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A study on consumer perception towards brands of soybean oil in Chandrapur District

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Abstract
This study explores consumer perception and brand preference for soybean oil in Chandrapur district, addressing the increasing demand for health-oriented edible oil options. The research focuses on identifying the consumer perception and purchasing behavior, market share of leading brands, and factors influencing consumer decision. Primary data was collected from 60 consumers and 10 retailers using structured interviews. Brands such as Sneha Gold, Fortune, Saffola, Gemini, Patanjali and Dhara were analyzed using tabular, graphical, and regression tools. The study employs a multiple linear regression model to assess the impact of variables like frequency of purchase, monthly consumption, packaging, price, and availability on buying behavior. Results indicate that frequency of purchase and packaging significantly influence consumer decisions. Sneha Gold emerged as the dominant brand in both preference and market share. The findings are expected to assist manufacturers and marketers in aligning strategies with consumer expectations by focusing on quality, accessibility, and trust. This research contributes to a better understanding of rural-semi-urban consumer dynamics in the edible oil sector.

Keywords: Consumer perception, brand preference, soybean oil, buying behavior, market share, Chandrapur District

Introduction

In today's dynamic marketplace, consumers hold a central role, with their preferences and satisfaction directly influencing the success of products. Understanding consumer behavior has become essential for businesses, especially in the case of frequently used products like edible oil. Edible oil is a staple in Indian households and plays a vital role in daily cooking. Among various options, soybean oil is widely preferred for its affordability, neutral taste, and health benefits such as being rich in omega fatty acids and vitamins A, D, and E. India is one of the largest producers and consumers of edible oil, yet it still heavily depends on imports to meet domestic demand. Government initiatives like the Technology Mission on Oilseeds and Pulses (TMOP) were introduced to reduce this dependency and enhance oilseed production.

Over the years, there has been a clear shift in consumer preference from loose to packaged and refined oils, driven by increasing health awareness, urbanization, and changing lifestyles. Soybean oil, in particular, has gained popularity across urban and semi-urban regions, including districts like Chandrapur in Maharashtra. Consumers today evaluate edible oils based on factors such as quality, price, taste, health benefits, availability, and packaging. In this context, market research becomes crucial to understand their evolving expectations. The present study aims to analyze consumer perception and preference for various soybean oil brands in Chandrapur district. It also evaluates market share and key factors influencing purchasing decisions. Primary data was collected from 60 consumers and 10 retailers through structured interviews. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights to manufacturers, marketers, and retailers, helping them align their strategies with consumer needs and enhance their competitive position in the edible oil market.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Chandrapur District to examine consumer perception and preference for branded soybean oil. Primary data was collected through structured interviews with 60 consumers and 10 retailers. Consumers were approached individually, and the purpose of the study was explained to ensure accurate and reliable responses.

Several well-known soybean oil brands were selected for the study, including Fortune, Sneha Gold, Dhara, Gemini, Saffola, and Patanjali. To analyze the data, various tools and methods were applied. Consumer preferences were examined using simple tabular and graphical methods.

Market share for each brand was determined using the formula:

Market Share = (Sales of a selected brand / Total sales of all brands) × 100.

Furthermore, to evaluate the factors affecting consumer buying behavior, a multiple linear regression model was utilized. The model is represented as:

$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5$,

where Y denotes the consumer decision, a is the constant, and b_1 to b_5 are the coefficients for the respective variables. The independent variables include frequency of purchase (X_1), monthly consumption (X_2), price (X_3), packaging (X_4), and timely availability (X_5). This model helped identify the key elements that significantly influence consumer perceptions towards branded soybean oil in the region.

Result and Discussion

The results were systematically organized based on the specific objectives of the study.

Table 1: Socio-economic and demographic profile of soybean oil consumers

Variables	Categories	No. of Consumers (N=60)	percentage
Gender	Female	40	66.67
	Male	20	33.33
Age	Below 30	36	60.00
	30-40	8	13.33
	Above 40	16	26.67
Education	Below HSC	11	18.33
	Graduate	24	40.00
	Post-graduation	17	28.33
	Professional qualification	8	13.33
Occupation	Student (M/F)	22	36.67
	Housewife	20	33.33
	Working	18	30.00
Family members	Upto 3 members	18	30.00
	Above 3 members	42	70.00
Monthly Income (INR)	Below 3 lakhs	12	20.00
	3-6 lakhs	28	46.67
	Above 6 lakhs	20	33.33

Table 1 showed that the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of soybean oil consumers (N=60) provide meaningful insights into consumption patterns. The gender distribution indicates a higher proportion of female respondents (66.67 percent) compared to males (33.33 percent), reflecting the significant role of women in household food-related decisions. Age-wise, the majority of consumers (60 percent) were below 30 years, followed by 26.67 percent above 40 years, and 13.33 percent between 30-40 years. Educational attainment revealed that 40 percent were graduates, 28.33 percent had completed post-graduation, 18.33 percent were below HSC level, and 13.33 percent held professional qualifications. In terms of occupation, 36.67 percent of respondents were students, 33.33 percent were housewives, and 30 percent were employed. With regard to family size, 70 percent belonged to households with more than three members, while 30 percent came from families with up to three members. Income distribution showed that 46.67 percent of consumers reported annual household income between INR 3-6 lakhs, 33.33 percent earned above INR 6 lakhs, and 20 percent had income below INR 3 lakhs. The data collectively reveals that the soybean oil consumption is primarily among educated females from medium to large families, with moderate to high income levels. Health awareness, budget, and household needs are key factors influencing purchase decisions, indicating the need for targeted marketing strategies.

Table 2: Consumer preference and purchasing behavior for various brands of soybean oil

Particulars	Categories	No. of consumers (N=60)	percentage
Brand preference	Sneha gold	24	40.00
	Fortune	14	23.33
	Saffola	9	15.00
	Gemini	6	10.00
	Patanjali	5	08.33
	Dhara	2	03.33
Yearly consumption pattern	Less than 60	5	08.33
	60-80	45	75.00
	More than 80	10	16.67
Purchase place	Local grocery shop	26	43.33
	Supermarket	21	35.00
	Wholesaler	13	21.67
Yearly amount spent per year	Below Rs.10,000	22	36.67
	Rs.10,000-15,000	33	55.00
	Above 15,000	05	08.33
Mostly preferred package size	1 lit	28	46.67
	5 lit	14	23.33
	15 lit	18	30.00
Source of information	Friends & Relatives	32	53.33
	Advertisement	22	36.67
	Social media platform	6	10.00

Table 2 examined that the consumer preferences and purchase behavior related to soybean oil. Among the surveyed brands, Sneha Gold was the most preferred, selected by 40 percent (24) consumers, followed by Fortune (23.33 percent), Saffola (15 percent), Gemini (10 percent), Patanjali (8.33 percent), and Dhara (3.33 percent). In terms of annual consumption, 75 percent (45) of respondents consumed between 60-80 liters, while 16.67 percent (10) consumed more than 80 liters, and 8.33 percent (5) consumed less than 60 liters. Regarding purchase location, 43.33 percent (26) bought from local grocery shops, 35 percent (21) from supermarkets, and 21.67 percent (13) from wholesalers. When analyzing annual spending, 55 percent (33) spent INR 10,000-15,000, followed by 36.67 percent (22) spending below INR 10,000, and 8.33 percent (5) spending over INR 15,000.

Pack size preference showed that 46.67 percent (28) favored 1-liter packs, 30 percent (18) preferred 15-liter bulk packs, and 23.33 percent (14) opted for 5-liter sizes. As for sources of information, 53.33 percent (32) were influenced by friends and relatives, 36.67 percent (22) by advertisements, and 10 percent (6) by social media.

In conclusion, consumer buying behavior is influenced by brand familiarity, moderate pricing, peer recommendations, and the convenience of smaller or bulk packaging. This highlights the need for targeted branding, flexible pack options, and leveraging word-of-mouth channels in marketing strategies.

Table 3: Market share of selected soybean oil brands

Sr. No.	Brand name	Qty per year (lit)	percent of market share (lit)	Value per year (in Rs.)	percent of market share (Rs.)
1	Fortune	32940	18.42	4809240	19.77
2	Sneha gold	138924	77.69	18337968	75.37
3	Saffola	2148	1.20	448932	1.85
4	Gemini	3816	2.13	560952	2.31
5	Patanjali	276	0.15	45540	0.19
6	Dhara	708	0.40	128856	0.53

Table 3 highlighted that the market share of various soybean oil brands based on quantity and value. Sneha Gold dominates the market with an annual sale of 138,924 liters (77.69 percent), generating Rs.1,83,37,968 (75.37 percent) in value. Fortune follows with 32,940 liters (18.42 percent) and a value of Rs.48,09,240 (19.77 percent). Other brands have much smaller shares: Gemini accounts for 3,816 liters (2.13 percent) and Rs.5,60,952 (2.31 percent), Saffola with 2,148 liters (1.20 percent) and Rs.4,48,932 (1.85 percent), Dhara contributes 708 liters (0.40 percent) and Rs.1,28,856 (0.53 percent), while Patanjali has the lowest share at 276 liters (0.15 percent) and Rs.45,540 (0.19 percent). This distribution indicates a highly concentrated market where Sneha Gold holds a strong lead, both in volume and value, while other brands serve smaller or niche segments.

Table 4: Regression result for factors influencing consumer's buying behaviour towards soybean oil in Chandrapur District

Independent factors	Coefficients
Intercept	32.30
Frequency of purchase	5.55**
Monthly consumption	0.20
Price	0.76
Packaging	2.06
Timely availability	0.66
R 2	0.34

Note: *= Significant at 10 percent level, **= 5 percent level, ***= 1 percent level

Table 4 indicated that the regression analysis results identifying key factors influencing consumer buying behavior toward soybean oil in Chandrapur district. The model shows an R^2 value of 0.34, indicated that 34 percent of the variation in consumer behavior is explained by the selected variables. Among them, frequency of purchase (coefficient = 5.55) is statistically significant at the 5 percent level, suggesting a strong positive influence. Packaging (2.06) and timely availability (0.66) also positively affect buying behavior, though not at statistically significant levels. Monthly consumption (0.20) and price (0.76) show a weaker influence. The intercept value of 32.30 represents the baseline consumer behavior when all independent variables are zero.

Conclusion

This research concluded valuable insights into consumer preferences and buying behavior regarding soybean oil in Chandrapur district. The study highlighted that young, educated women from medium to large families play a key role in household oil purchases. Among the surveyed brands, Sneha Gold stood out as the most preferred, followed by Fortune and Saffola, indicating strong brand loyalty and market presence.

Most consumers purchased 60-80 liters annually and favored 1-liter packaging, balancing convenience and budget. Local grocery shops and supermarkets were the preferred purchase points, and spending mainly ranged between Rs.10,000-15,000 per year. Peer influence, especially through friends and relatives, played a significant role in shaping brand choices. Market share data confirmed Sneha Gold's dominance in both volume and value, while other brands served smaller consumer segments. The regression analysis showed that frequency of purchase had the most significant impact on buying behavior, with packaging and availability also contributing.

Overall, the study concluded that the consumer choices are driven by brand familiarity, consistent availability, attractive packaging, and trusted recommendations. Companies should focus on these areas to enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen their position in the edible oil market.

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