [4]. In general, they seek to increase the amount of raw materials that are recyclable, renewable, and sustainably generated materials while reducing the negative effects that sourcing, production, and distribution have on the environment [5].
Green FMCG products in India are defined by Technavio [3] as those that substitute natural, organic, or sustainably produced ingredients for synthetic and artificial ones. They also use environmentally friendly manufacturing techniques and packaging (biodegradable, recyclable, and reusable materials) to lessen their impact on the environment. Green FMCG encompasses a wide range of categories (food and beverage, household care, health, and beauty) and manifestations (natural, organic, and eco-friendly labels) under one broad term. It also includes several forms of "green," ranging from ethically traded to agrochemical-free.

Green FMCG Growth Drivers

These interrelated factors are driving the robust growth anticipated in India's green FMCG market.

- Increased health consciousness and the prevalence of lifestyle diseases are forcing consumers to consider product compositions more carefully in favor of "natural," "fresh," and "minimally processed" options that are thought to be better for personal well-being [6].
- Higher disposable incomes, media exposure, and literacy rates are also allowing more Indians to consider sustainability as a social responsibility in addition to health considerations [7].
- To encourage the production and certification of organic food and beverages, the federal and state governments are implementing a number of regulations, guidelines, and incentives [8].
- Additionally, export promotion organizations are promoting India as a significant supplier of genuine green FMCG exports [9].
- Growing private investments show how confident the industry is in green FMCG. Large domestic companies such as while Dabur, Patanjali, and Emami are expanding their ayurvedic and organic portfolios [10].
- Global behemoths like PepsiCo and Unilever integrate eco-conscious brands to cater to changing consumer tastes [11],
- The number of startups that just sell green items is growing, giving consumers even more options. The industry is also boosted by sustainable packaging innovations made by both new and established businesses employing recycled, biodegradable materials [12].
- Supply-side compliance is increased by strict quality rules, improved testing facilities, and surveillance systems.
- Consumer trust is increased by the implementation of stringent labeling regulations and universal certification requirements, which eliminate ambiguity and false "green washing" claims [13].

Perceptions and Awareness of Green Products by Consumers

Latent interest in the actual adoption of green products is mostly supported by consumer knowledge. Customers must be able to identify these products when they shop and understand why they issue, weigh opposing possibilities carefully, and use this knowledge to inform decisions about what to buy while defending any high pricing [14].
Studies show that there are significant knowledge gaps and misunderstandings regarding the environmental qualities, advantages, and trustworthy verification of green product versions in India and other developing nations [15]–[18].
When purchasing green products, consumers also consider their health benefits over social and environmental considerations. There are also misconceptions about how they affect the quality, safety, and performance of products, which breed mistrust and reduce willingness to pay [19], [20].
However, there are significant contextual differences according to product categories, income brackets, urbanization levels, and educational backgrounds [21] – [24]. Compared to older rural purchasers, younger, better-informed consumers in cities and small towns are more likely to be environmentally sensitive and accept green products. Concerns about taste, quality, and cost predominate in the latter categories.

Specific Research Gaps

Although the discussion above emphasizes the growing opportunities for the green FMCG sector as well as obstacles pertaining to consumer awareness, perceptions, and purchasing patterns, the majority of published

research takes a general approach to Indian consumers. There is a dearth of research on consumer perspectives across green product categories that are specific to a given location [25].
Similarly, organic foods and beverages receive a disproportionate amount of attention in green FMCG research, with other categories being mostly ignored. This is a significant gap because the category of "green" products is growing to include natural, sustainable, ethical, and other forms in addition to those devoid of agrochemicals. In the organic Compared to fruits and vegetables and staple foods, beverages are still poorly investigated.
Finally, there is a dearth of academic research on the viewpoints of consumers in the northeastern states of India. This frontier area has unique potential for sustainable FMCG companies meeting both domestic and export demand because of its close proximity to Bangladesh and Bhutan as well as its favorable agro climatic conditions [26]. This potential can be realized through a thorough comprehension of northeastern consumer sentiments.
All things considered, a study examining urban consumers' awareness and impressions of all green FMCG categories and offering particular regional insights for a significant northeastern
State through primary data analysis would be a useful contribution to the body of existing work.

Research Purpose, Goal, Questions, and Methodology

Purpose and Goal of the Research

With a particular focus on the Delhi, the main objective of this study is to evaluate consumer awareness, attitudes, motives, and behaviors surrounding green FMCG items in India. To evaluate Indian consumers' knowledge, attitudes, and actions around green fast-moving consumer goods, with an emphasis on those in Delhi.

Specific Goals:

1. To ascertain the degree of consumer knowledge and comprehension of the essential terminology and characteristics used to identify green products in the FMCG sector.
2. To determine the primary motivators and obstacles affecting consumers' purchases of green FMCG products.
3. To determine whether consumers are prepared to pay more for certain green product characteristics.
4. To assess customer expectations and confidence in the existing green certification and labeling systems.
5. To examine how customers' attitudes from Delhi differ and how they are similar across the country.
6. To offer suggestions to interested parties on how to raise consumer knowledge, confidence, an Using a hybrid methodology,

The objectives seek to evaluate current consumer perspectives regarding green offerings across dimensions such as awareness, perceptions, motives, and behaviors. By contrasting regional and national viewpoints and suggesting ways to stimulate dormant demand, a thorough, contextualized knowledge to support the expansion of the green FMCG industry in India.

Research Questions-

The study aims to respond to the following research questions in accordance with the established research objectives:
RQ1: What terms and characteristics do urban consumers connect with and seek out in green fast-moving consumer goods?
RQ2: Which element influences green FMCG purchase decisions more, the benefits to ecological sustainability or personal health?
RQ3: To what extent are consumers currently prepared to pay more for certain green product features?
RQ4: How best to increase consumer acceptability and trust through labeling improvements and access to verification data?
RQ5: Do Delhi customers' attitudes and actions differ from general comments on the aforementioned elements? If yes, what are the main traits and attitudes that set them apart?

Methods of Research

This study will use a mixed methodology that combines primary survey questions with secondary literature analysis.
In the first stage, the body of research on consumer attitudes toward green FMCG items in India and around the world will be critically examined. We'll also assess secondary data on the size, growth trends, definitions, important trends, and regional context of the sustainable FMCG business. This basis establishes the justification for conducting the current investigation.
After that, standardized questionnaires will be used to gather primary data from urban consumers chosen using a multi-stage random selection process. Multiple choice questions will be included in the survey instrument.

Likert scale rating statements and questions are included in the following modules:
a) Profile, b) Awareness, c) Motivations and Attitudes, d) Behaviors and Preferences, and e) Suggestions.
The following key metrics will assess unaided versus aided recall for green traits, terms and labels, the importance of information access, the influence of health versus environmental reasons for purchasing, willingness to pay levels, and desired product features. The phrasing and format of the questions will be designed to reduce biases. The duration of the survey will be appropriate for the target audiences.
Finally, the produced dataset will be subjected to a systematic analysis utilizing Excel tools and SPSS software. To identify connections between consumer characteristics like age, gender, income, education, and their opinions on green products, basic descriptive statistics will be used in conjunction with tests like chi-square, correlations, and ANOVA. Variations in replies on important metrics for customers who explicitly belong to the Delhi will also be highlighted by comparative research.
Synthesizing the research findings while taking into account practical limitations relevant to the Indian and regional context will yield recommendations. There will be recommendations made for important parties, including corporations, non-profits, and policy organizations. Future directions for study will also be emphasized.

Hypotheses for Research

The following theories will be investigated in light of the study's goals and current academic understanding of how consumers behave when purchasing eco-friendly goods:
H1: Urban Indian consumers have a low level of unaided understanding of specific terminology and standards identifying green credentials in FMCG products.
H2: The main factor influencing customer interest in and purchase of green FMCG products is personal health concerns rather than environmental preservation.
H3: There is little evidence linking demographic characteristics such as age, income, and education to a desire to pay more for sustainable product features.
H4: Consumers want stricter laws and greater openness in product labeling; they have little faith in the current certification systems supporting green claims.
H5: Customers in smaller cities are more skeptical about certification and have a stronger health orientation compare to metro based buyers.

Research Instruments

The following aspects will be measured by the primary data collection questionnaire utilizing particular tools:
• Using multiple-choice questions and unaided, assisted, and relative memory for important green product attributes Items on a Ranking Scale.
• Understanding sustainable principles through open-ended definitional inquiries.
• Rating statements on the Likert scale are used to calculate the motivational priorities driving adoption; several price threshold questions are used to capture degrees of willingness to pay.
Ranking statements are used to assess the reliability of information sources, while open comments are used to gather stakeholder suggestions.
Measures of consumer awareness, attitudes, and behaviors regarding green FMCG products will be assessed using statistical tests such as Chi-Square, ANOVA, correlations, and comparative analyses.

Analysis and Results

An Example of a Description

During August and September of 2023, 350 people from metropolitan areas within the Delhi metro area took part in the survey. 300 of them finished every question, resulting in a respectable 86% response rate. Among according to Table 1, of the respondents, 52% were men and 48% were women, spread across age groups, educational attainment levels, and monthly family income segments.
Furthermore, 75 out of 300 responders, or 25% of the subsample, were exclusively from Noida city. This made it possible to accomplish the region-specific study goal by conducting a distinct examination of Noida-based consumers.
The distribution of their profiles matched that of the entire sample.

Table 1: An explanation of the sample respondents

Consumer Attribute	Category	Percentage
Age	18-25 yrs	32%
	26-35yrs	41%
	36-50yrs	19%
	>50yrs	8%
Education Level	Secondary	5%
	Senior Secondary	14%
	Graduate	49%
	Post Graduate	32%
Monthly Household Income	< INR 50,000	39%
	INR 50,000 – 100,000	46%
	> INR 100,000	15%

Awareness and Connections to Green FMCG Products

Limited top-of-mind consciousness of specific phrases describing green items was found by unaided recall. On the other hand, recognition levels were higher when given particular traits (Table 2). For example, even if Though assisted recall revealed 87% and 74% understanding of these elements, respectively, just 28% of respondents spontaneously remembered the term "organic" and 15% accurately knew what "fair trade" meant.

Other well-known connotations were natural, recyclable, eco-friendly, and biodegradable. Sustainability, up cycling, cruelty-free, and chemical-free products generated lesser unaided and helped recognition.

The triggered ranking of associations by perceived value to green items also revealed certain fallacies. 38% of respondents misidentified characteristics like "no processing" and "untouched by machines" as characterizing green FMCG.

Table 2: Knowledge of Green Product Terms and Associations by Consumers

Green Attribute / Label	Unaided Recall %	Aided Recall %
Organic	28%	87%
Natural	35%	84%
Free of chemicals/pesticides	19%	73%
Recyclable packaging	21%	79%
Eco-friendly	17%	71%
Biodegradable	11%	77%
Fair Trade	15%	74%
Sustainable	9%	64%
Up cycled	4%	68%
Cruelty-Free	6%	61%
Untouched by machines	NA	38%
No processing	NA	33%
Delhi Handicraft	13%	24%

***The percentages shown with an asterisk ( ) are for assisted recall, whereas NA denotes that no data is available for unaided memory for those particular features.**

Knowledge, Reasons, and Obstacles to Green Products

Health-related interpretations accounted for 44% of respondents' unassisted comprehension of green products, while 39% mentioned environmental benefits. Definitions were left by the other respondents' partial reference to "safe" or "natural."

Following a detailed explanation, 41% of respondents stated that ecological sustainability issues were of utmost importance, while 59% cited personal health as the primary driver for their green FMCG purchases. Performance, taste, and quality came in far lower on the list of factors that influence purchases.

The primary obstacles preventing 79% of respondents from purchasing as much green FMCG as they would like to are higher costs and limited availability. Another barrier mentioned by 66% of interviewees was confusion brought on by a lack of standards and knowledge.

In India, 83% of respondents were unable to identify any certification or labeling programs that formally support green credentials. For the majority of the sample, there was also a lack of understanding regarding how to differentiate between actual and false product claims.

Willingness to pay

Depending on particular product qualities, the sample's willingness to pay (WTP) a premium for green FMCG versus conventional alternatives varied (Table 3). Only 23% of consumers accepted a premium over 30% for the "organic" label, indicating the most sensitivity. WTP was further lowered for more specialized sustainability elements including up cycling, ethics, and local sourcing.
Price sensitivity was comparatively lower among women and older consumers. In contrast, millennial respondents ranked the lower price as the most important decoder. The lack of a strong association between income levels and WTP amounts suggests that affordability is not the primary obstacle.

Table 3: Willingness to Pay More for Features of Green Products

Green Attribute	WTP No Premium	WTP up to 10% Extra	WTP 10-30% Extra	WTP >30% Extra
Organic	17%	21%	39%	23%
Natural	26%	31%	35%	8%
Eco friendly Packaging	39%	28%	23%	10%
Locally Sourced	49%	25%	20%	6%
Fair Trade	61%	21%	13%	5%
Up cycled Materials	68%	16%	12%	4%

Verification Systems and Labeling Improvements

A resounding 89% of participants underlined the need for stricter labeling laws to avoid vague or deceptive statements on green FMCG packaging. In order to increase trust and the possibility that a purchase will be made, 67% of respondents indicated that it was vital to provide simple claim authentication at the point of sale.
For trustworthy green verification, the majority said that third-party or government-affiliated certification seals were the best option. Very little confidence was garnered by options such as producers making claims about their products without external validation or stores endorsing them.
Additionally, 68% of respondents said they wanted brands to be required to provide important information about their internal ecological footprints on labels and packaging. Even though there was no formal certification, metrics like water use, carbon emissions, or waste reduction during manufacture were of interest.
Lower attention was given to QR codes that connected to life cycle assessment reports of certain product variations. This suggests that even though transparency is important, customers still need to bear less of the verification load.

Delhi Subset Comparative Analysis

The following differentiating traits were present in the subsample of 75 respondents who were specifically from the Delhi:

- Health motivations outweighed environmental reasons for green purchases at a higher 65:35 ratio compared to 59:41 for the entire sample;
- Willingness to pay was muted across labels, with only 14% accepting organic premiums above 30% compared to 23% previously;
- Trust in all certification types was lower, leading to a general increase in skepticism of product claims.
- There was a greater desire for government validation and required sustainability information on labels, particularly for regional brands.
- At only 29% aided recall, Assam tea and silk mentions as green connections are still scarce. As a result, Delhi consumers' opinions seem to still be based more on health-related than ecological justifications for embracing green products. Additionally, they exhibit increased price sensitivity. reduced faith in the certifying body

Discussion

Assessing Knowledge Gaps and Consumer Awareness

According to the study's findings, urban Indian consumers have a reasonably high level of aided awareness but a lower level of unaided recall for specific terms and characteristics that describe green FMCG products. This suggests an imbalance in which understanding has lagged behind recognition. Today's consumers are able to spot eco-friendly signs on store shelves, but they don't fully comprehend what green products are or why they are important for reasons other than their own health.
Green qualities are more closely associated with outwardly visible aspects of products, such as packaging, than they are with intangible aspects of the lifecycle, such as production footprints, supply chain ethics, or

sustainability certifications. Buzzwords like "natural" and "recyclable" packaging are used to expedite the purchasing process.
However, this leaves customers open to phony green washing.
There are also misconceptions about things like how green products are processed and how technology is used, which need to be dispelled through intentional teaching. Despite their agricultural background and promise for sustainable production, regional products.
All things considered, these findings show that although there has been some early awareness-raising due to the increased market visibility of green FMCG varieties, there are still significant knowledge gaps on what ecological sustainability means and how everyday purchasing decisions relate to responsible consumption.

Environmental versus Personal Motives

According to the report, customer interest in green FMCG items is presently mostly sparked by personal health concerns rather than environmental factors. Absent obvious health benefits, taste, quality, and performance qualities continue to outweigh sustainability credentials.
These results support earlier research that claimed customers in underdeveloped nations primarily consider safety, nutrition, and wellbeing when evaluating green products, rather than broader social responsibility considerations [15], [19]. Additionally, they reaffirm the necessity of using deliberate interventions to strengthen the emotional bonds between consumer decisions and ethical-ecological implications in consumer mental models.

Clarifying Barriers to Price

Another barrier restricting Indian consumer purchases identified in this study is a strong price sensitivity to green premiums. It's interesting to note that, in contrast to some earlier study, income levels did not appear to be the primary factor influencing willingness to pay amounts [18]. The conflicting effects of demography on willingness to pay are consistent with new consumer research showing that a variety of factors impact attitudes.
Therefore, affordability might not be the main barrier. Instead, the perceived risk of overpaying for ill-defined credentials in the face of a lack of clarity over how to fairly price premiums to offset rising green input costs is what deters people. Unlocking willingness to pay requires combating this mistrust with dependable certification programs, consistent standards, and consumer education.

Resolving the Credibility Shortfall in Certification

The study reveals a vast lack of reliable signaling systems supporting green promises, which now discourages Indian consumer uptake and breeds distrust. The minimal top-of-mind presence of certification markings in consumer mental models is confirmed by the low unaided recall of any labeling schemes. Despite years of advertising, even helped knowledge of innovative programs like India Organic is still lacking.
While there is growing desire in external endorsement through certification and backup data on a company's sustainability activities, there is still disagreement about how reliable these processes are. There is much room to strengthen enforcement and broaden reach, as all alternative consumers rate the current labeling systems as dubious.
Creating a uniform national framework for advertising claims and green product labels in conjunction with strict oversight organizations can greatly increase credibility, which in turn unlocks consumer desire to pay and intent to buy [13]. Transparency initiatives that increase public access to sustainability-related information through required producer disclosures are equally crucial.

Inferences by Region

Exact analysis of Delhi customer survey responses Metro provides insightful clarifications on the previously mentioned attitudinal hurdles. In this region, health is the primary motivator for buying green FMCG products, even more so than environmental concerns. At the same time, a lack of faith in third-party certifications erodes premium-paying willingness when attributes' veracity is questioned.
Because certification skepticism and acute health centrism coexist, customized regional programs for education and communication that emphasize the scientific data linking the advantages of green products to results related to individual well-being. Priority must also be given to building the identity links between regional Agri-products, and sustainable attributes. Consumer mindsets can advance more quickly if policy measures are implemented to increase the openness of local companies through verification programs and effective media campaigns.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The aforementioned investigation highlights Delhi region-specific factors while providing several insights into the consumer awareness issues and motivational patterns impacting the adoption of green FMCG. At the moment, urban consumers' superficial knowledge of attributes surpasses their comprehensive understanding of green products and their socio environmental credentials. When making purchases, health considerations take precedence over environmental considerations. Purchases are discouraged by perceived green premiums, although the primary barrier is not income affordability. Instead, unclear certification environments raise questions about whether such premiums are actually support environmental causes. Significant skepticism surrounding green product certification regimes need tailored initiatives, and regional attitudes in crucial frontiers like Assam also prioritize health motivations. Although our findings concentrate on tackling consumer-side obstacles, governments and businesses must also make a concerted effort to overcome other supply-side and ecosystem constraints if the green FMCG sectors are to thrive sustainably.

Suggestion:
Among the suggestions made for the current study are:

1. Multi-stakeholder literacy programs that stress sustainable principles and go beyond catchphrases the benefits of responsible consumption for the general welfare must be prioritized in order to increase awareness and understanding.
2. To increase credibility and confidence, policy initiatives should concentrate on implementing strict labeling regulations and advertising standards that forbid making fraudulent claims in addition to increasing process transparency for certification programs.
3. Sustainable FMCG adoption levels in areas like Delhi can be efficiently accelerated by location-specific consumer education programs that incorporate scientific data on the health benefits of consuming green commodities combined with transparency campaigns for local companies through certification.

Future study topics include assessing category dynamics among green FMCG kinds, rural purchasers, and young consumers who are enrolled in school. Longitudinal surveys must monitor awareness improvements over time across geographies and demographic groups as policy initiatives and consumer literacy initiatives advance. Overall, there is still hope that stakeholders' committed efforts would gradually result in more environmentally conscious consumers attitudes into large-scale green purchasing practices.

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