



ISSN Print: 2664-844X
ISSN Online: 2664-8458
NAAS Rating: 4.97
IJAFS 2025; 7(7): 50-52
www.agriculturaljournals.com
Received: 20-05-2025
Accepted: 23-06-2025

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Consumer buying behavior of different packaged milk brands in Prayagraj district, Uttar Pradesh

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DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/2664844X.2025.v7.i7a.497>

Abstract

This research study analyzes the marketing and consumer buying behavior of various packaged milk brands in Prayagraj district, Uttar Pradesh. The aim is to explore consumer preferences, evaluate existing marketing channels, and identify the factors influencing consumer decisions in selecting packaged milk. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 100 consumers across urban and semi-urban areas. The study utilized statistical tools like percentage analysis and Garrett's Ranking Technique to understand consumer preferences and the major constraints faced by them. The findings revealed that Amul and Sudha are the most preferred brands due to their availability, perceived quality, and reasonable pricing. The majority of respondents purchase milk from retail outlets due to accessibility and trust in the brand. Quality, brand image, packaging, and price are the most critical factors influencing consumer choice. Constraints such as adulteration fears, irregular supply, and lack of proper labeling were identified as major issues by respondents. The study recommends that companies invest in enhancing supply chain efficiency, build brand trust through transparent practices, and educate consumers on milk safety standards. These steps would help improve consumer satisfaction and loyalty in the competitive packaged milk market of Prayagraj.

Keywords: Packaged milk, consumer behavior, marketing channels, brand preference, Prayagraj district

Introduction

Milk is one of the most essential components of the Indian diet, and with growing urbanization, the demand for hygienically processed and conveniently packaged milk has significantly increased. In districts like Prayagraj, packaged milk consumption is on the rise, influenced by factors such as lifestyle changes, awareness of health and hygiene, and increasing disposable incomes. Multiple brands such as Amul, Sudha, Mother Dairy, and local brands compete to capture the growing consumer base. Despite the rising demand, consumers often face challenges related to product authenticity, pricing, regularity of supply, and misinformation regarding nutritional content. Additionally, brand switching is commonly observed due to changes in product quality or marketing strategies. Therefore, understanding consumer buying behavior becomes essential to design effective marketing strategies and enhance brand loyalty. This study investigates the socio-economic profile of consumers, their brand preferences, the marketing channels they rely on, and the constraints they face. The insights gained from this research aim to guide dairy companies and policymakers to improve product accessibility, pricing strategies, and quality control, ultimately benefiting both producers and consumers.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Prayagraj district of Uttar Pradesh. A sample of 100 consumers was selected randomly from both urban and semi-urban areas. Data was collected using a structured interview schedule comprising questions on socio-economic status, brand preference, frequency of purchase, mode of purchase, and constraints faced.

Analytical Tools Used:

1. Percentage Analysis
2. Garrett's Ranking Technique - Per cent position = $100(R_{ij} - 0.5)/N_j$
3. Consumer Preference Score Analysis

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)		
18-30	30	30
31-50	45	45
51 and above	25	25
Education Level		
Illiterate	10	10
Primary	18	18
Secondary	42	42
Higher Education	30	30
Monthly Income (Rs.)		
Below 10,000	20	20
10,000 - 30,000	50	50
Above 30,000	30	30

The socio-economic profile of respondents reveals a diverse demographic in Jaunpur district. A significant portion (45%) of farmers is in the 31-50 years age group, indicating a predominance of experienced and productive farmers, while 30% are younger farmers, bringing potential for innovation. Educationally, 42% of farmers have completed secondary education, which suggests a basic understanding of modern farming techniques, though 10% are illiterate, which could limit access to advanced agricultural practices. Income-wise, 50% of respondents earn between ₹10,000 - ₹30,000 per month, with 30% earning above ₹30,000, reflecting a moderate income distribution, while 20% earn below ₹10,000, indicating economic challenges for a portion of farmers. These socio-economic factors highlight the need for targeted interventions in education, income enhancement, and access to modern farming techniques to improve profitability and overall farm productivity.

Table 2: Brand Preference among Consumers

Brand	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Amul	42	42
Mother Dairy	18	18
Local Brands	15	15

Discussion: Amul is the most preferred brand (42%) followed by Sudha (25%), indicating strong consumer trust and consistent product quality. Local brands are less preferred due to issues related to quality and trust.

Table 3: Factors Influencing Buying Behavior (Garrett Ranking)

Factor	Garrett Score	Rank
Quality of Milk	75.6	I
Price	66.8	II
Brand Image	58.9	III
Packaging	52.5	IV
Availability	48.2	V
Advertisement Influence	42.7	VI

The factors influencing buying behavior toward milk products in Jaunpur district highlight the significant role that quality plays in consumer decisions, with a Garrett score of 75.6, ranking it as the most influential factor. Consumers prioritize the quality of milk above all else, indicating that milk's freshness, taste, and nutritional value are critical to purchasing decisions. Price follows as the second most important factor, with a score of 66.8, suggesting that while quality is paramount, affordability remains a key consideration for consumers. Brand image ranks third, with

a score of 58.9, signifying that consumers are also influenced by the reputation and trustworthiness of the milk brands they purchase. Packaging, with a score of 52.5, indicates that the visual appeal and convenience of packaging contribute to consumer preferences, though it is less influential than the above factors. Availability (48.2) is ranked fifth, which reflects the importance of easy access to milk, but it is not as decisive as quality or price. Lastly, advertisement influence (42.7) ranks the lowest, indicating that promotional campaigns have the least impact on consumers' milk purchasing decisions, suggesting that word-of-mouth, trust, and personal experience play a more significant role. These rankings underscore the need for milk producers and marketers to focus on maintaining high quality, competitive pricing, and strong brand presence to effectively cater to consumer preferences.

Table 4: Frequency of Milk Purchase by Consumers

Frequency of Purchase	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Daily	65	65%
Alternate Days	20	20%
Weekly	10	10%
Occasionally	5	5%

Discussion

The majority of respondents (65%) purchase milk daily, which aligns with the staple nature of milk in the Indian diet. This frequency highlights the need for reliable supply and product availability. Consumers purchasing on alternate days (20%) or weekly (10%) likely have storage capacities or variable consumption needs. Only 5% purchase milk occasionally, suggesting they may substitute with other dairy or non-dairy products. Ensuring daily availability and freshness is therefore crucial for brand loyalty.

Table 5: Source of Purchase of Packaged Milk

Source	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Local Retail Shops	58	58%
Supermarkets	20	20%
Direct from Vendor	12	12%
Online Platforms	10	10%

Discussion

Local retail shops are the most common purchase point for consumers (58%), indicating their convenience and accessibility. Supermarkets (20%) cater to consumers preferring bulk buying or branded options. A smaller proportion (12%) rely on direct vendors, possibly for perceived freshness or affordability. Online purchases remain low (10%), reflecting either limited digital adoption or concerns about freshness in online delivery. These insights emphasize the importance of maintaining strong supply chains through local retail and exploring trust-building in online platforms.

Table 6: Constraints Faced by Consumers (Garrett Ranking)

Constraint	Garrett Score	Rank
Fear of Adulteration	70.2	I
Irregular Supply	62.4	II
Lack of Proper Labelling	55.3	III
Inconsistent Pricing	48.9	IV
Poor Customer Service	40.5	V

Discussion: The key drivers of buying behavior are milk quality and price. Consumers are increasingly conscious of

hygiene and safety. Adulteration fears dominate as the top constraint, highlighting the need for stricter quality checks and transparency in labeling. Brand image and availability also influence decision-making but to a lesser extent. Retailers and producers must address supply irregularities and labeling issues to improve consumer confidence.

Conclusion

The study reveals that consumers in Prayagraj district prefer well-established brands like Amul and Sudha due to trust, quality, and affordability. However, issues like adulteration and inconsistent supply persist. Dairy companies should invest in building transparent, efficient supply chains, and educate consumers on safety standards. Enhancing packaging and improving customer service can also foster loyalty. Policies supporting strict quality control and empowering local dairies with technology and infrastructure can help strengthen the overall packaged milk market in the region.

Recommendations

1. Implement strict quality control measures to reduce adulteration.
2. Improve supply chain efficiency for consistent product availability.
3. Promote consumer awareness regarding labeling and nutritional content.
4. Strengthen retail networks in semi-urban and rural areas.

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