



CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS READY-TO-EAT FOOD PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT:

In recent years, due to lifestyle pressure Indian people mostly prefer for an easy and fast way of cooking meal rather than spending too much time for cooking. Most of the time people prefer instant food like Maggi cup noodles, Bhel etc. specially youngsters.

In recent past Ready-To-Eat Food Products have become popular in India due to various reasons like easy availability of products, convenience, taste and texture, packaging and promotional strategies etc. Some of the ready-to-eat food products include Dal & Curries, Instant Poha, Instant Upma, Instant Idly and Dosa Mix, Sandwiches, Ready Masalas & curry powders, Indian Snacks etc.

This paper discusses the factors that influence consumers to purchase and consume Ready-To-Eat Food Products, analyse the consumer perception and consumer satisfaction towards Ready-To-Eat Food Products.

Keywords: Ready-To-Eat Food Products, Consumer Perception, Consumer satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION:

Consumer is the king in the market place. Consumers are those who purchases goods and services for their personal consumption. Consumers behave according to their taste and preference and sometimes according to the occasion. Consumer perception is different from consumer to consumer. It depends on the states, standard of living, the price of product and many more. Food and Nutrition are most important for all the living species. To keep the body healthy and active every living being consumes food. Ready-To-Eat packaged food is the food which is ready to eat just in few minutes. Nowadays, due to lifestyle pressure, People prefer an easy, fast way of cooking food rather than spending too much time on cooking. The Emergence of Ready-To-Eat (RTE) food in the global industry, and now in the Indian markets, has seen a shift in consumption pattern over the years. Consumers are becoming more aware of food products and so intentions and perceptions towards Ready-To-Eat Food products are changing the food industry. Ready-To-

Eat food can be refrigerated, it requires minimal heating or no heating at all. Ready-To-Eat food has made people's life easier. Initially, these foods were consumed by disaster victims, hikers, and hunters who needed food in a short time. But now, RTE food has become popular among most busy people in modern cities. Some of the Ready-To-Eat products include Dal & Curries, Instant Poha, Instant Upma, Instant Idly mix, Ready masalas and Curry powder, Indian snacks, cooked salads, Smoked fish, Desserts, Sandwich, Cheese and food that has cooked in advance to serve cold.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To identify factors that influence consumers to purchase and consume Ready-To-Eat food products.
- 2) To Analyse the consumer perception towards Ready-To-Eat food products.
- 3) To Analyse the consumers satisfaction towards Ready-To-Eat food products.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

In this Modern Era, with the change in the living standards of people, convenience and readily availability the preference towards Ready-To-Eat Food Products has been increased from college going students to bachelors to women at the workplace. In view of this, the present study analyses the consumer perception towards Ready-To-Eat Food Products and also identifies the factors that influence consumer to purchase Ready-To-Eat Food Products. The Scope of the study is limited to 100 respondents between the ages 18 and 45 at Hyderabad city who will be contacted using social media. Each respondent to the study will be asked to complete a short questionnaire in order to analyse the data.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research is based on both primary and secondary sources.

- **Primary data:**

The Primary data is collected by circulating a questionnaire to the consumers in the age group of between 18 to 45 using Google Forms which are distributed using social media and based on their input the analysis was done.

- **Secondary Data:**

The secondary data is collected from Articles, Magazines, Books and Internet.

LIMITATIONS:

- The Study totally depends on the responses given the respondents.
- The Sample may not totally represent the whole section of population because of different backgrounds,
- It is limited to 100 respondents at Hyderabad.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

- Bae, Chae & Ryu, 2010 Published paper titled “Consumer Behaviour towards ready to eat foods based on related lifestyles in Korea”. The main aim of the study was to find the lifestyle related food consumers according to the people and the buying behaviour of RTE foods. They stated that health orientation, taste orientation, convenience and tradition orientation, were the four factors that were weighed when aiming to identify the behaviour of the customer towards food related lifestyle of ready to eat food consumers.
- Sarathy and Gopal 2011 Published a paper titled, “Managing the diffusion of innovation in ready to eat food products in India. “The main motive for research was to find out the factors that the production of ready-to-eat products would be increased or slow down the innovation in the case of ready to eat food. They stated that the consumers seem to be open minded and they changed their taste and preferences with positive inclination generated towards ready to eat food products. Hence it seems to people are mostly preferred ready to eat food products for initiating the hungriness.
- Vijayabaskar.M & N.Sundaram, 2012 Published a paper titled “A market study on key determinants of Ready to Eat/ Cook products with respect to tier I citizens in Southern India”. The main purpose of the study is to identify the factors that determine the market of Ready-To- Eat food. They state that there is a greater demand for ready-to –eat food segments and the major attraction for these products are convenience, availability and less time consumption to cook. Due to life style changes and long working hours people are choosing these products.
- Kazmi S.Q. (2012): This study recognizing those factors which effect consumer perception about pasta products and also determined factors which stimulate buying decision of consumers towards pasta. Awareness and availability were chosen as main variables which effect consumer buying pattern. Quota sampling technique was used to collect data from a sample of 30 housewives living in Karachi City of Pakistan. Results of the study explored that product awareness was the factor which had a great impact on popularity and usage of any product especially the food item and also awareness about cooking method of particular product may affect the popularity of food product.
- Lavanya M.S. et al. (2012): This study attempted to explore consumer’s awareness and perception towards quality certified products. Primary data was collected from 120 respondents through pre-tested interview schedule. In this study consumer awareness, preference of certified products and their perception on pricing were analysed with reference to three products: Ghee, vegetable oils and spices. Results concluded that 85% people were aware about Agmark certification and most of the high-income group people were about Agmark products and they are also satisfied with the products especially ghee.
- Kumar H. et al. (2013): This study was conducted with objective of assessing consumer’s awareness, safety perceptions and flavouring agents used in packed/canned food. Study was conducted in South India in the states of Karnataka & Kerala with a sample size of 126 respondents. Results showed that around 91.7% of total respondents were aware about food preservatives and (84.9) were

aware towards flavouring agents (FA) but their knowledge was inadequate. Unfavourable practices were involved. Gaps in Knowledge and unhealthy practice need to be addressed by public awareness campaign.

- Gupta, 2016 Published a paper titled “Consumer perception towards ready to eat food products in Varanasi district”. The main aim of the study is to identify consumers taste and preference for selecting the RTE foods in their habit of the households with or without children, single earners and bachelors. He stated that changing lifestyle that is stressful and the busy lives or schedule due to long lasting hours of work of them working contributing factor to the growth of the ready to eat meals sector hence it seems like a hectic.
- Solanki & Jain, 2017 Published paper titled “A consumer buying behaviour towards ready to eat food industry”. The main aim to conduct the research was to study about consumer purchase behaviour towards ready to eat food industry in northern India. They study that due to the lifestyle pressure now a days, consumers don't have the time to cook the food due to their busy schedule regarding their jobs, that's why they prefer to go restaurants or cafe or ready to eat foods for hungeriness. Also, it was stated that individuals are single who are not married bachelor's preferred to consume ready to eat food products mostly therefore, it was mostly preferable.

FINDINGS:

1. 86.4% of the respondents cook meals at home for all days, for a given normal week.
2. It has been observed that 67% of the respondent order food from restaurant when meals are not cooked at home
3. It has been found out that 72% of the respondents are aware of Ready-To-Eat Food Product
4. The study depicts that 53% of the respondents consider Taste & Nutrition while purchasing Ready-To-Eat Food Products and
5. 39% of the respondent have come to know about Ready to Eat food products through TV Commercials.
6. It has been observed that 69% of the respondents choose any brand of Ready-To-Eat Food Products because of its taste.
7. It has been found from the study that 51% of the respondents are neutrally satisfied with Ready-To-Eat Food Products.

CONCLUSION:

1. There is a positive outlook towards Ready-To-Eat Food Products.
2. It is concluded from the study that the major attraction for Ready-To-Eat Food Products are Taste & Nutrition, Convenience and its availability.
3. There are several factors that affect brand choice (such as taste, advertisement, schemes and availability).

4. Majority of the people consume RTE products frequently and are neutrally satisfied.
5. Taste, Nutrition and Availability are very important factors that are considered by respondents while purchasing Ready-To-Eat Food Products.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Taste and Nutrition preference is the key driver for purchase of Ready-To-Eat Food Products. Hence, manufacturers should focus more on the nutrition aspect especially directed towards increasing the immune system of consumers.
3. It is suggested that Ready-To-Eat Food Products should be made easily available at retail shops, quantity should be increased and prices should be reduced.
4. It is recommended to enhance the taste of Ready-To-Eat Food Products and also to reduce the oil and salt quantity in all variety of Ready-To-Eat Food Products so that it tastes like home-cooked food.

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