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Go Green: The New Era's Marketing Carol making Life easier

Dr. Mahek Iram Qureshi, Dr. Jaspal Gidwani, Mrs. Vaishali Shrihari Gode

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From Farm to Destination: The Emerging Role of Agritourism in Rural Transformation with Special Reference to Maharashtra

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Bharati Vidyapeeth's Institute of Management Studies & Research
Sector 8, CBD-Belapur, Navi Mumbai-400614

022-27572433/ 27562582, email: editor_bjmr@bvimsr.com , bvimsr.bjmr@bharatvidyapeeth.edu

Website: www.bvimsr.org

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Bharati Vidyapeeth's Journal of Management Research in its volume seventeenth October issue includes a wide variety of research articles that exhibit the advances in the field of management specifically marketing. However we have included an article which is contemporary on consumer index by invitation from an acclaimed industry practitioner from the field economics and finance.

“Go Green: The New Era’s Marketing Carol making Life easier” is the first paper in the current issue that examines the situation within the ecologically conscious environment of advertising, or in other words a Go Green marketing, and its influence on the consumer behavior and the enhancement of lifestyle in the conditions of modernity. The question which should be answered by the research is the magnitude to which the sustainable marketing practices affect the choice which is taken by the buyer, brand loyalty and overall wellbeing of the community. The plan is in a hybrid form of a mixed-method study involving the type of quantitative surveys and qualitative interview of customers on the urban markets. It was surveyed to 150 individuals in form of a structured questionnaire and was accompanied by Likert scale and interviewed 10 marketing managers of the eco-friendly brands. The key observation is that consumers are also becoming more appreciative to the brands that show environmental responsibility given that seventy two percent of the consumers have the mindset that the green initiatives will also determine their ability to buy. Moreover, the respondents mentioned green products, which involved healthy, less complicated and more satisfying lifestyles. This article results concludes that green marketing is not merely a marketing activity, but it is a trend that brings corporate responsibility in line with consumer values and it is the one way through which it can make life easier and sustainable.

The second paper, " Employees as Internal Customers: Applying the 7Ps of Service Marketing Mix to Internal Marketing in Infosys”, aims to investigate Human Resources is treated as a vital resource in service industry as the services are generated and delivered directly by the employees. So customer satisfaction is intimately linked to ensuring employee satisfaction. The important concepts of marketing can also be applied in field of Human Resource Management(HRM). While traditional marketing emphasizes on customers, internal marketing (IM) stresses treating workforces as internal customers to develop engagement, productivity, and overall organizational performance. Even though the significance of IM remains broadly acknowledged, limited research has explored the application of “7Ps of service marketing mix: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence”, within software companies such as Infosys. In this article, the authors have made an attempt to examine HR practices through the lens of IM, using 7Ps of service marketing mix as a framework. The article also throws light on how these elements influence employee engagement and their performance.

The third paper in the issue is titled " A Study On Consumer Buying Behavior For Bakery Products With Reference To Selected Villages In Miraj Tahsil” comprehend how consumers in a few chosen villages purchase bakery goods from Miraj Tahsil. This study used a combination of primary and secondary data as its research methodology. It was primary data obtained through a standardized questionnaire and secondary data came from journals that had been published papers. To analyze the association between variables Chi-Square test was employed. The result obtained from analysis reveals there is no significant association between age and the purchase of bakery factors influencing. This study indicates that there is no significant association between income of customer and preferences for price, quality, or brand while purchasing bakery products. This study provides insights about the taste, choice, and preferences of consumers for bakery products for selected villages

in Miraj Tahsil. The findings of the study will be useful for bakery product producers, wholesalers, and retailers, as well as new market entrants, to design a market strategy for Miraj Tahsil and its villages.

The fourth paper in this issue “From Farm to Destination: The Emerging Role of Agritourism in Rural Transformation with Special Reference to Maharashtra” emphasizes is on how agritourism has gradually emerged as a practical strategy for strengthening rural livelihoods by linking to agricultural activities with tourism experiences. In Maharashtra, these models have gained momentum over the past two decades as farmers increasingly and check out supplementary income opportunities beyond conventional cultivation. The present study examines how agritourism contributes to rural change by analyzing its economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The research is based on field communication, structured surveys, and secondary sources. Data from selected districts indicates that agritourism has improved household income levels, created job opportunities for young people in rural areas and increased the involvement of women in the hospitality industry and similar businesses. Simultaneously, issues like digital technology, inadequate infrastructure, marketing limitations, and seasonal variations in tourist numbers persist in influencing the stability of the sector. The research indicates that with improved collaboration among institutions, focused training efforts and infrastructure enhanced, agritourism can function as a sustainable rural growth mechanism in Maharashtra.

Issue's final article titled " Recalibrating India's Inflation Compass: An Assessment of India's CPI Base Revision," examines the recent revision of the base year of Consumer Price index (CPI) from 2012=100 to 2024=100 marks a pivotal point in the methodology of inflation measurement. This paper covers the changes in CPI measurement, economic rationale, international best practices and policy implications. The analysis shows how the revised CPI index with updated weightages, expanded coverage and methodological improvements aligns with global standards, making it more relevant to the current economic context. This revision brings back the focus on regular updates to inflation measurements and its pivotal role in policymaking.

CONTENTS

Title and Author	Page No.
Go Green: The New Era's Marketing Carol making Life easier <i>Dr. Mahek Iram Qureshi, Dr. Jaspal Gidwani, Mrs. Vaishali Shrihari Gode</i>	41
Employees as Internal Customers: Applying the 7Ps of Service Marketing Mix to Internal Marketing in Infosys <i>Ms. Simran Sharma, Dr. Manish Kumar Srivastava</i>	48
A Study On Consumer Buying Behavior For Bakery Products With Reference To Selected Villages In Miraj Tahsil <i>Miss. Manisha. V. Naikwade, Dr. Nitin. C. Mali</i>	57
From Farm to Destination: The Emerging Role of Agritourism in Rural Transformation with Special Reference to Maharashtra <i>Mrs. Matale Suvarna Shankar, Dr. Mahesh Pandurang Bhaskar</i>	67
Recalibrating India's Inflation Compass: An Assessment of India's CPI Base Revision <i>Dr. Sachchidanand Shukla , Ms. Priyanka Pande</i>	78



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editor.i2or@gmail.com

i2or.com

“Go Green: The New Era’s Marketing Carol making Life easier”

Dr. Mahek Iram Qureshi

Director, Associate Professor, NIT Graduate School of Management, Nagpur,
Email- mahek.mirza.mb@gmail.com

Dr. Jaspal Gidwani

Assistant Professor, NIT Graduate School of Management, Nagpur
Email- jaspal.gidwani@gmail.com

Mrs. Vaishali Shrihari Gode

Assistant Professor, NIT Graduate School of Management, Nagpur
Email- Vaishaligode@nitmba.edu.in

ABSTRACT:

The proposed research examines the situation within the ecologically conscious environment of advertising, or in other words a Go Green marketing, and its influence on the consumer behavior and the enhancement of lifestyle in the conditions of modernity. The question which should be answered by the research is the magnitude to which the sustainable marketing practices affect the choice which is taken by the buyer, brand loyalty and overall wellbeing of the community. These are the questions that are of interest to the research and they focus on the following; How much is the effects of green marketing strategies on consumer choices? Do consumers feel that their life is easier with the anti-business eco-conscious branding? The following was the testable hypothesis: H 1: Green marketing policies are significant in the consumer preference of choices and enhancing lifestyle decisions.

The plan is in a hybrid form of a mixed-method study involving the type of quantitative surveys and qualitative interview of customers on the urban markets. It was surveyed to 150 individuals in form of a structured questionnaire and was accompanied by Likert scale and interviewed 10 marketing managers of the eco-friendly brands.

The key observation is that consumers are also becoming more appreciative to the brands that show environmental responsibility given that seventy two percent of the consumers have the mindset that the green initiatives will also determine their ability to buy. Moreover, the respondents mentioned green products, which involved healthy, less complicated and more satisfying lifestyles. This article results into conclusion that green marketing is not merely a marketing activity, but it is a trend that brings corporate responsibility in line with consumer values and it is the one way through which it can make life easier and sustainable.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Sustainability, Sustainable development.

Introduction:

This has been happening over the years immediately before, the current days, where consumer value has not remained comparable to that seen in the previous decades and therefore on the business and market dynamics. In a place where we all are concerned about the climate change, the lack and shortage of supplies, the business that had no choice, but to remain environmentally viable in its production machinery, its communication and marketing strategies. The new ideology today often labeled as Green Marketing or Go Green Marketing, can be technically described as an extreme change of course in which businesses sell their products and conduct their business with consumers.

Green marketing is not merely a fad that is going through as it has even turned into a philosophical notion of commercial policy in order to balance business interests and the planetary requirement to environmental accountability. Green marketing is not just a business of selling goods that are friendly to the environment but building knowledge, trustworthiness, and smooth living, uniting with nature thus making life easier and significant to people who purchase the output, in this modern generation.

Marketing traditionally is the old four Ps, comprising of product, price, place and alternate, with the former being profit oriented in large measure and the latter acquiring a customer. The planet has however evolved with

introduction of fifth P the planet. Firms have begun to redefine their products, materials, distribution, packaging and fulfilling nearly all their products even within the corporate vision statements to be more responsible and sustainable. The increased consumer awareness of the problems of the environment has pushed the brands to be ethical. The millennials and Gen Z consumers are no longer facing the wall of marketing message but they can be informed and educated and are seeking out those brands that resonate with them on their values. In this respect, brands that engage in green marketing not only outshine in a market that is already saturated but also creatively have an emotional equity with the target markets. It is a thesis of the modification of transformational marketing- Not that it will no longer be concerned with what alone the product can contribute to the table, but what in the broader sense of sustainable living.

The role of the green marketing is even smaller considering its role in reflecting some of the life style changes. Packaging (biodegradable) and appliances (energy saving): consumers are increasingly conscious either in the food market (moving toward organic foods) or in the transportation (electric cars). The decisions are not reached against the environment but with respect to the convenience, wellness and the value of the decisions are availing. Green marketing narrative is therefore not the guilt inspired consumption but the empowerment and well-being. The very idea of Go Green, in the discussed aspect, has since become a marketing hymn, a timeless, uniform melody which, so to speak, rings in ears of an ever-increasing resulting percentage of the populace, who wants to know how to live responsibly. This is the promotional side that introduces environmental concern in marketing campaign, but this is becoming violent not only in advertising rights of merchandise, but also the establishment of social norms.

Although green marketing is increasingly gaining momentum, there is no silver bullet associated with it. Fraudulent advertising happens in greenwashing, which overstates the environmental advantage of the business in attempt to pursue that of attracting customers without trying to amend anything to minimize their impact on the ecosystem. It is a dent on the actual seller of green and elicits suspicion in the consumers. In this regard, transparency, authenticity and accountability is a

tremendous factor of success of any green marketing strategy. The companies must demonstrate their claims using objective statistics, certification of third parties and unchanging outcomes of the environmental issues. Besides, government comes into play, consumer education is crucial and in advertisement of viable and credible green marketing environment, media literacy would be essential.

It is against this backdrop that this paper embarked to criticize how green marketing is redefining consumer behavior, branding as well as the lifestyle that is being practiced by the present society. It is keen on determining the major positive factors leading to the success of any green marketing campaigns and, to determine that indeed, the green marketing campaigns is effective enough to make the people lives less complex and complicated by making the process of decision making less complicated, adding value to product and subsequently, healthy lifestyle. The paper also extends to examine the manner in which the consumers perceive and react to the green branding and whether they take their decisions, basing on the altruism, pressure or even utility. These comparisons of the two parties including the supplier side (the marketer and the company) and the demand side (the consumer) will offer an insight about green marketing phenomenon.

Given the above, green marketing is not only a chance to be green, but also a chance to be creative; it is a chance to earn some value; it is a chance to know and learn more about your customers and position them in a good place. With the increasing global practice of sustainability in growth practices, and the growing accountability and spending habits of the customers becoming what they believe in, it goes without saying that the concept of green marketing will remain center stage in the process of ensuring that trade and consumption adopt a new face within the next few decades. Surely it is the advertising hymn of the new age the hymn that shouts the word that we will be responsible, we will take care or be simple that life will get easier, more ethical, more enriching daily.

Literature Review

The contemporary situation in marketing is strongly affected by the evolution of the tendency towards sustainability and environment. The sale of products and services meeting extended delivery of environmental

benefits has elicited the occurrence of the green marketing, which is a study and practice of critical research. An overview of theoretical and empirical information will be used in the literature review, taking into account such aspects of consumer behavior, brand loyalty, the strategic benefits, and threats, including greenwashing provided in the past literature on the subject.

The impacts of green marketing on consumer behavior are one of the factors that have raised a serious issue among the scholars. Delafrooz, Taleghani, and Nouri 2014 state that the buying behavior among the consumers is positively influenced by the green marketing strategies due to the appreciation and ethical satisfaction of the products. Likewise, in the report on the Jordanian tourism industry, Burhan Mahmoud Awad Alomari (2020) says that green marketing is also pertinent in supporting the uptake of environmental friendly consumer behavior that reflects the rising popularity of environmental values in the everyday consumer behavior.

The beneficial effect of the sustainability programs is also being associated with the significant effect on the marketers, as they are brand loyalty. The article by Anwaruddin Tanwari (2020) demonstrates that the public sphere in the manufacturing sector in Greece is under analysis because the company, which implements green marketing and the green supply chain management, demonstrates the increased consumer confidence and brand loyalty. The same observation has also been agreed upon by Donaldson (2005) when he says that green brands generate a high emotional appeal on environmentally conscious have stated that sustainability is an effective brand differentiator.

This has been established to be the strategic level of green marketing emerging out of competitive advantage. Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard (2014) assert that the adoption of the concept of environmental sustainability in marketing does not only fulfill the compliance requirements and ethical dimension, but also brings about an increase in profitability in the long-term, as it will be in tandem with the changing needs of the consumer. In their international research of sustainability marketing, Belz and Peattie (2009) devote their attention to the issue of business due equilibrium of profit, the environment, and the social performance and how such a stance can evolve

potentially new values in the marketing realm in the 21 st century. Besides this, Berchicci and Bodewes (2005) also claim that the association of green activities to product development improves innovation and performance of the corporations.

The attitude and knowledge of the consumer about the environment is also essential precondition of green consumerism on psychological level. Arcury (1990) singles out education and awareness as being among the factors that influence the pro-environment attitudes. The higher is the awareness of the consumer about the ecological problem, the more positively he/she will be inclined to the green products. Dahlstrom (2011) even goes the extra mile and indicates that it is possible that green marketing does not work by itself as it should be complemented with openness and consumer education.

Nevertheless, the literature puts a red flag against unethical green marketing activities, specifically, greenwashing. According to Chen, Bernard, and Rahman (2019), the structural model that refers to false or exaggerated environmental claim would be where false or exaggerated environmental claim slays the consumer trust or lowers the behavioral intention. This observation is vital as this would imply that though green marketing has a lot of potential, its abuses will have negative effect on the brands. Consistent with this, authenticity and third party are meaningful attributes of getting rid of doubts.

Green marketing has been regarded even in the industrial businesses such as the auto business, and the hospitality business. Another instance is described by De Craecker and De Wulf (2009) in the case study of a Belgian car manufacturer producer that the alignment between the sustainability message and the marketing message on the product will depend on the up innovativeness of the products. Equally, Afridi, Ayaz, and Irfan (2021) conceptualize the concept of behavior change within the banking industry as part of the COVID-19 context and the environmental benefit, they explain that the customers see the digital and contactless services as an alternative in the form of safe and sustainable behavioral change.

Besides the need of the consumer level and the firm level pay, green marketing helps in the upper level strategic level of performance. Chakravarthy (1986) and Chang Lee et al. (2005) have given the models of strategic and knowledge performance that can be modified to confirm

the effectiveness of green marketing operations. These models provide a guideline of how the green plans can be appraised in terms of computing the performance of the business.

Finally, Durmaz and Yasar (2016) lists the positive effects of green marketing as a list that is broken down into the positive reputation and loyalty of buyers, the lower price due to the optimal utilization of the resources, and so on. Their research sticks to the idea that a green business is not only a morally right activity but also a business prudent notion.

Finally, as provided in the literature, the concept of green marketing has been identified and defined as multi-dimensional concept, where far European Union, there are far reaching implications of green marketing in terms of consumer behavior, brand equity, business strategy and market performance. It should however be created without hypocrisy, ruthless creativity and consumer-mind understanding to avoid falling into such traps as greenwashing in order to be productive. With the reduction of sustainability as an issue in the minds of the population, the notion can be stated as one of the most indispensable when it comes to designing business practices that would serve to correspond to the overall goals of the environmental aspects.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the impact of green marketing on consumer purchasing behavior.
- To assess the role of green marketing in building brand loyalty.
- To evaluate the influence of eco-friendly marketing on lifestyle choices.

Hypothesis

- Hypothesis (H₁): Green marketing has a significant positive impact on building brand loyalty among consumers.
- Null Hypothesis (H₀): Green marketing does not have a significant impact on building brand loyalty among consumers.

Research Methodology

The research design adopted by the current study is that of both approaches mingled in an effort to identify the complex effects of the role played by green marketing in generation of brand loyalty. Quantitative and qualitative actions used in the attempt to be profound and right in the outcomes. The study performed an interview or a designed interview that followed some sample of 150 consumers sampled in urban area of consideration of whether the consumers were aware of the green marketing strategy or green products or services on a sampling approach. The rationale of utilizing the forms was that it was Likert scale question(s) that were believed to measure the consumer attitude, the consumer perceptions, the intensity of the consumer loyalty to the notion of green marketing. The semi-structured interviews have been done to the 10 marketing specialists working currently in the companies where the green marketing practices have been implemented with the intention of complement the quantitative data. The qualitative conclusions may offer a management approach and to the corpus of knowledge concerning the issues and the measures of victoriousness concerned with green branding. This hypothesis came into reality by applying the tools of descriptive statistics as well hypothesis testing (i.e. correlation analysis) to the data acquired in the course of the surveys. The analysis of the qualitative data was also conducted by relying on the thematic analysis that contributed to revealing the occurrence of some repetitive tendencies and primary themes. This was triangulated in a way that made the research study to be able to record both the consumer perspective and the organizational perspective of the green marketing and brand loyalty relationship.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics – Green Marketing and Brand Loyalty (N = 150)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Awareness of green marketing campaigns	4.12	0.76	2	5
Perceived environmental commitment of brand	4.08	0.81	1	5
Trust in green brand claims	3.85	0.89	1	5
Satisfaction with eco-friendly products	4.01	0.68	2	5
Willingness to repurchase from green brands	4.1	0.72	2	5
Likelihood to recommend green brands	4.03	0.79	2	5
Overall brand loyalty	4.05	0.74	2	5

By the descriptive statistics shown in the table, the general reaction of the consumers about the green marketing programs and its role in brand loyalty is positive. The average indicator of the concept of green marketing campaigns (M = 4.12) demonstrates that the exhaustion of the respondents in the field of the environmental activities promoted by brands is rather high. In the same vein, there is also a high level of perceived environmental commitment (M = 4.08 and M = 4.01) and the perceived level of satisfaction with environmentally-friendly products (M = 4.08 and M = 4.01, respectively), meaning that these dimensions are also viewed as one of the valued attributes of brands whose sustainability strategy is active. The level of trust in the promises of green brand is somewhat lower (M = 3.85) this reflects the positive attitude, but is also evidenced of the necessity of the companies to be as transparent and genuine as possible in the communication of environment issues.

The variables, which positively correlate with the brand loyalty, are positioned higher in score 1st, willingness to repurchase (M = 4.10); 2nd, likelihood to recommend (M = 4.03), 3rd, overall brand loyalty (M = 4.05) which means that the variables are rather high. This means that

consumers with the personality inclination that is green and perceive a brand to be environmentally friendly are the ones most likely to express the behavior of repetitive purchase and referral. Additionally, values of standard deviations of variables have low rates; this is also related to a stable structure of responses and qualifies the information once again. On the whole, the descriptive analysis confirms the hypothesis of positive effect of green marketing on consumer brand loyalty and it is an overlay that will be the basis of desiring further inferential analysis.

Hypothesis testing

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between Green Marketing and Brand Loyalty (N = 150)

Variables	Green Marketing	Brand Loyalty
Green Marketing	1	.674**
Brand Loyalty	.674**	1

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

To test the hypothesis which observed the relationship between green marketing and brand loyalty among the consumers, the Pearson correlation analysis was done. Then result revealed that $r = 0.674$ was considerably positive with value showing that there is an overall significant association amongst the two variables, that is, a linear association amongst the two variables. Statistically noteworthy level of 0.01 ($p < 0.01$) was correlated which indicated that the relationship is quite unlikely to have been developed by coincidence. This means that, consumers considering green marketing practices of a brand positively, will be better placed to exhibit loyalty to the brand. It is also found that the magnitude of the correlation favors viewing environmentally conscious branding as the power variable that delimit the relationships in long-run situation towards the consumer. On the basis of such findings, the alternative hypothesis (H1) that declares the strong positive influence of the green marketing on the creation of the brand loyalty is accepted and the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. It is justifiable knowledge to ensure that companies invest on both real and transparent green marketing approaches to attain consumer loyalty.

Discussion

The outcomes of the examination show the increased consequence of green marketing in the consumer behavior, specifically in brand loyalty. The correlation amongst the investment in green marketing and customer loyalty is positive at a considerable level, and it means that the branding on sustainability appears to appeal to the contemporary customers who are more worried about environmental state of affairs. It implies that by turning truly green, the companies will not just have better treatment in the society, but will also have the control over retention and promotion in the community of customers. These results, however, also imply the necessity of being transparent so as to avoid the occurrence of green washing which can indeed eat trust. Generally, green marketing is born as a kind of social responsibility, and as winning approach in the modern competitive business case.

Conclusion

This discussion has revealed that green marketing is very necessary as long as the construction of consumer loyalty towards brands is concerned. As the environmental awareness of the consumers keeps growing, consumers are gravitating more towards brands that appear to be concerned about the issue of sustainability. The high positive interdependence among green marketing and brand loyalty facilitated by the help of statistics confirms that green marketing strategies can influence the decision of a customer more than just the mention of the product feature, and it may predetermine his/her trust, satisfaction, and commitment. Companies that successfully exercise clear and genuine green marketing activities have greater chances of achieving the competitive edge and development of strong associations with customers. Green marketing is therefore a sustainable policy, not only in terms of environmental, but also a good brand differentiation and promotion of brand loyalty strategy in the contemporary market.

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Employees as Internal Customers: Applying the 7Ps of Service Marketing Mix to Internal Marketing in Infosys

Ms. Simran Sharma

Research Scholar, Department of Commerce,
Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University,
Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India
Email id: simranshr925@gmail.com
Orchid Id: 0009-0009-1239-870X

Dr. Manish Kumar Srivastava,

Professor, Department of Commerce,
Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University,
Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India
Email id: manish.comm@ddugu.ac.in
Orchid Id: 0000-0002-1260-6339

ABSTRACT:

Human Resources is treated as a vital resource in service industry as the services are generated and delivered directly by the employees. So customer satisfaction is intimately linked to ensuring employee satisfaction. The important concepts of marketing can also be applied in field of Human Resource Management(HRM). While traditional marketing emphasizes on customers, internal marketing (IM) stresses treating workforces as internal customers to develop engagement, productivity, and overall organisational performance. Even though the significance of IM remains broadly acknowledged, limited research has explored the application of “7Ps of service marketing mix: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence”, within software companies such as Infosys. In this article, the authors have made an attempt to examine HR practices through the lens of IM, using 7Ps of service marketing mix as a framework. The article also throws light on how these elements influence employee engagement and their performance.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Services Marketing-Mix, SDG 3, SDG 8, SDG 9,

INTRODUCTION:

As per the International Monetary Fund Data, “India's nominal GDP is approximately \$4.19 trillion as of June 2025, making it fourth-largest economy in world after overtaking Japan (IMF Data)”. The contribution of the Indian IT sector in India's nominal GDP is about 10% to the country's nominal GDP. Besides this, around 14.67 million labors (2.55% of workforce) are a part of the workforce who is working in this sector. The productivity of the IT industry is about five times that of the overall economy. This signifies importance of this sector in Indian economy.

In the competitive IT industry, organizations like Infosys, TCS & Wipro depend heavily on performance of their workforces to deliver first-class services. Consumer satisfaction is fundamentally driven by engagement, motivation & satisfaction of workforces who are important internal stakeholders of companies.

The Conventional “Marketing Mix, i.e. Product, Price, Place and Promotion” popularly known as 4 P's is a set of tactical tools used by companies to promote its products or services and satisfy customer needs.

In service industries like IT, Hospitality, Medical services etc. besides the above mentioned 4 P's three additional elements are added down i.e. ‘People, Process and Physical evidence’ popularly known as 7P's of Services Marketing. For a software company like Infosys, the 7Ps can be mapped internally as well, aligning employee satisfaction (People), work processes (Process), and technology platforms (Physical Evidence) to enhance both employee engagement and customer outcomes. The 7 Ps of Services marketing can be used to satisfy internal stakeholders i.e. the employees who are the most important resource of any service sector.

In the modern, service-oriented economy, organisations are realizing the value of coordinating internal operations with external marketing objectives. To promote employee engagement and service excellence, one such strategic approach is internal marketing (IM), which places an emphasis on viewing “jobs as internal products and employees as internal customers”. In order for employees to be knowledgeable, driven, and dedicated to providing excellent customer service—and thus serve as brand ambassadors—IM is essential.

The concept of IM, which treats employees as "internal customers", can be used to engage the employees with the organisation and motivate them to communicate its values both inside and outside the workplace. The premise is that contented and knowledgeable staff will provide superior customer service to external clients, which will ultimately lead to business success.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In 1970s, the idea of internal marketing was born out of the growing recognition that, particularly in service-oriented industries, "customer satisfaction has been directly influenced by employee satisfaction". There have been discussions about internal marketing in marketing literature from decades, starting with Berry et al. (1976). "Internal marketing" was primarily mentioned by Arbeit and Sasser (1976); Berry, in 1980, was the one who first used the term. According to Berry (1981), companies must provide for the requirements of their workers if they hope to succeed. External marketing should come second in importance, according to Kotler (2009). According to Grönroos (1990), the idea has developed over time to encompass more than just employee training or motivation. It now encompasses internal communication, leadership support, employee empowerment, and the alignment of personal and organisational objectives. Berries (1981) and Money and Forman (1995) proposed that workers are company's core consumers, they should be content with their positions and the internal products they are provided. This is because a dedicated and contented worker will provide superior customer service to the company.

Grönroos (1981) defines IM as the practice of pitching company to its own internal clients, or employees, with the idea that contented workers will contribute to the development of a customer-focused and market-oriented business. A change in internal marketing toward a customer-centric viewpoint was noted by Caruana and Calleya (1998). According to their research, market orientation and organizational commitment are directly related, and there is an even higher correlation between organizational commitment and employee responsiveness within market orientation. In line with Christopher et al., (1991), who saw internal marketing as crucial to creating a customer-focused culture, Pitt et al. (1999) highlighted that it's essential to raise external and

internal customer awareness while removing obstacles that impede organizational effectiveness. In order to achieve corporate goals, internal marketing entails putting programs into place that treat customers and employees equally. While Lings (2004) proposed that employees' acceptance of internal marketing directly influences key performance outcomes like satisfaction, retention, and commitment, which in turn shape external market orientation, Jones et al., (2003) contended that salespeople's perceptions of a company's market orientation enhance their organizational commitment.

Current studies highlight the increasing significance of IM and use of 7Ps marketing mix in service, healthcare, and higher education sectors. Ivy (2008) looked into how MBA students were recruited in South Africa and discovered that, in addition to the more conventional marketing components of people, promotion, and price, program, prominence, prospectus, and premiums better capture students' perceptions. This suggests that the new 7P model is better for marketing higher education programs. According to Tortosa, Moliner, and Sánchez (2009), while Al-Ahmadi (2009), work performance can be measured by staff productivity. Al-Ahmadi (2009) found that tracking and improving employee performance is essential for organizational success. Chang and Chang (2009) states that motivation and retention of employees is increased by satisfying employee requirements which also improves service delivery. Internal marketing practices motivate the employees to offer superior service to customers of the companies (Ting (2011).

The benefits of 7Ps framework were also found in the healthcare service sector. According to a study conducted by Ravangard et al. (2020) in hospitals of Shiraz, Iran, "people" and "physical environment" were found to be the most important elements of service marketing mix which influenced patients' decisions, whereas "promotion" had the least impact on their decision. They also found that price, promotion, and process differed significantly between private and public hospitals. Similar results were found in the study conducted by Nair, Menon, and Chowa (2025) in UAE hospitals, that proved that internal marketing helps in the development of staff which resulted into better patient care, operational effectiveness, and alignment with corporate goals.

When it comes to educational sector, Vasagan (2023) found that three elements service package, staff involvement, and workflow i.e. product, people and process respectively in terms of extended service marketing mix have a major impact on internal marketing strategies of Assamese B-schools. Manzoor & Zhang (2025) conducted their study in Pakistani higher education institutes and concluded that internal marketing plays a vital role in improving academic team outcomes by mediating the relationship among team performance & knowledge-oriented leadership. Further Sadri and Aprianingsih (2025) in one of their study in online IELTS classes in Indonesia found that product, price, promotion and people have more impact as compared to place, process, and physical evidence on purchase intentions. Lastly, Foroudi and Akbari (2024) also emphasized that internal marketing is a strategic instrument to enhance stakeholder involvement, customer loyalty, and employee happiness across various industries.

So the above mentioned study proves that IM increases worker retention, their productivity, and employee happiness especially in the service industries. The 7Ps framework or the Service Marketing mix offers an organized method for successfully implementing internal marketing in any company. The inferences drawn from the above study can be used to analyze how Infosys (one of the leading digital services and consulting company) is incorporating internal marketing concepts into HR initiatives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study HR practices of Infosys using 7Ps of the service marketing mix as an internal marketing framework.
- To analyse the impact of internal marketing (IM) on employee productivity, satisfaction, & retention.

DATA & METHODOLOGY

This study uses an exploratory and descriptive research design based solely on secondary data sources. The data collection was from various sources like annual reports and ESG disclosures (2015-2024) from Infosys official

website, previous studies and performance reports related to Infosys' internal marketing initiatives. Content analysis will be conducted on selected secondary sources to take out information about each element of the 7Ps framework of Service Marketing as it pertains to Infosys employees. This design enables a systematic and unbiased review of Infosys' internal marketing strategy using the 7Ps framework, with data supported by credible published sources and organizational reports. In order to integrate the analysis and interpretation of literature, data were gathered & methodically documented using the hermeneutic framework (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

From the view of 7Ps Framework of services marketing, "Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence", following HR practices (from 2015 to 2024) were examined:

1. **Product: Jobs, Careers, and Continuous Learning as Offerings**

Infosys has continuously marketed its positions and career paths as "career products" that are intended to fulfill the goals and professional development of its employees. This strategy is embodied in the company's Career Gambit framework (Get-Set-Go), which provides employees with clarity regarding career advancement. Employees are encouraged to view their job roles as possibilities for advancement rather than as fixed routine jobs.

The most notable product innovation was the Lex digital learning platform introduced by Infosys in 2017. The company tried to position learning as a crucial component of their employee experience with the help of Lex's extensive telemetry, gamification features, and more than 14,800 other courses. Infosys also introduced Digital Quotient which is a score to track an employee's digital capabilities and preparedness. This score helps the employees in earning Skill Tags, which are special recognitions for acquired skills in new technologies. Additionally, Infosys prioritizes hands-on learning through its InStep Global

Internship Program, which Vault Firsthand has recognized as the world's top internship program for five consecutive years. This initiative promotes Infosys' reputation as a career-builder and acts as a talent pipeline for the future.

Internal Marketing Linkage: In order to ensure synchronization between employee goals & organizational expansion, Infosys markets jobs internally as long-term "career products" that change constantly to meet the demands of employees.

2. Price: Compensation, Rewards, and Non-Monetary Benefits

In order to foster loyalty, Infosys has used pay and incentives as internal marketing techniques in addition to transactional features. In 1994, the company was the first in India to implement Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs). Building on this, Infosys launched a stock incentive program in 2016 and extended it to include 25% of mid- to senior-level staff in 2017.

Platforms like RISE (recognition) and the Awards for Excellence, Infosys' biggest recognition platform, are examples of how performance-linked awards are institutionalized.

Competitiveness is also reflected in salary increases; in 2020, for instance, the average yearly increase in India was 7.3%. Infosys provides advantages like as personal loans and advances in addition to direct salary; in 2020, employees received loans totalling 260 crores, of which 239 crores may be repaid within a year.

Employee happiness is further reinforced by non-monetary rewards. The 'HALE (Health Assessment and Lifestyle Enrichment) program' has received numerous accolades, including 'the AFE Gold for Internal Customer Delight (2022)' and 'the SHRM Excellence Award (2021)', and it promotes physical, emotional, social, and safety wellness.

Internal Marketing Linkage: Various efforts taken by Infosys for the Wellness of its employees and by giving various incentives, Infosys "prices" the working relationship in terms of comprehensive

benefits as well as pays, giving workers a sense of worth and commitment.

3. Place: Workplace Environment, Flexibility, and Deployment

Infosys' implemented the concept of "place" by focusing on workplace design and flexible deployment. Zero Bench Program was introduced in 2016 to keep unused staff members motivated and productive. These employees who were not working on client projects were assigned internal projects especially successful during periods of fluctuating demand. It also helped to improve staff utilization. During COVID-19 pandemic, the company adopted the concept of workplace flexibility. 96.5% of the employees were working remotely by 2021 with the help of online collaboration platforms such as Infosys Meridian.

After the epidemic, Infosys implemented a hybrid strategy and transformed physical workstations into collaborative agile spaces.

The company also prioritized local employment to improve client closeness and cultural alignment. In 2020, 2,035 of the 6,932 local employees hired were recent graduates; by 2023, that number had increased to 10,169 local hires, including 2,216 recent graduates.

Internal Marketing Linkage: Strategic redistribution and flexible work schedules helped in strengthening workers' sense of security and belongingness with the company, which helped in lowering disengagement during recessions.

4. Promotion: Communication, Engagement, and Feedback Systems

Infosys has created an advanced internal communication system to improve employee experience and HR branding. They have developed various apps for improving employee internal communication. InfyMe app is used as a one-stop employee experience center providing access to HR services, training, and engagement features.

Pulse app is used for ongoing employee input and culture sensing, and iEngage app offers a structured communication framework. Employees submitted more than 2,000 ideas to the

Optiwise program, which was introduced in 2016. Of those, 250 were selected for implementation. Recognition and ongoing communication were made possible with the iCount performance rating system (2019).

Internal Marketing Linkage: Infosys' internal communication aligns employees with company goals by promoting opportunities, values, and recognition, just like external marketing does for customers.

5. People: Employees, Culture, and Diversity

The foundation of Infosys' service delivery is its workforce, and internal marketing makes sure they are regarded as important stakeholders. The company's engagement strategy is anchored by the '5C Engagement Model: Connect, Collaborate, Celebrate, Care, and Culture'. HALE promotes wellness, and platforms for employee volunteering foster social responsibility.

Infosys received a score of 95 out of 100 on 'Human Rights Campaign Equality Index for LGBTQ+' inclusiveness and has been named one of the "Best Workplaces for Women" on a regular basis.

Internal Marketing Linkage: Employee commitment is increased by Infosys' internal marketing of itself as a forward-thinking, encouraging employer through investments in wellness, culture, and inclusivity.

6. Process: HR Systems, Policies, and Governance

Internal marketing requires openness and fairness, which Infosys's processes are built to deliver. The performance evaluation system was redesigned in 2016 with an emphasis on ongoing feedback. In addition to the Whistleblower Policy (which was updated in 2019), grievance redressal procedures such as ASHI 2000 (anti-harassment) and HEAR (workplace-related concerns) were established.

HR tasks have been made more efficient by automation. Infosys developed an idea-based culture, to promote continuous innovation at various project levels. Infosys Mana and the Zero Distance Initiative (2017) is an example of encouraging employees to come up with new ideas

for serving the client in a better manner or making improvement in their daily work.

Internal Marketing Linkage: In Internal Marketing, due weightage is given to process which is duly followed by Infosys to serve their clients

7. Physical Evidence: Tangible Work Environment and Employer Branding

To improve their employer branding image, Infosys has taken the help of both tangible and intangible elements. On the one hand, they have developed their cooperative areas that represent creativity and openness and on the other by implementing the digital HR systems, wellness programs, and Health, Safety, and Environment Management Systems (HSEMS), the company has shown their commitment and seriousness towards their employees. The company had won awards like Glassdoor's "Best Places to Work" (2021), was listed as one of LinkedIn's "Top 5 Employers in India" (2022), and were consistently ranked #1 for the InStep Internship Program. These accolades prove that the company has adopted Internal Marketing practices in the best possible manner.

Internal Marketing Linkage: Working on the tangible and intangible elements to improve branding and by winning international accolades helps in increasing dedication and pride among staff members.

Impact of IM Practices on Employees:

According to Internal marketing, employees are seen as internal customers which results into positive effect on employee retention, increase in productivity and employee satisfaction. The efforts taken by the management of the Infosys and their impact on employees are mentioned below:

1. Impact on Employee Satisfaction

Infosys has consistently improved employee satisfaction by implementing various employee engagement and employee wellbeing programs like iEngage communication framework, the InfyMe app, the Pulse feedback system, and the '5C Engagement Model (Connect, Collaborate,

Celebrate, Care, Culture)’ and the HALE program. The management also acknowledged the good performance of their employees by recognition systems such as RISE and Awards for Excellence besides giving them monetary benefits.

Data Evidence:

- The ESG reports of various years of the company also states that due to the above efforts taken by the company, the rate of employee satisfaction improved from 73% in 2021 to 75% in 2022 to 82% in 2023 and 80% in 2024.
- Prestigious Awards like LinkedIn Top Employers in India (2022) and Glassdoor Best Places to Work (2021) won by the company also proves the level of satisfaction the employees are having in the company.

Interpretation: By strengthening the employee value proposition and fostering a positive work atmosphere, internal marketing directly increased satisfaction. Workers saw themselves not as interchangeable resources but as collaborators in Infosys' expansion.

2. Impact on Employee Productivity

Infosys has successfully connected creative redeployment models, a robust culture of continuous learning, and new HR procedures to increases in production. With 200,000 users in 2019 and over 325,000 by 2023, the Lex platform made learning a daily habit. In 2022, employees spent an average of 45 minutes a day on learning, & number of training days increased from 1.9 million in 2021 to 3.3 million in 2023. With over 1.5 lakh people trained in digital skills in 2022 and 1.9 lakh in 2023, and over 2.5 lakh employees becoming AI-aware by 2024, reskilling initiatives bolstered digital growth. The Zero Bench Program was launched by the company under which the employees who were not working on any project with the external client were given internal projects. This program on one hand, ensured better utilization of the human resource whereas on the other hand helped to maintain the morale of the employees. Infosys also created an innovation driven culture by introducing Initiatives like

Optiwise (2016) and Zero Distance (2017). These efforts resulted into adoption of 250 innovative ideas generated by the employees.

Data Evidence:

- Employee utilization, excluding trainees, was among the highest in the industry at 81.7%.
- From 2017 to 2023, Infosys's expansion of digital services increased revenue per employee.

Interpretation: Learning, engagement, and deployment models were positioned as productivity aids by internal marketing. Employees saw chances to stay billable, utilize their abilities, and innovate, which matched corporate efficiency with individual productivity.

3. Impact on Employee Retention

Infosys' internal marketing has had the biggest impact on retention, as the business has successfully reduced attrition over the past ten years by combining governance, diversity, career growth, and awards. Initiatives like Career Gambit, Skill Tags, Digital Quotient, and continual reskilling aided career growth by giving workers clear paths to promotion.

ESOPs & other stock incentives (2016–17) and platforms that rewarded loyalty beyond monetary remuneration improved rewards and recognition. Systems like the ASHI 2000 anti-harassment program, the HEAR grievance procedure, and a revamped Whistleblower Policy in 2019 all improved trust and governance by fostering an environment of openness and justice. In addition, Infosys demonstrated its dedication to an inclusive workplace by achieving score of 95/100 on the ‘Human Rights Campaign Equality Index for LGBTQ+ inclusion’ and boosting women's involvement from 37.8% in 2020 to 39.3% in 2024.

Data Evidence:

- Attrition decreased from 23.4% in the first quarter of 2015 to 15.0% in 2017 and 12.6% in 2024.
- Engagement mechanisms-maintained retention

even during periods of high hiring (84,782 new grads in 2022; 50,000+ in 2023; and 11,900 in 2024).

Interpretation: Internal marketing changed retention by giving workers a sense of safety, worth, and inclusion in a growth narrative. As a result, there were fewer voluntary departures and increased organizational stability.

Integrating Synthesis in Three Dimensions

1. Satisfaction: Motivated by tools for involvement (InfyMe, Pulse), wellness (HALE), and recognition (RISE, Awards for Excellence).

2. Productivity: Bolstered by reskilling (2.5 lakh AI-skilled workers by 2024), Zero Bench, Lex (3.3M training days), and idea-driven innovation initiatives.
3. Retention: Enhanced by diversity inclusion (39% women), career clarity (Career Gambit, Skill Tags), equitable procedures (HEAR, ASHI, Whistleblower Policy), and acknowledgment.

The benefits of implementing Internal Marketing practices can be understood from the following table:

Table 1: Benefits of implementing Internal Marketing practices in Infosys

Particulars	Details
Employee Strength	It grew from 176,187 in 2015 to 343,234 in 2023 before consolidating to 317,000 in 2024.
Attrition	Declined steadily from 23.4% in 2015 to 12.6% in 2024
Learning & Reskilling	Lex adoption grew from ~200,000 users (2019) to 325,000+ (2023); training days rose from 1.9M (2021) to 3.3M (2023).
Diversity	Women’s workforce share rose from 37.8% (2020) to 39.3% (2024)
Employee Satisfaction	It Increased from 73% (2021) to 82% (2023).
Recruitment	Large-scale campus hiring peaked in 2022 (84,782) and tapered to 11,900 in 2024 as part of strategic optimization

Source: Various Annual Report from 2015-2024

CONCLUSION

The evidence shows that Infosys’ HR practices, when interpreted through the 7Ps framework of Services Marketing-Mix, reflect a deliberate adoption of internal marketing practices. Various programs like Career Gambit, Lex, Skill Tags, InStep, Zero Bench, Optiwise, InfyMe, iCount, 5C Engagement, HALE, and Zero Distance launched by the company for the overall development of the employees, proves that Infosys does not treat them as mere employees but as internal customers.

By the strategic integration of Internal marketing principles with HR procedures, Infosys has enhanced its competitive edge in the IT services sector, maximizing

both organizational performance and employee engagement.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study provides valuable insights into Infosys's HR operations using the 7Ps framework of services marketing-mix and internal marketing, but still it has some limitations.

The primary limitation is its sole dependence on secondary data collected, from annual reports, ESG disclosures, and other published studies which may not fully represent internal realities of employee experiences. The results can be verified by conducting surveys and interview with the employees of the

company. Furthermore, as this study is time-bound i.e. between 2015–2024, it does not include any practices or advancements that occurred beyond this time. Additionally, as the study is related with Infosys only, the findings might not apply to other businesses or sectors.

FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

The study offers a number of directions for further investigation. Primary data from focus groups, employee surveys, and interviews can enhance the reliability and validity of the research by confirming secondary findings and offering more in-depth understanding of lived experiences. Comparative research including other top IT giants, like TCS, Wipro, or HCL, can extend the focus and reveal best practices for the entire sector. In order to monitor how HR and internal marketing strategies change after 2024, especially in reaction to new technology, workforce shifts around the world, and ESG requirements, future studies could potentially take a longitudinal approach. Additionally, investigating the 7Ps internal marketing framework's suitability for non-IT industries including manufacturing, healthcare, and education can yield insights from different sectors. Additionally, there is room to create quantitative models that use engagement indices and performance measures to quantify the direct effects of IM on worker retention, productivity, & satisfaction. Lastly, to increase research's applicability to strategic organizational development, future studies can incorporate a governance and policy perspective and look at how internal marketing fits with diversity, inclusion, sustainability, and corporate governance goals.

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A STUDY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR FOR BAKERY PRODUCTS WITH REFERENCE TO SELECTED VILLAGES IN MIRAJ TAHSIL

Miss. Manisha. V. Naikwade

Research Scholar, Department of Commerce and Management, Shivaji University, Kolhapur

E-mail: mnaikwade9894@gmail.com

Dr. Nitin. C. Mali

Director, Yashwantrao Chavan School of Rural Development, Shivaji University, Kolhapur

E-mail : ncm.yesrd@unishivaji.ac.in

ABSTRACT:

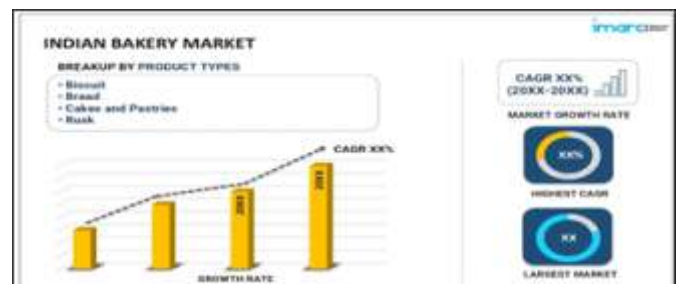
The purpose of this study is to comprehend how consumers in a few chosen villages purchase bakery goods from Miraj Tahsil. This study used a combination of primary and secondary data as its research methodology. It was primary data obtained through a standardized questionnaire and secondary data came from journals that had been published papers. To analyze the association between variables Chi-Square test was employed. The result obtained from analysis reveals there is no significant association between age and the purchase of bakery factors influencing. This study indicates that there is no significant association between income of customer and preferences for price, quality, or brand while purchasing bakery products.

This study provides insights about the taste, choice, and preferences of consumers for bakery products for selected villages in Miraj Tahsil. The findings of the study will be useful for bakery product producers, wholesalers, and retailers, as well as new market entrants, to design a market strategy for Miraj Tahsil and its villages.

Keywords—Consumer Buying Behavior, Consumer Preferences, Miraj Tahsil, Bakery Products

Introduction

Consumer Buying Behavior refers to tastes, choices, actions, and decisions taken by the consumers while purchasing the goods and services. A bakery is a shop, unit, or layout that produces and sells flour-based products like bread, biscuits, buns, cake, pastries, donuts, etc. With the increase in population, increase in disposable income of people, influence of Western lifestyle, influence of social media, and ready-to-eat availability of bakery products and busy life, people are giving an important place to bakery products in their breakfast and meals. The Indian bakery market size reached USD 13.8 billion in 2024. Looking forward, IMARC Group expects the market to reach USD 31.5 billion by 2033, exhibiting a growth rate (CAGR) of 9.12% during 2025-2033. The growing population and changing consumer preferences, driven by factors such as Western food trends, increased consumption of cakes and RTE food, and expanding retail and e-commerce sectors, are fueling the market growth / demand. (<https://www.imarcgroup.com/>)



source: <https://www.imarcgroup.com/>

In today's era consumers are not only buying bakery products, but they are expecting bakery products with less sugar, less processed, gluten-free, multigrain base products, better texture and odor, better quality and packing and fragrance with affordable prices. Bakery market is growing and has huge success potential in coming future for bakery producers and sellers. But with growing market, marketing competition is also increasing. And for sustaining, tackling this local as well as international markets need to take detail overview about existing as well as future market conditions, consumers choices, preferences, income level, availability. This study throws light on bakery industry of Miraj Tahsil. It defines consumer's preferences,

demographic of Miraj Tahsil. This will help bakery producers, wholesalers, retailers, new entrants to define marketing strategies which will help them to offer bakery products to the Miraj Tahsil's Consumers.

In today's era consumers are not only buying bakery products, but they are expecting bakery products with less sugar, less processing, gluten-free multigrain-based products, better texture and odor, better quality and packing, and fragrance with affordable prices. The bakery market is growing and has huge success potential in the coming future for bakery producers and sellers. But with a growing market, marketing competition is also increasing. And for sustaining, tackling this local as well as international market needs to take a detailed overview of existing as well as future market conditions, consumers' choices, preferences, income level, and availability. This study throws light on the bakery industry of Miraj Tahsil. It defines consumers' preferences and the demographics of Miraj Tahsil. This will help bakery producers, wholesalers, retailers, and new entrants to define marketing strategies that will help them to offer bakery products to the Miraj Tahsil's consumers.

Objectives of the Study

- To discover the key factors manipulating consumer purchasing decisions for bakery products for selected villages in Miraj Tahsil.
- To investigate consumer preferences for different types of bakery products (e.g., bread, cakes, pastries) in the region.
- To assess the role of price, quality, and brand in shaping consumer buying behavior for bakery items in selected villages in Miraj Tahsil.
- To quantify the consumers' attitude towards the marketing problems of bakery products.
- To assess the purchasing patterns of consumers in Miraj Tahsil for bakery products.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H0) : There is no significant association between age and factors influencing the purchase of bakery products.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1) : there is significant association between age and factors influencing the

purchase of bakery products.

Null Hypothesis (H0) : There is no significant association between income of customer and preferences for price, quality, or brand while purchasing bakery products.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1) : There is significant association between income of customer and preferences for price, quality, or brand while purchasing bakery products.

Review of Literature:

Singh, S., Suman, Kour, P., & Kumar, S. (2024). This study found that people in modern times prefer healthier bakery products. They prefer low-processed, gluten-free, lactose-tolerant, low-sugar foods with less saturated fat. And after the Covid pandemic, e-commerce is also playing a major role in the bakery industry. In traditional bakery businesses the products were sold in offline retail shops, but with the digitalization and rise of e-commerce, now bakers are delivering their services through e-commerce platforms.

Dr. Virender Khanna. (2014). These studies explore that there is a significant relationship between the marketing mix of bakery products and the problems of bakery products. The study found that the majority of the consumers are concerned about product mix. Like shelf life, nutritional value, texture, quality, and volume of product, and they are much less concerned about promotion and pricing of a bakery product.

Dr. Virender Khanna. (2014). This study aims to find out the consumer attitude and consumer behavior towards bakery products in the Delhi NCR region. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 500 consumers. The study found that the majority of the respondents purchase bakery products on a daily basis, and they have been purchasing products for the last 3 years from the same bakers. The majority of the respondents purchased bakery products from local kirana stores rather than supermarkets or bakery shops, and they spent 20 to 30 minutes for the buying process in shops with the intention to pay 100 to 500 rupees for bakery products.

Kaur, P., & Choudhary, M. (2024). The study was carried out in Ludhiana City Punjab and 200 respondents provided data. Bread and biscuits were the study's top

choices. Most of the respondents purchased baked goods from the neighborhood market. Additionally the study found that participants eat brown and whole wheat bread once a week and biscuits every day.

Kathane, M., & Sharma, R. (2017). The study aimed to ascertain the purchasing patterns of women who were employed and those who were not. According to a study bread and biscuits are the most popular baked goods. While demographic factors had little impact on purchasing behavior education had a significant impact on the purchases of bakery goods made by both working and non-working women.

Muruges, M. K. (2022). The goal of the study was to gauge consumer perceptions of bread products. According to the study the majority of respondents spend between 100 and 500 rupees on bakery products each day from local market stores. The study found that the respondents purchasing decisions are influenced by the price mix

Patel, H., & Solanki, D. (2022). Finding the variables influencing consumers was the study's goal. consumer perceptions of Atul Bakery products and purchasing patterns. The study finds that the. Though some respondents believe they have quite a few the majority of respondents prefer high-quality products. They are unable to buy Atul Bakery products because of the high processing costs for baked goods.

Virana, D., & Goel, Dr. A. (2025). Comparing and evaluating respondents satisfaction levels with branded and non-branded bakery products was the study's main goal. The study finds that while respondents are happy with the quality hygiene and packaging of branded products they believe that non-branded bakery goods are more reasonably priced.

Kumar, A., & Raina, A. (2024). The study explores the differences in tastes and choices of consumers in Ghaziabad. The study reveals that the market has more male consumers, so they need to define gender-based marketing strategies. It also reveals the generation's variety and their different needs.

Lakshmi, E., Selvi, K. S., Fathima, S. R., & M, D. (2024). The study found that the flour used in the production of cake had low protein and gluten value. The study reveals that not only quality and brand are important, but also shelf life, texture, nutrition, and good packaging

appearance play important roles while selling the bakery products.

Research Gap

After reviewing the literature, we have arrived at the interpretation that there is a huge amount of work and study on consumer buying behavior for apparel, footwear, etc. But very little study/research has been conducted on buying behavior for bakery products. Mostly these studies are conducted in metro cities. So there is huge scope for this titled study in semi-urban areas like Miraj Tahsil.

Research Methodology:

Research Design:

Sampling Unit –Data was collected from main Miraj Tahsil city and other villages, towns included Malgoan, Bedag, Arag, bamnoli and Khanderajuri, Bamani, Bamnoli, Ankali, etc.

Sample Size –

The sample size of 384 for Miraj Tahsil is based on the widely accepted sample size formula for estimating proportions in large populations:

Where:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

- $Z=1.96$ $Z=1.96$ $Z=1.96$ (for 95% confidence)
- $p=0.5$ $p = 0.5$ $p=0.5$ (maximum variability, conservative estimate)
- $e=0.05$ $e=0.05$ $e=0.05$ ($\pm 5\%$ margin of error)

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16 \approx 384$$

This sample size is sufficiently powered to make inferences about the taluka-level population with 95% confidence and a 5% margin of error, assuming random sampling. For estimating a proportion in a large population with 95% confidence and 5% margin of error, a sample size of approximately 384 is sufficient. (Kish, L. 1965)

Sampling Method- For this study, Simple Random

Convenient Quota Sampling Method was used for data collection.

Simple Random Sampling Method

Under this method, every individual consumer had an equal opportunity to be selected from the population. Respondents were randomly from different villages and areas to avoid bias and to capture a true reflection of consumer’s preferences and buying behavior. This helped in gathering varied opinions from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Convenient Quota Sampling Method

Due to time accessibility constrains, respondents who were conveniently available and willing to participate were included in the study. This approach facilitated the smooth collection of data from local markets, bakeries and residential areas without disrupting daily activities of the respondents.

Quota Sampling Method

To maintain balance and represent all areas within Miraj Tahsil, quotas were assigned to different locations such as Miraj Tahsil city and other villages, towns included Malgoan, Bedag, Arag, bamnoli and Khanderajuri, Bamani, Bamnoli, Ankali,etc. ensure that adequate number of respondents were covered from each selected village or town. This ensured that every geographic area within the Tahsil was proportionately represented in the final sample.

Statistical tools used – For data tabulation, analysis Excel was used along with Pie Chart, Bar Diagram, and Chi square Test.

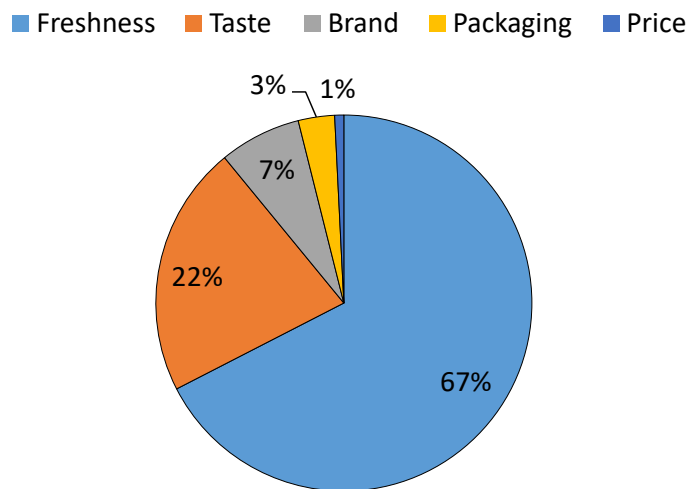
Sources of data

Primary Data- For this study the Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire from the consumers in Miraj Tahsil.

Secondary Data- For this study the Secondary Data was collected through published journals, articles.

Table 1 Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

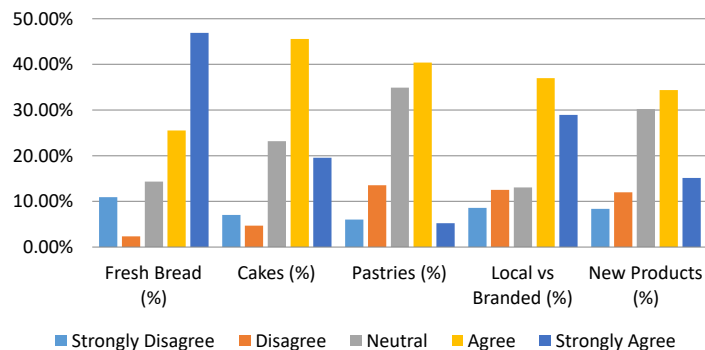
Factors influencing purchase decisions



It is found that freshness is the most important factor influencing purchase decision, accounting for 67% of total. Taste also play important role i.e. 22% followed by brand and packaging. Price is the least important factor which affects the purchase decision.

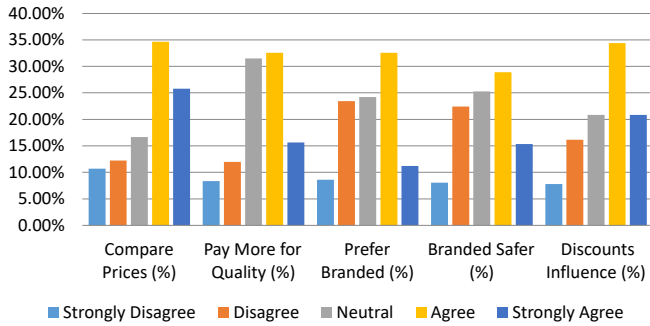
Table 2 Consumer preferences

Consumer preferences



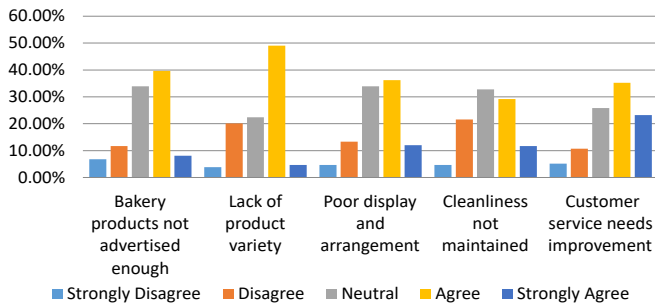
This chart shows consumer preferences for various products. It is found that majority of the consumers give preference to fresh bread with nearly half expressing strong agreement. Cakes are also much liked. Pastries received mixed reaction with significant proportion remaining neutral. About local and branded products majority of consumers gave preference to the local products. Significant proportion gives neutral response to the new products.

Table 3 Role of Price, Quality and Brand
Role of Price, Quality and Brand



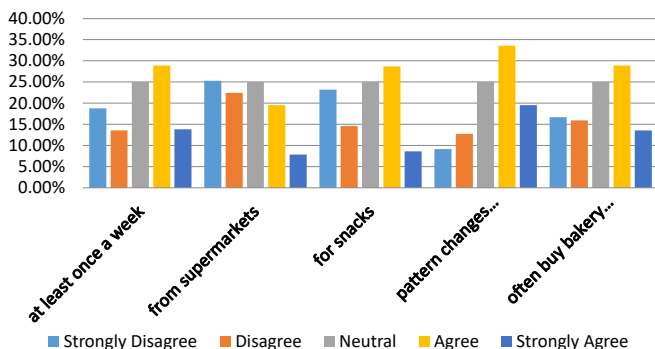
The chart reveals that many consumers compare prices before making a purchase. Additionally, a large number of consumers are ready to pay more money for quality and branded products. Majority of the consumers prefer branded products with the thought that they are safer and hygienic. Furthermore, discounts and offers play a vital role in buying decision.

Table 4 Marketing Problems and Attitudes
Marketing Problems and Attitudes



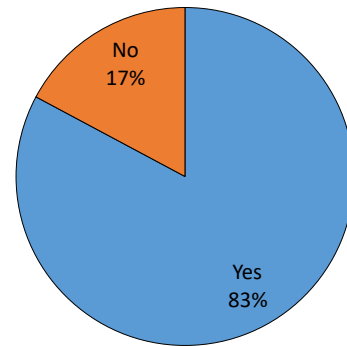
The chart shows that consumers feel there is a lack of product variety and enough advertising in their area. Many also find that poor display, arrangement, and hygiene to be an issue. Also, there is a need for better and improved customer services.

Table 5 Purchasing Patterns
Purchasing Patterns



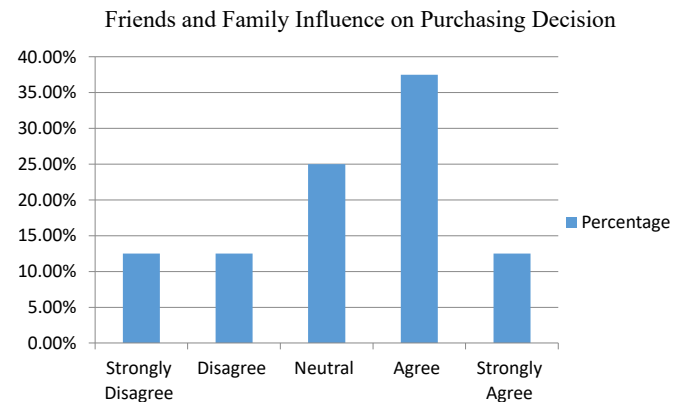
The chart shows that majority of the consumers purchase bakery items once a week. It also reveals that they gave preference to buy bakery items from local market than super market. They buy bakery products for evening snacks. Also, buying pattern changes at the time of festival and special events for many people. Some consumers often buy bakery products for gifting purpose.

Table 6 Willingness to Pay More For Branded Bakery Products
Willingness to Pay More For Branded Bakery Products



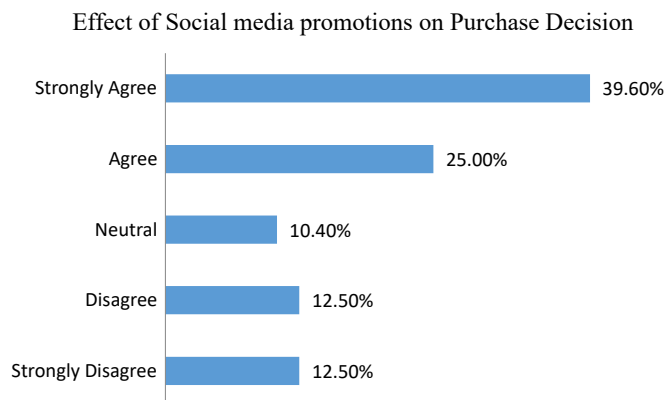
The study found that majority of the respondents is ready to pay more for branded and quality bakery products irrespective of their income.

Table 7 Friends and Family Influence on Purchasing Decision



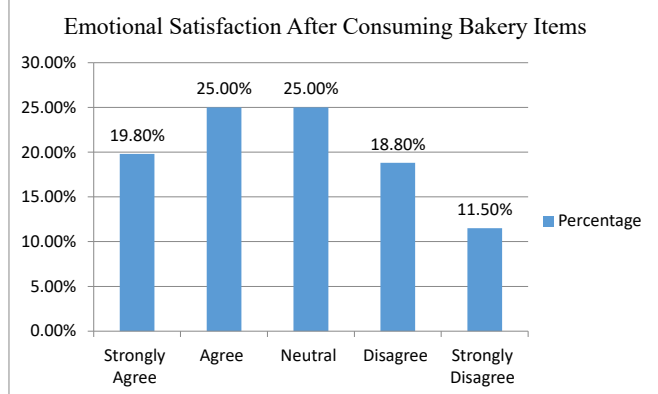
The above graph shows that majority of the consumers i.e. 35% have family and friends influence on purchase decision followed by strongly agree. 25% consumers showed neutral interest.

Table 8 Effect of Social media promotions on Purchase Decision



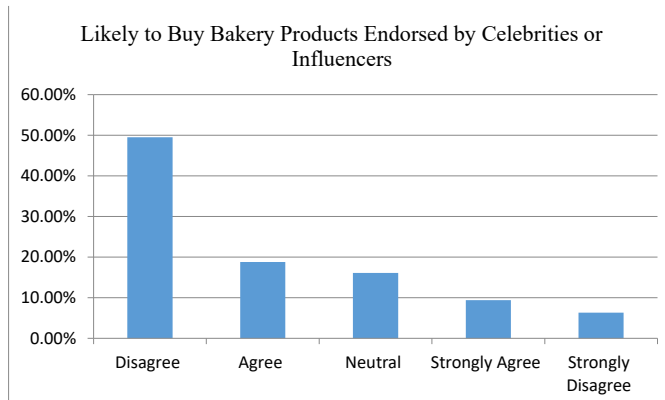
The chart shows that social media promotions strongly influence purchase decisions for many people. About 40% respondents strongly agree while only 10% remains neutral. Very few people disagree or strongly disagree, showing that social media has strong impact on bakery product choices.

Table 9 Emotional Satisfaction After Consuming Bakery Items



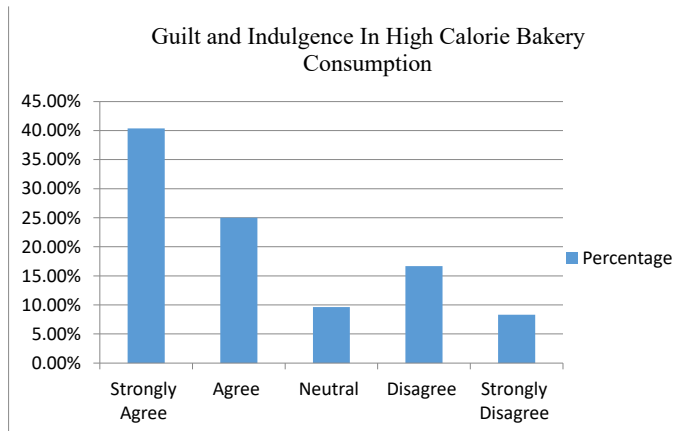
Most people feel positive and neutral about their emotions after eating bakery items. 25% agree they feel emotionally satisfied, and another 25% are neutral. About 20% strongly agree they feel satisfied, while fewer people or strongly disagree. This shows that bakery products often bring emotional satisfaction to many peoples.

Table 10 Likely to Buy Bakery Products Endorsed by Celebrities or Influencers



Most people do not tend to buy bakery products just because celebrities or influencers endorse them as shown by nearly 50% who disagree. Some people feel agree or feel neutral but they are fewer in number. Only small percentage strongly agree or strongly disagree with buying based on endorsement. This means celebrity or influencer endorsement have limited influence on buying bakery products for most people.

Table 11 Guilt and Indulgence In High Calorie Bakery Consumption



Most people (40%) strongly agree they feel guilty after consuming high-calorie bakery products but still indulge sometimes. A significant portion (25%) also agrees with the feelings. Fewer people are neutral or disagree with this statement, and only a small percentage strongly disagrees. This shows that guilt combined with occasional indulgence is common experience among bakery consumers.

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant association between age and factors influencing the purchase of bakery products.

Age Group	Freshness	Taste	Brand	Packaging	Price	Total
18-21	141	58	19	16	4	238
22-25	52	24	14	4	2	96
26-30	22	9	6	1	0	38
31+	8	1	2	1	0	12
Total	234	92	41	22	6	384

Age Group	Freshness	Taste	Brand	Packaging	Price	Total
18-21	151.734375	59.65625	26.5859375	14.265625	3.890625	249
22-25	58.5	23	10.25	5.5	1.5	96
26-30	23.15625	9.104166667	4.057291667	2.17708333	0.59375	38
31+	7.3125	2.875	1.28125		0.1875	12
Total	234	92	41	22	6	384

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the relationship between respondent's age and the most important factors influencing their purchase of bakery products. The resulting p-value was 0.69, which is significantly higher than standard significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis (H0) which follows, affirms that there is no meaningful relationship between age and factors that influence bakery purchases. This indicates that respondents preferences for freshness and flavour are not significantly impacted by age, price packaging or brand.

Null Hypothesis : Preferences and consumer income do not significantly correlate when purchasing baked goods for brand quality or price.

Monthly Income	Quality	Discount/ Offers	Price	Brand	Total
Below ₹10,000	148	12	21	3	184
₹10,001- ₹20,000	102	7	11	2	122
₹20,001- ₹30,000	42	3	7	2	54
₹30,001- ₹50,000	15	2	1	2	20
Above ₹50,000	4	0	0	0	4
Total	311	24	40	9	384

Monthly Income	Quality	Discount/ Offers	Price	Brand	Total
Below ₹10,000	149.020833	11.5	19.1666667	4.3125	184
₹10,001- ₹20,000	98.8072917	7.625	12.7083333	2.859375	122
₹20,001- ₹30,000	43.734375	3.375	5.625	1.265625	54
₹30,001- ₹50,000	16.1979167	1.25	2.08333333	0.46875	20
Above ₹50,000	3.23958333	0.25	0.41666667	0.09375	4
Total	311	24	40	9	384

The relationship between the respondents monthly income was examined using a chi-square test of independence. and their inclinations regarding brand quality or cost when purchasing baked goods. This is the computed p-value. 0. 689 which is greater than the typical 0. 05 significance level. Consequently the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. This indicates that consumer income and preferences do not significantly correlate value brand or cost when buying baked goods.

Findings

- Freshness has been found to be the most significant factor influencing consumers decisions to buy. for baked goods which made up 67% of all answers. This finding highlights the. There is an urgent need for bakeries to prioritize product freshness in their operations. new merchandise to draw clients.
- The majority of consumers prefer locally produced baked goods over branded alternatives according to research. This highlights a significant local market preference suggesting that consumer's value traditional locally made bakery goods more possibly because they think they are more authentic and fresh.
- A significant percentage of consumers are willing to pay more for branded baked goods despite being price sensitive because they believe they are of higher quality and are more hygienic. This demonstrates how consumers are more likely to value perceived quality over price when buying baked goods highlighting the significance of branding in influencing consumer behavior.

- Social media marketing is strongly believed by about 40% of study participants influences the way they choose to buy bakery goods demonstrating its significant influence. consumer conduct. This indicates how digital marketing is becoming more and more effective. influencing customer decisions and recommending social media use for bakeries. platforms to draw in clients.
- A significant portion of consumers report feeling guilty after consuming high-calorie bakery goods but they are discouraged from consuming such items. This indicates the complex relationship between indulgence and health consciousness when making dietary choices.
- Almost half of survey respondents rejected the notion that recommendations from celebrities and influencers have any influence on consumers decisions to buy baked goods. This suggests that consumer purchasing decisions in this industry may not be significantly influenced by endorsements leading bakeries to place a higher value on local relevance and product quality than on celebrity endorsements.
- It is found that Consumers shows dissatisfaction towards the rareness of bakery items and subpar marketing initiatives in their area, inferring there is a need for bakeries. To encounter consumer demand effectively by rising their product line and enhancing their marketing approach. Additionally, serious problem affecting to sanitation and presentation are fetched up as potential coercions to customer loyalty and brand insight.
- Baked goods have been noted to provide consumers emotional fulfillment; many of those surveyed reported feeling pleasant emotions after eating them. Baked items' emotional component emphasizes their importance as comfort foods that meet psychological and emotional needs, therefore improving the consumer experience next to their nutritional value.
- It is found that Most consumers buy bakery products on a weekly basis, but they buy them more often during festivals and other occasions. This purchasing behavior demonstrates the seasonality of the product consumption, implying that bakeries may gain from customized advertising campaigns and deals during busy periods.
- Although branded goods are valued for their quality, they do not control the market, indicating a potential gap for local bakeries to increase their product offerings and brand loyalty. This implies that consumer buying pattern in the bakery industry are generally consistent across demographic categories, highlighting the necessity for a wide marketing plan, instead of concentrating on certain age or income groups.
- It is found that The research suggest that a clear bias in favor of neighborhood bakery items over name brand ones, especially among younger age groups, indicating that local bakeries might profit from this preference. The allure of fresh and traditional goods. Although branded goods are valued for their quality, they do not control the market, indicating a potential gap for local bakeries to increase their product offerings and brand loyalty.

Suggestions

- The study's conclusions lead to the following recommendations to boost customer satisfaction and the Miraj Tahsil bakery industry.
- Results show that variety is not up to par. It is recommended that bakeries expand their product lines by adding healthier options like sugar-free cake low-oil snacks and multigrain bread. They can provide festival-specific products and seasonal specialties such as Christmas plu cakes or Diwali dry fruit cakes which could increase customer appeal and encourage repeat business.
- According to the study taste and freshness have the biggest effects on purchasing decisions. Therefore bakeries ought to guarantee the fresh guarantee and produce fresh goods every day. Free samples baked today labels and live baking counters could all help to increase customer satisfaction and trust.
- The findings demonstrate that social media promotions have a significant impact on consumers decisions to buy. Thus bakeries ought to spend money on digital marketing campaigns influencer partnerships short films Instagram reels that

showcase baking behind the scenes and customer reviews. Health-conscious young people can be drawn in by emphasizing the promotion of new healthy and hygienic products online.

- The results imply that although bakery goods satisfy emotions their high calorie content also makes people feel guilty. Multigrain bread low-oil snacks sugar-free cake and high-fiber products are examples of health-conscious options that can be introduced while still satisfying consumer cravings. To appeal to consumers who are health-conscious marketing messages may emphasize guilt-free indulgence. .
- Discounts and offers continue to have a significant impact on consumer behavior even though price was determined to be the least significant factor. Therefore bakeries should create festive discounts combo offers and loyalty programs while keeping product quality in mind such as Buy 5 breads get 1

free. Regular consumption may be encouraged by the low-oil and multigrain bakery products affordable prices

Conclusion

According to a survey of consumer buying behavior for bakery goods in several communities in Miraj Tehsil, freshness affects purchasing decisions more than cost does. Further considerations are taste, brand, and appearance. Although celebrity endorsements have little influence, purchasing decisions are greatly influenced by social media. Guilt and emotional fulfillment drive the need for more viable options. Bakers ought to grow their product lines, pay attention to health-conscious goods, and increase their online visibility. More research might examine how regional cultural changes, the use of digital payments, and changing health trends affect consumers' baker purchasing habits. This could help you better understand how to direct your marketing campaigns.

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“From Farm to Destination: The Emerging Role of Agritourism as a Catalyst for Rural Transformation in Maharashtra”

Mrs. Matale Suvarna Shankar
MBA, LLB,
Research Scholar, Assistant Professor
Sharadchandra Pawar Institute of Management

Dr. Mahesh Pandurang Bhaskar
MBA, Ph.D.
Research Guide, Associate Professor
Samarth Group of Institutions Faculty of Management

ABSTRACT:

Agritourism has gradually emerged as a practical strategy for strengthening and make substantial development in rural livelihoods by linking and connecting to agricultural activities with tourism experiences. In Maharashtra, these models have gained and obtained not only momentum but also growth over the past two decades as farmers get major opportunities for increasingly and check out supplementary income opportunities beyond traditional methods of conventional cultivation. The present study focused on how agritourism contributes to rural development change on livelihood by analyzing its economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

The researcher research is based on field communication, structured surveys, as well as secondary sources uses are data collection. Data collected from selected a district which indicates that agritourism has play as an important role improved household income levels, created job opportunities for young people and make women independent in rural areas and increased the involvement of women in the hospitality industry and similar businesses because major strength of women they are strong in hospitality as per our culture. Simultaneously some issues like digital technology as well as awareness in rural areas, inadequate infrastructure, and marketing limitations less awareness about new technology, and seasonal variations in tourist numbers persist in influencing the stability of the sector.

The research is focused and indicates that with improved collaboration among institutions, focused training efforts, financial support, necessary facility and infrastructure enhanced, agritourism can function as a sustainable rural growth mechanism in Maharashtra.

Keywords: *Agritourism, Rural Development, Maharashtra, Sustainable Livelihoods, Women Empowerment, Eco-tourism, Rural Entrepreneurship*

Introduction

India’s countryside economy continues to depend largely on farm on agriculture as a traditional farming methods, yet farming households have been facing majorly challenges on government policies, subsidies, economic pressure due to fluctuating market prices, rising and high production costs, unpredictable climate conditions basically our farming are depends on rain, and shrinking landholdings. In many regions, suffer these challenges have reduced profitability and created uncertainty among small-scale and marginal farmers. When we reach about a result, rural populations have slowly begun and developed to investigate other income-generating

options and that not much easy that seem can supplement conventional farming methods.

Agritourism has emerged as one such one of good alternative. Rather than depending solely on crop production, animal husbandry farmers invite visitors to experience rural life through farm stays, seasonal harvesting activities, local cuisine, cultural performances, and interactive learning experiences. This approach enables farmers to their existing land in more productively can utilization, maximize resources utilization, and traditional knowledge can be diversified manner. At the same time, urban visitors gain exposure to rural lifestyles goes to close the nature and they get

experience agricultural processes that are otherwise unfamiliar to them.

Globally, we look like countries Italy and the United States have effectively incorporated and developed tourism with agriculture as an element are play important role of their economy of their rural revival strategies on a global scale. In the early 2000s, agritourism started to become more widely and effectively known in India, especially are spread in Maharashtra, as well as especially we can talk about Pune district in Junnar taluka have declared first tourism taluka (paryatan Taluka) in January 2018 MLA declared that time where deliberate they try to develop tourism in this taluka were made to encourage agritourism as a formal rural business. The establishment of the Agritourism Development Corporation played a vital role in promoting mainly focused the adoption of this model by farmers through educational programs and institutional assistance as well as promote this model in all over.

Agritourism centers as per data researcher studied in districts like Pune, Nashik, Satara, Ahmednagar, and Kolhapur in Maharashtra have experienced noticeable and substantial not only expansion but also makeable growth in last decades. Field observations and discussion researcher found they are successfully run that a considerable number of these units are operated by families, some of women's, young generation with agricultural operations being carried out alongside the provision of hospitality services. The growing involvement of mainly women and young people from rural areas in these activities indicates this positive sign agritourism goes beyond from traditional farming just making money and also leads to changes in household dynamics.

However, agritourism development is not only consistent across various regions but also despite its potential find out from these studies. Some districts have natural got obtained advantage of better connectivity and being close to urban areas, while others district are face challenges with inadequate infrastructure, connectivity, government facilities and lack of marketing exposure. It is important to investigate whether agritourism truly plays a vital role if it simply serves as an additional activity to this a small number of forward-thinking farmers in rural transformation of Maharashtra.

The present study attempts to investigate and tries to found the impact of agritourism in rural areas of Maharashtra, The study aims to provide a solid understanding of agritourism as a tool for rural or we can say village development, rather than just a newly developed passing tourism trend, by combining survey results with on-the-ground observations. Focusing mainly on its economic results with positive and negative impact; it's on really influence on employment, involvement of women, youth and environmental practices.

Agritourism in Maharashtra

Maharashtra has been at the forefront and leading of agritourism in India. The creation of the Agritourism center for promoting plays the major role. Development Corporation (ATDC) in 2005 establishment was a major milestone in the formalization of agritourism provide guideline authentication and stabilities this are focused structured rural business. Since that time, numerous agritourism centers have been established in various districts that was ytime are on leading position for incorporating agritourism including Pune, Nashik, Satara, Ahmednagar, and Kolhapur and other district also now aware about and turn on agritourism. These facilities provided by ATDC real and live agricultural and cultural experiences that are unique to each region identity, reflecting the diverse agricultural and cultural characteristics like natural and manmade of the state.

The Transformative Role of Agritourism

Apart from its economic advantages mainly research found barriers agritourism also plays a role in bringing about environmental and social change in rural regions in Maharashtra state. It promotes the involvement of women want become an independent in generating income, create employment, enhances community engagement, youth involvement and maintain and enhance traditional knowledge and cultural customs it's the helpful. Moreover, today in corporate word required mind peace and close to the nature major this cause the increasing demand from tourists for eco-friendly and sustainable travel experiences has encouraged agritourism operators to embrace environmentally responsible practices like traditional farming, bullock cart organic farming, waste management, real and origin to natural rural life and the preservation of natural

resources.

Against this backdrop, the present study are focused and try to seeks and examine the role of agritourism in facilitating rural transformation in Maharashtra. The study's mainly goal is to evaluate and analysis agritourism on the basis of a sustainable development tool by examining it's on the basis of economic, social, and environmental effects, development as well as identifying the obstacles and challenges that hinder its expansion. The results of this study are expected to offer and provide valuable perspectives for policymakers, rural business owners, women's, youth generation and tourism planners who are striving for inclusive and sustainable rural development this study will provide insight.

Objectives

1. To examine how much agritourism initiatives are influence the economic conditions and social development.
2. To studies an agritourism activity creates additional income sources and expands livelihood opportunities.
3. To identify the practical difficulties, operational constraints, and institutional barriers agritourism entrepreneurs.
4. To propose suitable resources and policy-level interventions that can be strengthen sustainable, inclusive, and long-term growth of agritourism in rural Maharashtra.

Hypothesis

H₀₁ (Null Hypothesis):

Agritourism activities do not play a substantial role in the socio-economic evolution of rural communities in Maharashtra.

H₁₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):

Agritourism activities play a crucial role in the socio-economic evolution of rural communities in Maharashtra.

H₀₂ (Null Hypothesis):

Agritourism does not play a substantial role in increasing

income level and diversifying the livelihoods of rural households.

H₁₂ (Alternative Hypothesis):

Agritourism plays a crucial role in increasing income and diversifying the livelihoods of rural households.

H₀₃ (Null Hypothesis):

Operational and institutional challenges have a least impact on the performance and growth of agritourism enterprises.

H₁₃ (Alternative Hypothesis):

Operational and institutional obstacles have a noticeable impact on the performance and development of agritourism businesses.

Need for the Study

Despite the fact that agritourism has expanded consistently in Maharashtra, if we see development is not without limitations. Many agritourism units in Maharashtra continue to suffer struggle with basic needs like infrastructure issues such as road connectivity, accommodation facilities, financial support and access to reliable utilities. Besides this, not only this challenges but also inadequate promotional efforts, limited market reach, new technology awareness, social media ineffectiveness and the absence of structured training programs who will be promoted by government restrict the professional growth of these enterprises. Coordination and communication gaps between tourism entrepreneurs and agriculture departments further slowdown many reasons systematic development of the sector.

There is a clear need to critically examine and commenting the actual contribution of agritourism to rural transformation and overall rural development and actual impact of this. While major part are focused income generation and employment creation are often highlighted as key benefits, it is equally important to understand its role in diversifying rural livelihoods, encouraging the participation in aritourism of women and youth, and promoting environmentally responsible practices are working there. These dimensions require angle on studies 360 careful and systematic analysis.

In this research, the present study tries to understand to

develop a comprehensive analysis of the significance of agritourism within the rural development and contribution in economically framework of Maharashtra. The study aims to evaluate the opportunities create for local communities, societal contribution identify the major operational and institutional challenges, and propose practical and supportive measures to strengthen the long-term sustainability of agritourism initiatives.

Scope and Relevance

The findings of this research are useful study for policymakers, rural entrepreneurs, tourism administrators, and investors, women in rural areas, youth and researchers involved in rural development planning. Maharashtra has gradually and steadily emerged as one of the more beneficial organized agritourism regions in India. Therefore, examining its experiences can offer practical lessons and meaningful guidance set will be an ideal example for other states that aim to integrate agriculture and tourism as a strategy for regional development.

The transition “from farm to destination” represents more than an additional source of income for farmers, women’s, youth and societies. It indicates a transfer or shift in the way rural communities engage with the evolving and participating in economy. Agritourism combines both traditional agricultural practices as well as with service-oriented activities, allowing farming families to respond to changing market demands participate in service industries while maintaining their cultural identity. In this process, local traditions are not replaced but repositioned within a growing developing tourism sector, and reach in worldwide our tradition or our cultural activity creating new economic possibilities without disconnecting from rural roots.

2. Literature Review

Agritourism has focused and attention as a development strategy that both combining links agriculture with the service sector. Researchers view as an additional income source for farmers as a covered part of tool for rural development. It combines both its impact on economic benefits with cultural preservation and environmental

sustainability in short. The agritourism as a way to strengthen is rural resilience and development, especially in regions facing declining farm incomes and migration. Organizations such as Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Tourism Organization recognize.

Global studies show in this research that agritourism helps farmers respond to not assured agricultural profits by better utilizing farm resources (Tew and Barbieri, 2012). Phillip, Hunter, and Blackstock (2019) further classify agritourism into passive, active, and experience-based forms, reflecting the growing demand for rural livelihood experience among tourists and visitors.

According to evidence and studied from Europe and North America, agritourism can help stabilize farm income, provide employment opportunities in local communities, and improve the connections between farmers and consumers.

Within India, agritourism has been discussed and considered as a complementary rural development strategy, particularly and specially in agriculturally diverse states. Scholars such as Agarwal (2020) note that and point out agritourism offers farmers an additional and extra revenue stream while facilitating interaction between rural communities and urban visitors. Sharma and Singh (2021) emphasize potential that the integration of tourism with agriculture encourages rural entrepreneurship and supports for inclusive growth. Several and multiple resercher are studies suggest that such initiatives may help reduce rural–urban migration by expanding local employment it means new job opportunities prospects and improving living standards in villages.

Maharashtra is frequently cited in literature as one of the first regions to embrace organized agritourism programs. Deshmukh (2019) has studies credits the state's advancement in part to the institutional support provided by the Agritourism Development Corporation (ADC) . According to a study conducted and contributed by Joshi and Pawar in 2020, farmers who participate in agritourism experience more consistent income and have stronger community connections than those who rely and depends solely on traditional farming methods. The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

have also emphasized an encourages the importance of the sector in enhancing rural infrastructure, promoting small-scale businesses, and facilitating market entry for agricultural products.

Recent research has been focusing especially more on the gender aspect of agritourism and has found that women frequently take on active roles in providing hospitality services, cooking, making handicrafts, and participating in cultural activities. Women are actively their participation not only adds to their household income but also increases their involvement in decision-making and improves their social standing in rural communities.

Researchers also studied and point out some challenges in agritourism, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited digital marketing, financial constraints, lack of proper training, and main content and barrier seasonal fluctuations in tourist demand because of natural environment majorly affected. Without consistent government policy support and clear rules and regulations, the long-term sustainability of agritourism enterprises remains uncertain.

While earlier studies recognize the economic and social benefits of agritourism, region-specific empirical research particularly focused region of Maharashtra state this are remains limited. Therefore, a focused assessment and analyses is mostly needful to understand its impact on income generation, employment creation, participation of women and youth, and environmental sustainability within the regional context.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to analysis and examines the role of agritourism centers in boost rural development and generating new opportunities in Maharashtra state and that will be beneficial to other state. The research tries quantitative and qualitative approaches both for the purpose of obtain a comprehensive understanding kindly of the economic and social effects linked with agritourism activities.

The descriptive part of the study highlight in this

research on archiving the current status and methods of functioning agritourism enterprises in the selected region of Maharashtra state. In difference, the logical element their wider evaluates influence on rural livelihoods, community development, employment generation, women’s engagement and environmental practices.

Quantitative data also usefull to measure key indicators such as income generation, percentage of employment opportunities, number participation levels, and other related factors those are connected with agritourism activities. Beside of with this, qualitative information helps in understanding the experiences of stakeholders, operational difficulties, and the overall contribution of agritourism initiatives to rural areas mainly depend of farm.

3.2 Study Area

The studies are majorly carried out in selected districts of Maharashtra where agritourism activities have developed in a systematic manner and contributing major part. The districts included focused Pune, Satara, Nashik, Ahmednagar, and Kolhapur those are actively participated in agritourism. These regions were deliberately selected because this district a strong agricultural base natural resources are available and are located close to major urban markets, which helps attract tourists. In addition, agritourism initiatives in these districts have received support and guidance from organizations such as the Agritourism Development Corporation. This makes these areas suitable for examining; analyze the role and impact of agritourism on rural development.

Every region has beautiful showcases a unique form of agritourism growth. An example of this is that Nashik is famous for tourism centered on pilgrimage areas Trimbakeshwar, vineyards, while districts in western Maharashtra offer agricultural experiences related to sugarcane, and Ahmednagar is home to various horticulture-focused businesses and try to overcome dry areas.

The range of differences allows for an investigation into how agritourism operates in different agricultural and regional environments, allowing for a comparison of its impact on rural areas.

3.3 Sampling Design

The research mainly utilized a typed random sampling technique to find out guarantee equal representation from various agritourism stakeholder groups. The population being studied included agritourism centers those are situated in Maharashtra, both those that were registered and those that were not registered.

Around 150-200 participants were selected for the survey and mainly divided into three primary groups. The main and prime first participants were agritourism entrepreneurs and farm owners who are directly responsible for managing and running the businesses. In this study, respondents were classified into different categories on the basis of their level of involvement in agritourism activities. Tourists visiting agritourism centers those are considered as secondary respondents, while local community members and women entrepreneurs whose are engaged in agritourism operations were treated as tertiary respondents.

3.4 Methods for Data Collection

Primary and secondary sources of data are used to accomplish the objectives of research of the study.

A. Primary Data

Primary data were collected accomplish the following methods:

- **Structured Questionnaires:**

Structured questionnaires were applied to agritourism entrepreneurs and tourists to collect quantitative information on income levels, employment patterns, women engagement visitor satisfaction, opportunities and operational challenges.

- **Semi-Structured Interviews:**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with collect info women entrepreneurs, local officials, and agritourism coordinators to gather qualitative information into management practices, empowerment outcomes, and policy-related issues.

- **Field Observation:**

Field observation was used to examine the physical infrastructure, accommodation facilities, sanitation standards, environmental practices, and interaction between visitors and entrepreneurs.

- **Focus Group Discussions:**

Focus group discussions were organized with farmer groups and local community members to identify common opportunities, challenges, and future prospects of agritourism in Maharashtra state the study area.

B. Secondary Data

Secondary data collected from:

- Government publications and reports from MTDC, ATDC, and NABARD
- Academic journals, books, and research theses related to agritourism and rural development
- Statistical records from District Agricultural Offices and Tourism Departments
- Publications by international organizations such as FAO and UNWTO

3.5 Data Collection Tools & Data Analysis Techniques

1. Questionnaire:

A comprehensive questionnaire consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions was prepared to collect information related to demographic characteristics in this developed agritourism, the nature and types of agritourism activities, income patterns, employment generation, digital marketing practices, and the operational challenges faced by agritourism enterprises in focused areas in Maharashtra state.

2. Interview Schedule:

A semi-structured interview was used to obtain in-depth and described insights into the personal and real experiences of agritourism operators. The discussions mainly focused on management practices, factors contributing to agritourism success, difficulties which are encountered and future prospects of agritourism ventures.

3. Observation Checklist:

An observation in this studies checklist was utilized during field visits to observantly document information pertaining to accommodation setups, cleanliness and hygiene standards, presence of signage, and implementation farm layout, of environmentally sustainable practices.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The gathered data were examined through a balanced of quantitative and qualitative analysis methods used and interpreted.

- Descriptive Statistics: Percentage analysis, mean values, and frequency distributions were used to summarize demographic characteristics and operational features.

• **Inferential Statistics:**

- o Chi-square tests were applied to examine associations between categorical factors including gender and youth involvement and job functions.
- o Correlation and regression methods analysis were employed to evaluate and examined the connection between agritourism participation and income/ employment results.

• **Qualitative Analysis:**

- Thematic analyses were majorly utilized and understand to analyze interview transcripts and focus group discussions by recognizing and understand recurring patterns and themes.

• **Comparative Analysis:**

Comparisons were conducted on a Maharashtra state district basis to assess and realized the regional differences in the development and impact of agritourism in Maharashtra district.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The research included a survey were conduct of 180 participants, comprising 50 agritourism business owners, 100 visitors, and 30 members of the local community those are included.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male – 62%, Female – 38%	100
Age Group	Below 30 – 20%, 31–45 – 45%, 46–60 – 25%, Above 60 – 10%	100
Education Level	Secondary – 18%, Graduate – 50%, Postgraduate – 22%, Other – 10%	100
Type of Agritourism	Family-owned – 72%, Partnership – 18%, Cooperative – 10%	100

Interpretation:

The findings in this suggest that most agritourism centers entrepreneurs are educated individuals within the age range of 31 to 45 years, in that agritourism is being embraced by young and middle-aged farmers who possess a business-focused mindset. The notable female participation rate of 38% highlights the increasing

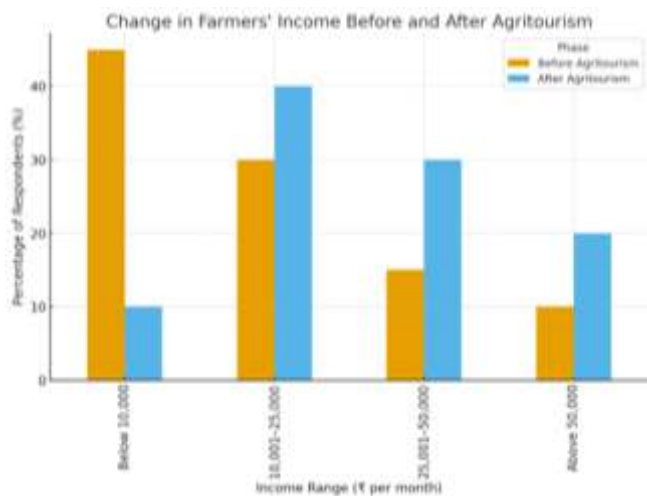
additionally, involvement of women in rural tourism.

4.2 Economic Impact of Agritourism

Agritourism demonstrated has its effectiveness as an additional source is in included of revenue for numerous farmers.

Table 2: Change in Income Before and After Agritourism

Income Range (₹ per month)	Before Agritourism (%)	After Agritourism (%)
Below 10,000	45	10
10,001–25,000	30	40
25,001–50,000	15	30
Above 50,000	10	20



Interpretation:

The graph represented that farmers experienced that noticeable increase level of income after they starting agritourism activities. This earning proportion or ratio of those earning above ₹50,000 per month increased from 10% to 20%, showing that agritourism’s potential to enhance rural livelihoods and give better life style. Additionally, create seasonal employment opportunities for local youth and women increased in all surveyed districts.

4.3 Employment Generation and Skill Development

Agritourism centers have created both many direct and indirect job opportunities in rural regions beside of farmer dependency. Typically, each agritourism establishment employs minimum between 6 and 10 individuals, which includes farm workers, chefs, tour guides, and craftsmen and maximum depend on their size of aritourism.

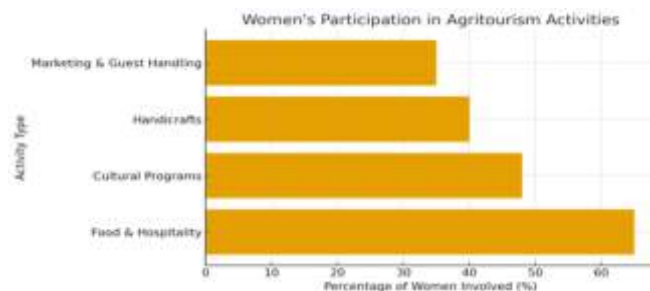
Additionally, 65% majority of business owners indicated that they offered skill development training in areas such as hospitality in new trending, organic pharming agriculture, and handicrafts to members of the local community.

4.4 Women’s Participation and Social Empowerment

Women play a crucial and important role today in Maharashtra agritourism operations — managing homestays, local cuisine, traditional activities and handicraft sales.

Table 3: Women’s Role in Agritourism Activities

Activity	Percentage of Women Involved (%)
Food and hospitality management	65
Cultural programs and folk art	48
Handicraft and souvenir production	40
Marketing and guest handling	35



Interpretation:

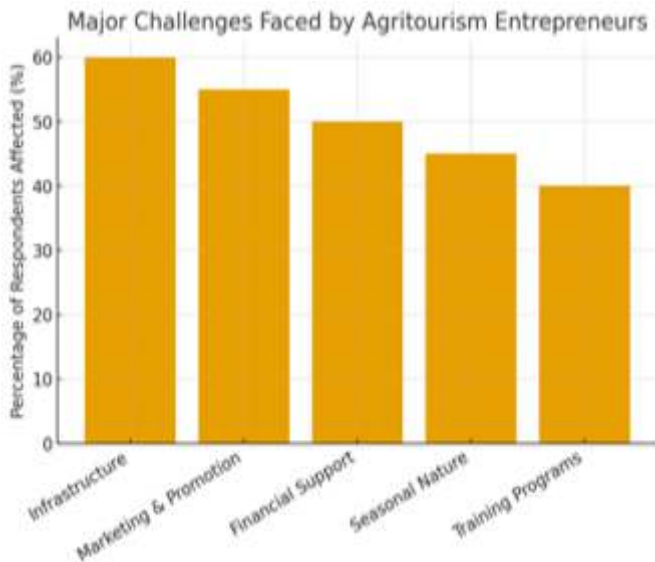
Agritourism has created an inclusive and new opportunities and platform for women’s socio-economic empowerment, confirming Their involvement not only provides income but also they try to enhances confidence, recognition, and decision-making roles within families and communities and make then independent.

4.5 Challenges Faced by Agritourism Entrepreneurs

In spite of its advantages, agritourism in Maharashtra encounters numerous obstacles and challenges.

Table 4: Major Challenges in Agritourism Development

Challenge	Percentage of Respondents Affected (%)
Lack of Infrastructure (roads, accommodation)	60
Limited Marketing and Promotion	55
Insufficient Financial Support	50
Seasonal Nature of Tourism	45
Lack of Government Training Programs	40



Interpretation:

Infrastructure and marketing have surfaced as the primary obstacles, as per this graphical presentation and representation.

Entrepreneurs communicated the necessity for major concern in this policy assistance, financial subsidies, and professional development to enhance the sector.

4.7 Comparative District-Wise Analysis

A comparison by district wise indicated that mainly Pune and Nashik district possess more advanced agritourism models they are introduce some are really appreciable center also in Pune district, attributed to their closeness to urban areas and the proactive efforts of the Agro-Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC).

Conversely, Ahilyanagar and Satara fall short due to restricted accessibility major challenges they are faced and a lack of awareness.

5. Findings, Suggestions, and Conclusion

5.1 Major Findings of the Study

Following the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, researcher finds out the major finding from this analysis:

1. Improvement in Income of Rural Households

Agritourism has significantly enhanced the financial situation of farmers those are involved in this sector. It obtains an extra and relatively stable income stream in addition as compared to traditional and routine farming practices. Number of participants indicated that they came from lower income brackets to higher income categories after engaging in agritourism, indicating improved economic stability and financial support and basically when we talk about the women they has more beneficial among rural households.

2. Creation of Employment Opportunities

Agritourism has opened and creates new employment opportunities for women’s, rural youth and local people. Each agritourism unit generates approximately 6–10 jobs and more than as per agritourism size and income both directly and indirectly. The major factor in this research has reduced dependency on traditional agriculture alone and helped minimize seasonal unemployment in rural areas.

3. Empowerment of Women

The aritourism study mainly finds out women’s are involved actively in various agritourism activities such as cooking, hospitality management, organizing cultural programs, and preparing handicrafts those are mastered in guest hospitality. Their participation has not only increased household income but also improved their confidence, decision-making power, social recognition and financial stability within the community.

4. Development of Rural Infrastructure

The growth of agritourism has taken positively influenced focused on the basic development of infrastructure like roads, sanitation facilities, and communication services in nearby villages. These

improvements benefit tourists and local residents, as well as all community thereby not only financial stability but also enhancing the overall quality of rural life.

5. Encouragement of Eco-Friendly Practices

Many agritourism centers max to try following environmentally friendly practices such as organic farming, proper waste disposal, water conservation, and the use of renewable energy for the major purpose of this feel near to nature. These efforts mainly contribute to part environmental protection and create awareness among visitors whose are visited and promoted about sustainable living.

6. Conservation of Rural Culture and Traditions

Agritourism plays an important role in preserving traditional agricultural practices save to our culture and tradition, as many visitors are attracted by the opportunity to get more real rural experience rural life and local traditions. Tourists can take part in activities related to traditional lifestyles, local cuisine, folk arts, and village festivals.

7. Challenges Faced by Agritourism Units:

Despite its many benefits, agritourism enterprises but face several challenges for sustaining. These include limited digital media marketing facilities, lack of awareness and use of modern technologies, inadequate financial support, government support and seasonal fluctuations in tourist demand, poor infrastructure, and insufficient professional training. Such constraints substantial support affects the long-term growth and sustainability of agritourism ventures in Maharashtra state.

5.2 Suggestions and Recommendations

• Capacity Enhancement and Competence Development:

When researcher studying agritourism in Maharashtra, it is observed and analysis that farmers and rural entrepreneurs need regular training programs to improve their skills in areas such as hospitality management, customer service, digital marketing, awareness of government

policies, and financial management. Proper training, government facility will help them manage their agritourism units in a more professional and efficient manner.

• Increased Government Assistance:

The Government of Maharashtra state should provide focused financial support in the form of subsidies, low-interest loans, and tax incentives to encourage the growth of agritourism enterprises. Not only, better coordination and communication between the agriculture and also tourism departments are necessary to ensure effective policy implementation and overall development of the agritourism sector.

• Enhancement of Infrastructure in Rural Areas:

Basic infrastructures are required such as road connectivity, sanitation facilities, internet access, clean water supply, and proper signage needs to be strengthened. If improved infrastructure facilities will help attract more tourists and encourage greater participation from women and youth entrepreneurs, while also enhancing better the overall visitor experience.

• Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship:

Special efforts should be made to encourage women’s active participation in agritourism through self-help groups, financial freedom, self-development, skill development programs, and easier access to microfinance. Supporting women entrepreneurs will contribute create employment, economic development to inclusive and balanced rural development.

• Stronger Marketing and Promotion Strategies:

Agritourism centers are required in today era are mostly depends on digital world should make effective use of digital platforms, social media, tourism portals, and partnerships with travel agencies to reach a wider audience, especially urban and international tourists.

• Focus on Eco-Friendly Methods:

Farmers should be encouraged to adopt eco-friendly and environmental based agricultural and tourism practices. Awareness initiatives and

appropriate incentives can foster environmental sustainability and guarantee the sustainable success of agritourism the both are required.

5.3 Conclusion

Agritourism has developed as an effective and sustainable approach for rural transformation in Maharashtra playing a vital role by combining agriculture with tourism activities. The study finds out clearly show that agritourism helps in increasing farmers' income, generating employment opportunities, youth empowerment, financial assistance and empowering women, preserving local culture, promote to our tradition which are famous or specialty for this particular location , food specialty and promoting environmental sustainability. By providing an additional source of livelihood, it reduces the economic risks; dependency only on traditional farming faced by farmers and strengthens the overall resilience of rural households.

However, the continued growth and long-term success of agritourism depend on overcoming several key challenges faced agritourism center such as inadequate infrastructure, government facilities, and limited financial support, low awareness of digital technologies, insufficient marketing efforts, lack of professional training, technological support and inadequate policy support. Addressing these issues through proper planning, financial assistance, institutional support, and active community participation is essential growth for the sustainable development of agritourism.

In conclusion, agritourism is not merely a form of recreation rural life experience but a comprehensive strategy for rural development. It promotes economic empowerment, government support, social inclusion, and sustainable growth in rural areas. Major strengthening this sector we finds out can significantly contribute to the future development, employment creation, living of standard in rural Maharashtra and may also serve as a model for other regions of India.

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Recalibrating India's Inflation Compass: An Assessment of India's CPI Base Revision

Dr. Sachchidanand Shukla

Group Chief Economist L&T. Views personal

Ms. Priyanka Pande

Economist-AGM L&T. Views personal

ABSTRACT:

The recent revision of the base year of Consumer Price index (CPI) from 2012=100 to 2024=100 marks a pivotal point in the methodology of inflation measurement. This paper covers the changes in CPI measurement, economic rationale, international best practices and policy implications. The analysis shows how the revised CPI index with updated weightages, expanded coverage and methodological improvements aligns with global standards, making it more relevant to the current economic context. This revision brings back the focus on regular updates to inflation measurements and its pivotal role in policymaking.

Introduction

The CPI is a key macroeconomic indicator for measuring the health of the economy. It acts as a primary anchor for monetary policy and provides crucial signals for government planning, wages and other pricing decisions. In other words, it tells us how valuable the money is that we have in our pockets!

In February 2026, India took a big step to revise the base year of CPI from 2012 to 2024. The last such revision took place in January 2015 with base 2012=100 using the 66th Round of Consumer Expenditure survey (2011-12).

This initiative was part of a comprehensive exercise by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) for revision of base year of CPI, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Index of Industrial Production (IIP). It aimed to enhance the relevance and accuracy of these key macroeconomic indicators and align them with international standards.

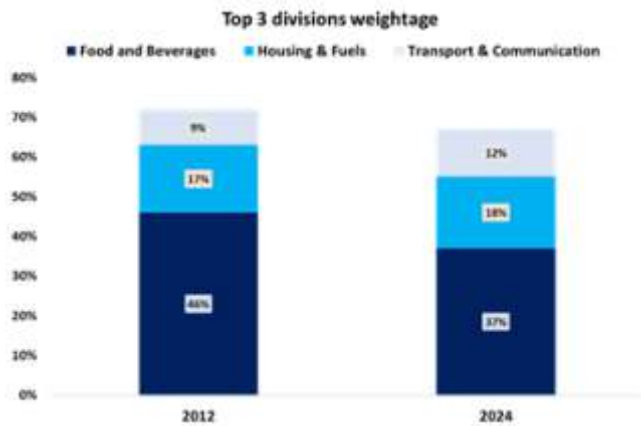
The significance of the CPI revision cannot be overstated. In the last few years, India has witnessed a rapid pace of digitalization, urbanization, expanding services sectors, and changes in consumption patterns. These have led to significant shifts in what we consume in our daily lives. As a result, the use of old basket of goods and dated methodology for calculating CPI

created a huge gap in terms of reflecting the current economic conditions. The expert committee has addressed some of these gaps in the new series by using the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24 to determine the item basket and their corresponding weights. These are designed to capture current spending behaviour and patterns of the households in both rural and urban India. Furthermore, expansion of item coverage, improvement in geographical representation, and adopting the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)2018 developed by the United Nations Statistics Division have further enhanced the pricing tool measure.

In this paper, we cover the following – key changes in the new CPI series, the economic rationale, international best practices and their comparison with India's methodology, and lastly assess the implications for policy making and way forward.

Summary of key changes in CPI 2024 measurement

Firstly, the geographical coverage has increased significantly. The price data will be collected from 1465 rural markets and 1395 urban markets across 434 towns – which is a total of 3294 markets versus 2,605 markets previously, an increase of 26%. Further, twelve online



markets are also added across 12 towns having more than 25 lakh population to capture price variations of the items on the e-commerce/online platforms and address the complex challenge of integrating e-commerce into traditional price indices.

Secondly, in terms of classification of items, the new series follows the COICOP 2018 framework with 12 divisions, 43 groups, 92 classes and 162 sub-classes. This has been expanded from the earlier classification of 23 sub-groups and 6 groups in CPI 2012 series, providing enhanced granularity and an adequate representation of the ever-changing consumer basket. Some new standalone categories include furnishings and household equipment, information and communication, recreation, restaurants and accommodation services, and personal care & social protection. This helps to identify the price variations across different consumption items and how each one contributes to the overall inflation. Furthermore, adoption of COICOP-2018 methodology aligns India with contemporary global standards, improving the cross-country inflation comparison.

Thirdly, the total weighted items in the basket have increased to 358 compared to 299 items in 2012 series. In this, number of goods have increased from 259 to 308 and services from 40 to 50. Obsolete items like VCR/VCD/DVD player, radio, tape recorder, clothing second-hand, CD/DVD audio/video cassettes and coir/rope have been removed. On the other hand, cloud storage subscriptions and streaming services are included in the new list of items, which are now penetrating both urban and rural households in a big way.

In terms of changes in weightage, the most notable has been the reduced weightage of food and beverages from 45.86% in 2012 series to 36.75% in 2024 series – a fall by 9.1 percentage points. This is mainly due to fall in weightages of ‘cereals and products’ from 9.67% to 5.95%, ‘oils and fats’ from 3.56% to 2.74%, combined weightage of ‘vegetables, pulses and products’ reduced from 8.42% to 6.82% and ‘Prepared meals, snacks and sweets’ category with 5.55% in 2012 series moved under ‘Restaurants and accommodation services’ in the new series. It is important to note, the reduction in food weights reflects how as household incomes rise, the share of income spent on food declines – a phenomenon described by the Engel’s Law. This shift indicates India is moving on high growth trajectory with increasing per capita incomes and rising middle class consumption.

Meanwhile, ‘housing’ as a category is combined with utilities – ‘water, electricity, gas and other fuels’ and the new weightage has increased to 17.66% from earlier combined weight of 16.9%. Moreover, it now also includes ‘rural house rent’. This revision shows the growing importance of housing costs in household budgets, especially in tier 1 and 2 cities where property prices and rents have increased significantly.

CPI old series base 2012		Weights %	CPI new series base 2024		Weights %
1	Food & Beverages	45.9	1	Food & Beverages	36.8
2	PTI	2.4	2	PTI	3.0
3	Clothing & Footwear	6.5	3	Clothing & Footwear	6.4
4	Housing	10.1	4	Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels	17.7
5	Fuel & Light	6.8			
6	Miscellaneous Goods	28.3		-	
6.1	Household Goods & Services	3.8	5	Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance	4.5
6.2	Health	5.9	6	Health	6.1
6.3	Transport & Communication	8.6	7	Transport	8.8
			8	Information & Communication	3.6
6.4	Recreation & Amusement	1.7	9	Recreation, sport and culture	1.5
	-	-	10	Restaurants and accommodation services	3.4
6.5	Education	4.5	11	Education services	3.3
6.6	Personal care & effects	3.9	12	Personal care, social protection and miscellaneous goods and services	5.0
		100			100

Table 1: Changes in categories and weights in Inflation Baskets

A much-needed improvement is in the data collection process where field investigators of National Sample Survey (NSS) would visit marketplaces, collect data using pen and paper and then upload on respective portals. This will be now done on a tablet-based software application with built in features like capturing geo-spatial location of shops and real time data validation etc.

Lastly, to facilitate continuity and ease of analysis of the time series data by connecting the two series – CPI 2012 and CPI 2024, the NSO has provided a linking factor of 0.5267 for the combined CPI Index. The overlapping year of 2025 has been used as the basis for forming the linking factor. This not only enables historical back-calculating to January 2013 but also helps maintain data continuity over the years.

Economic Rationale

In current times of economic volatility and uncertainty, monetary policymakers are faced with a constant dilemma – tighten to address inflation or ease to support economic growth. In such times, it is important to understand what are the underlying causes of inflation? Why is it happening? And how can it be addressed?

Drawing from a recent example, in H2 2025, on one hand, a drastic fall in food prices, mainly vegetables and pulses averaging -21% YoY and -15% YoY respectively pulled down CPI to historic lows of -3.7% YoY in October 2025, indicating deflationary pressures in the economy. These were mainly on account of supply side disruptions. Meanwhile, housing costs were on an uptrend along with rising healthcare expenses and other service costs. The heavy weightage to food and beverages in the old series overshadowed the inflationary pressures in services sector. In response, RBI decided to cut rates by 25 basis points in December 2025 to maintain the growth-inflation balance.

To some extent, the revisions in new series would take care of these distortions by reflecting the actual consumption patterns. In India, volatility in agricultural prices due to seasonal factors or supply shocks, though critical for food security tend to heavily influence the inflation measurement. The new CPI will provide a clearer signal of the demand side inflation pressures which can be addressed more effectively by monetary policy adjustments.

In the last 12 years, India has experienced rapid pace of

growth driven by digitalization, urbanization and changing consumer behaviour. If CPI weights are not in sync with the changing economic times, then they either underrepresent the drivers of growth or over represent the items of the past. This not only distorts the inflation index but also affects how we measure other indicators including real growth, wages, or alter the basis of contract negotiations and other pricing decisions.

An important element of inflation measurement is also what households and businesses believe – whether prices are expected to go up or go down in the future. RBI releases bi-monthly inflation expectations of households which provides insights and pre-empts behaviour of firms, employees and consumers. The new series could capture price changes more in line with these expectations.

Further from a research perspective, it brings more transparency and enhances granularity which enables economists to better analyse the price dynamics, transmission mechanisms, and sectoral divergence. This not only enriches academic research but also improves business decisions, wage and contract negotiations, and other aspects of the policy making as well.

In addition, the new series expands geographical and retail coverage which ensures that for a diverse country like India the CPI captures price movements across regional markets and increasingly important e-commerce platforms. This comprehensive coverage reduces sampling error, makes the data more holistic and enhances the index's representativeness of national price trends.

International Benchmarking: Comparative Assessment

In the US, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, updates the CPI weights annually, to reflect spending from two years prior. For example, consumer purchases made in 2021 are used by BLS as the weights for January through December 2023 CPI-U, CPI-W, and R-CPI-E indexes. This way the spending weights are lagged, on average, 2 years from the date of the index or current consumption patterns.

Similarly in the UK, the weights are reviewed and updated each year – for example, Office for National

Statistics uses expenditure reflecting household spending in 2023 to produce the 2025 Consumer Prices Index with a lag of only 2 years.

India's 12-year cycle falls measurably short of these benchmarks. The IMF's 2020 Consumer Price Index Manual recommends weights reflect current consumption patterns, suggesting updates minimally every five years. OECD data indicates member countries average five-year update cycles, with many updating more frequently. India's previous revision occurred in 2015 (updating from 2010 to 2012 base), establishing an irregular pattern: sometimes three years, sometimes twelve.

But India's constraint merits some acknowledgment - India's Household Consumption Expenditure Survey represents a massive undertaking, covering hundreds of thousands of households across diverse rural and urban areas. The 2023-24 survey underpinning this revision required years of planning and fieldwork.

So how can India learn from some of these international best practices? Annual updates, as practiced in the U.K., may prove impractical given resource limitations and survey complexity. However, biennial updates do seem achievable and can dramatically enhance measurement quality.

Policy Implications and Way Forward

The new CPI series pegged the year-on-year headline CPI inflation at 2.75% for January 2026 vs 1.33% for December 2025 as per old base. This was well below the mid-point of the RBI's medium-term inflation target range with a 4% midpoint and 2-4% tolerance band. Of the 12 groups, 11 saw benign inflation rates, ranging between 0.1% and 3.4% in January 2026. The only outlier was the personal care, social protection and miscellaneous goods and services with an elevated 19% inflation, largely reflecting the expansion in gold and silver prices.

So what can be the possible implications of these recalibrations on the inflation index? While a reduced weightage of food could mask genuine inflation problems if food prices were to surge drastically – on account of climate changes, or supply shocks, especially the impact on lower income households who allocate

disproportionately to food. The NSO publishes separate rural and urban CPIs, which helps, but headline CPI drives policy and public perception. However, the new series captures the service side more effectively – so any instance of overheating in the economy would be identified in the new series.

Going forward, while the revisions in the new series using the HCES 2023-24 is an important step in the right direction, India could introduce regular comprehensive revisions every five years, with biennial weight updates.

Secondly, developing supplementary indices for different household income quartiles—in India consumption baskets vary substantially across various income levels.

Lastly, as India moves towards rapid digitalization and use of AI/ML technologies, we need to improve real-time price collection processes, further build on the e-commerce price gathering mechanism and become front runners in digitalizing the entire data collection process across online and offline platforms while improving timeliness and reducing costs.

Conclusion

India's key macroeconomic indicators are undergoing a comprehensive modernization to better capture the realities of a fast-changing and evolving economy. CPI provides a timely measure of inflation. The new series with updated weights, expanded coverage and categories, methodological improvements bring inflation measurement closer to economic reality and reflect consumption patterns in both rural and urban India. It helps policymakers gain insights into both demand and supply side pressures, provides economists, analysts and researchers with rich and relevant data, and reassures those who are tracking the Indian economy closely. The real test will be whether such updates become routine rather than long awaited.

The recalibration also exposes the rapidly changing economic conditions and the need for statistical systems to keep pace with these changes or risk losing authenticity of data reporting and forecasting. The nearly ten-percentage-point reduction in food weight is evidence of how much transformation over the last 12 years went unnoticed. And it makes one wonder if it could have altered the policy decisions taken in the past.

The macroeconomic data revisions are crucial and steps in the right direction and will importantly influence better policy outcomes in the future.

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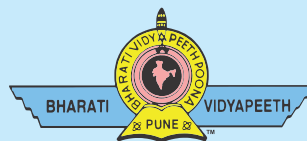


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