

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY TO ANALYSE CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS HEALTH AND WELLNESS DRINKS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The Indian soft drink market has undergone a big change with health and wellness drinks becoming buzz words capturing preference of the younger consumers. The Indian youth today is investing time, effort and money for a healthier lifestyle. This has accelerated growth of wellness market in India which is ever exploring newer ways of catering to the preferences of Indian youth. The present study examines and analyses the perception of consumers in accordance to the growing market of healthy beverages in India. The main focus of this study is to draw an interface based on various factors influencing consumer perception like advertising strategies, product price and packaging. Thus, the study explores a combination of multiple factors indicating to map the success of health and wellness drinks.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Perception, Health and Wellness, Purchasing Behavior, Drinks Industry.

INTRODUCTION

The food and beverage industry are a rapidly growing sector which is currently influenced by changing food habits from unhealthy to healthy by substituting various food and beverage products like soft drinks, alcoholic drinks, high in fat and carbohydrates diet etc. by healthier options like probiotic drinks, vegan food, etc. Thus, this type of dynamic industry requires products that are a revolution in healthier options of foods or beverages that majority of the population around the globe prefers but is deteriorating their health by a margin over a course of time. The market for carbonated (fizzy drinks as it's often termed by the industry) in

India is booming. Indian market for such drinks or beverages has been predominantly focused on sugary drinks or drinks with high number of calories. Sale of healthy drinks in the current market scenario will attract higher rates of speed and volume in the form of consumer transactions.

As the rural / urban population becomes more educated in India, the whole spectrum of young individuals is now shifting to a more disciplined diet regime with high focus on healthy foods and drinks. This "lifestyle correction" as we would like to term is highly instrumental in transforming the wellbeing of the nation.

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Ultimately, it's imperative that awareness about healthy foods and drinks be spread amongst the young in India, for they are the future of a healthy tomorrow. This study is being undertaken to analyse the perception of consumers in accordance to the growing market of healthy beverages in India. It is focused to draw an inference based of various factors influencing consumer perception like advertisement strategies adopted by the companies offering such healthy drinks, price of the product, packaging of the product and consumer awareness of the product in order to map the rate of success of such drinks in India.

This study includes various parameters like pricing of the product, product packaging, advertisement of the product, and consumer awareness about the product in order to analyse and study the consumer perception towards healthy drinks. This research was initiated to study how a consumer responds to various factors like packaging of the product, price of the product, etc in food and industry sector by collecting information directly from customers themselves. The information collected in the form of questionnaire included various criteria like product pricing, product packaging, consumer awareness and advertisement of the product.

India is expected to become the fifth largest consumer market in the world by 2025, according to a paper prepared by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Grant Thornton. Food and beverages are the biggest of the consumption categories. The F&B sector is supported by the vast agriculture sector: India is the biggest producer of pulses, and the second biggest producer of rice, wheat, sugarcane, and fruits and vegetables.

India is also the biggest producer of milk and buffalo meat and ranks fifth in poultry production. The other helpful factors: large extents of arable lands, favourable climate, long coastline, and low wages.

The liberalisation of the economy in the early 1990s minimised business barriers. The sector has found more avenues to the market with the development of modern retail systems such as supermarkets. Meanwhile, transportation and storage logistics have improved. Results from the India 2015-16 National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) reveal that approximately 21% of women and 19% of men are now overweight or obese, an alarming increase in the prevalence compared to the previous survey (12.6%). In addition, a recent World Bank study estimates foodborne diseases cost India approximately \$28 billion (Rs1,78,100 crore) every year.

The challenge in India is no longer focused on food availability but on accessibility to safe and healthy foods and diets. To address these challenges, inevitably, food and beverage manufacturers in India play a key role. Consumers, as well as investors, are becoming more aware of these risks and opportunities.

The total beverage market in India is about 43,000 crores and is growing approximately at about 15-18% and can reach 130, 000 crores by 2023. This includes all kinds of beverages such as energy drinks, food powder, probiotics, fermented beverages, juices, nectars including tea, coffee etc. If one looks at the specific areas of health, healthy drinks focussed on the urban consumer, probiotics and milkshakes etc, that market is much smaller, but it is growing significantly. It is the fastest-growing subset of the beverages market. It is likely to reach 15,000 crores by 2023.

Health and wellness over the last 5 years have become a big thing, especially in urban areas. In fact, younger consumers want to invest time, effort and money for a healthy lifestyle. Due to this, the market for healthy drinks started. The consumption of healthy snacks and beverages is a requirement to cater to these people. Due to the increase in health and wellness lifestyle, people are consuming health drinks.

With the emerging need for a healthier alternative to various fast food and beverages that are proven to be harmful in long run, many beverages have come up claiming to be a better, guilt-free option for consumption on a daily basis, amongst them kombucha has been gaining popularity in Asia Pacific (which includes Japan, India, China, Korea, Australia, Singapore and other countries) at an extensive rate.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Vartanian, L. R., Et al 2007 in their research titled, -Effects of soft drink consumption on nutrition and health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. American journal of public health mentioned that in a meta-analysis of 88 studies, it was examined that the association of soft drink intake with increased energy intake and body weight. Soft drink intake also was associated with lower intakes of milk, calcium, and other nutrients and with an increased risk of several medical problems (e.g., diabetes). The fact that soft drinks offer energy with little accompanying nutrition, displace other nutrient sources, and are linked to several key health conditions such as diabetes is further impetus to recommend a reduction in soft drink consumption.

Corbo, et al 2014 in their article titled, -Functional beverages: the emerging side of functional foods: commercial trends, research, and health implications. Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety, 13(6), 9 1192-1206 mentioned that functional beverages have drawn attention to a large group of population that wants to shift from unhealthy carbonated drinks due to their effect on various levels like cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes etc. Ever since the introduction of functional food, the gap between pharma and nutrition has been bridged substantially. At present, beverages are by far the most active functional food category because of convenience and possibility to meet consumer demands for container contents, size, shape, and appearance, as well as ease of distribution and

storage for refrigerated and shelf-stable products.

Hasler, C. M. 2002 in their research titled, -Functional foods: benefits, concerns and challenges—a position paper from the American Council on Science and Health. The Journal of nutrition, 132(12), 3772-3781 claimed that the functional foods and beverages are the most investigated and promoted source of nutrition in the current scenario. Every brand in the food and beverage industry has invested a fortune in R&D of such functional foods and their development. Even though there are numerous brands that claim to endorse functional foods, enough information is not being disclosed by some of them that can ensure safety and standards. Such brands are differentiated from others in this study.

Maria Sääksjärvi, 2009, CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE OF FUNCTIONAL FOODS, Delft University of Technology and Hanken School of Economics, 2, Vol. 19, pp.135- 156, the relatively low degree of familiarity with and acceptance of functional foods among consumers poses a distinct market challenge. In a global survey polling over 21,100 respondents-regular Internet users-in 38 markets across Europe, Asia Pacific, 7 North America, Latin America, and in South Africa, ACNielsen (2005) found that consumers' awareness of different healthy foods-including functional foods-was remarkably low.

Monica, P. Reva, 2013, An analysis of Indian customers attitude towards health drinks, University Business School, Punjab, 2, vol. 1 stated that while all segments of the beverage market are evolving, the growth seems to be directed more towards healthy, light and low-calorie drinks. The desire for health and concern for ill-health has driven consumers towards these drinks. Healthier product alternatives, including drinks specifically designed to provide energy, nutrition and health to the human body, are among becoming top priority. The consumers for

the health drinks are people from the different walks of life but the majority of them come from the younger and older generations.

G. Kirti, 2009, "Consumer behaviour for food products in India", based on grand mean score for all the four categories of food products, the five most important parameters that respondents rated very highly for food purchasing decisions are: cleanliness, free from pesticides, freshness, good for health, and clean place of sale. Value for money, overall quality, taste, variety of products availability at same place, seasonality, flavour, good display of products, nearby availability and good ambience are some other parameters, which were rated highly by respondents. Parameters like promotional offer and products produced in other country were not considered as very important by respondents.

U. Nina, 2005, Consumers' changing attitudes towards functional foods, 1-12, functional food markets change continuously and the competition to win consumers favour is becoming more intense. A research concluded that taste, quality, price/value, convenience and the health effects of functional foods are the key factors in purchase intention. Also, Gray, Armstrong, and Farley (2003) observed that functional foods have to answer the consumers' needs for convenience, health and good taste. Verbeke (in press) state that consumers are not ready to compromise on the taste of functional foods for health and thus, the health benefits do not allow any trade-off with taste.

Sena Bilgiç, Alev Yüksel, 2012, University Students' Perception and Attitudes towards Functional Foods in Istanbul, 6-12, Developing of functional food market, consumer-based product development and making profit with market opportunities are provided with consumer acceptance of the concept of functional foods, and a better understanding of its determinants. Acceptance 1130 failure rates from recent food cases have shown that consumer acceptance is

often neglected or at least far from being understood. Most of the studies investigated consumer reactions towards functional foods second half of the 1990s in the US and Europe.

Siegrist, M., Stampfli, N., & Kastenholz, H. (2008). Consumers' willingness to buy functional foods. The influence of carrier, benefit and trust. Appetite, 51(3), pp526– 529, The benefits of functional foods may not be directly experienced by consumers. Producers therefore must communicate potential benefits to consumers. It is only when consumers believe that products deliver the claimed health benefits that they be inclined to buy them. Trust in the industry may be important for the acceptance of functional foods.

G. Rezai, P.K.Teng, Z. Mohamed, M.N Shamsudin, 2012, Functional Food Knowledge and Perceptions among Young Consumers in Malaysia, 3, Vol.6, According to Sloan, the global functional food market was worth about USD47.6 billion in 2001 and the United States is the largest market segment followed by Europe and Japan. Japan is a very good example for enticing Malaysian consumers to begin considering the claimed health benefits of functional food.

Verbeke, W. (2006). Functional foods: Consumer willingness to compromise on taste for health? Food Quality and Preference, 17(1-2), 126–131. Health benefit belief from functional foods emerges as the strongest positive determinant of willingness to compromise on taste, but both its level and its predictive power on willingness to compromise on taste decreased over time. During the data collection interval, the perceived importance of food for health increased significantly. All evolutions combined are indicative for decreasing unconditional acceptance of functional foods, especially on taste, and a lower conviction that functional foods can constitute a part of a healthy and tasteful diet among a large majority of consumers.

This study is being conducted by taking following objectives into consideration:-

- To understand whether price of the product impacts the buying behaviour of consumers in case of healthy drinks.
- To analyse how consumer awareness about the product impacts the choice of healthy drinks in the market.
- To study consumer perception about healthy drinks on parameters like packaging of the product and response to advertisements.

The study was aimed at studying consumer perception in terms of factors like Price of the Product, Packaging of the Product, response to Advertisements and Consumer Awareness. With an increasing concern of multiple diseases and prolonged ailments, the market trends of FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) products seems to incline towards healthier alternatives to every food and drink possible. Hence, through this study, consumer perception about such drinks is observed under any of the criteria mentioned in the study (price of the product, packaging of the product, response to advertisements and consumer awareness). For this study, both primary data through questionnaire tool as well as secondary data is collected from published sources.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first part of this process is topic selection. The knowledge, observations and interest on a topic help to finalize the topic. After that, theories and literatures have been searched to support the research. Next, the research questionnaire has been developed and research method has been selected. The next step is to collect data with using the methods planned. After data collection analysis is undertaken to reach conclusions.

The research was conducted to analyse the consumer perception based on certain factors like pricing, packaging, customer awareness and

response to advertisement. Since the concept of healthy drinks has been introduced not so long ago not only in India but to the entire subcontinent, there has not been much research done to study the market trends and strategies that can be adopted to market this product to customers who are already accustomed to various aerated drinks in the market. Hence, in order to understand the consumers' preference of drinks if they choose to adopt a healthy lifestyle is important in order to study the market trends of this industry.

A research design is intended to provide an appropriate framework for the study. A research design has to follow a pre-determined methodology and pre-selected research type in order to achieve an error-free, and authentic conclusion. It provides the researcher with a well-structured, objective plan of the study that allows him/her to evaluate cause and effect relationship between various independent and dependent variables.

Descriptive research design was used in this study which accurately and systematically describe a population or a situation. It can answer what, where, when and how questions but not why questions.

Descriptive research design was adopted since the research aimed to study the consumer perception towards healthy drinks in India. Survey method in descriptive research design was used and a questionnaire was prepared as the tool of survey to collect the required information and data from the customers.

A questionnaire was used as the instrument for research. The questionnaire was formed into a Google form which consists of questions arranged in a systematic manner electronically. A questionnaire may be defined as a device or an instrument that is used to ask questions to the target population in order to derive some conclusion after analysing the responses of the

population.

Questions in a questionnaire can be close-ended or open-ended. Questions that require a longer answer may also be asked in a questionnaire in order to gain more insight on the objectives that needs to be fulfilled.

This section covers the sample selection, sample size and sampling techniques adopted in this study.

One hundred random consumers were requested to fill a questionnaire containing questions regarding various parameters like price of the product, packaging of the product, their response to advertisements of such products and degree of awareness of such products in order to understand consumer perception towards such drinks. While most of the customers were aware of the beverage, it's taste and health benefits, some of them were not acquainted to such beverages and were reluctant to change.

Random sampling technique was used to select 100 customers from the database. With this

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1.Age of the respondents

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	10 to 20	9	9%
2	21 to 40	44	44%
3	40 to 60	37	37%
4	more than 60	10	10%
	Total	100	100%

sampling method every single person within the target population has an equal chance of being selected for questioning. This technique of sampling was also logistically viable as the questionnaire was sent to the target population through e-mails.

Questionnaire Method under the Qualitative Method of Primary Data Collection, was used to collect raw data from customers.

A questionnaire is an instrument that contains questions in accordance to the objectives of the study that a respondent has to reply to in order to collect data regarding various situations to draw a cause-and-effect relationship. Secondary Data for the research included articles from magazines, journals, and newspapers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The following are the analysis, interpretation and graphical interpretations of the responses collected; the inferences are drawn from these graphical representations as under:

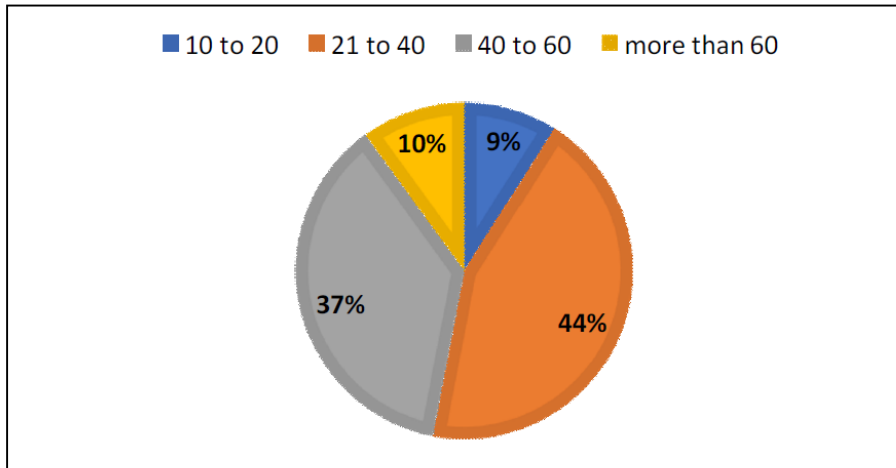


Figure 1. Age of the respondents

44% out of 100 respondents were of age 21 to 40 whereas 37% were of age 40 to 60. 10% of the respondents were more than 60 years of age and 9% were of 10 to years of age.

GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 2. Gender of the respondents

S. No	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Male	54	54%
2	Female	46	46%
3	Others	0	0%
	Total	100	100%

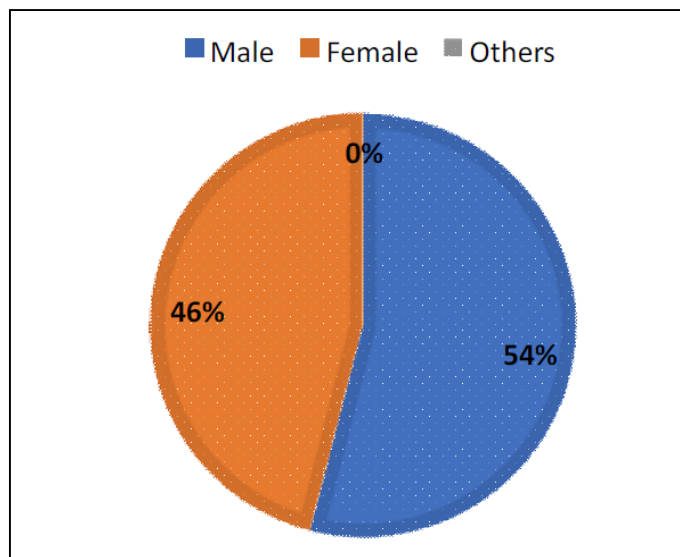


Figure 2. Gender of the respondents

Out of 100 respondents, 54% were male and 46% were female, maintain a balance of responses from each gender.

EDUCATION QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 3. Education qualification of the respondents

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Below high school	6	6%
2	High school	13	13%
3	Graduate	68	68%
4	Post-Graduate	13	13%
	Total	100	100%

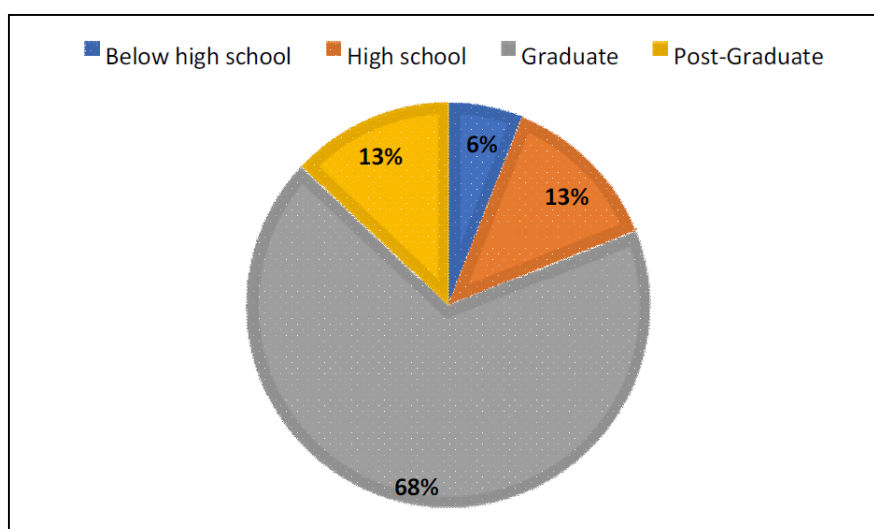


Chart 3. Education qualification of the respondents

More than half of the respondents (68%) have completed their Under-graduation whereas Postgraduates and High school passed were 13% each. There were 6% of the respondents who were below high school.

Q. 1: Do advertisements or posters impact the selection of healthy drinks?

Table 4. Impact of advertisements in consumer purchase decision

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	46	46%
2	No	28	28%
3	May be	26	26%
	Total	100	100%

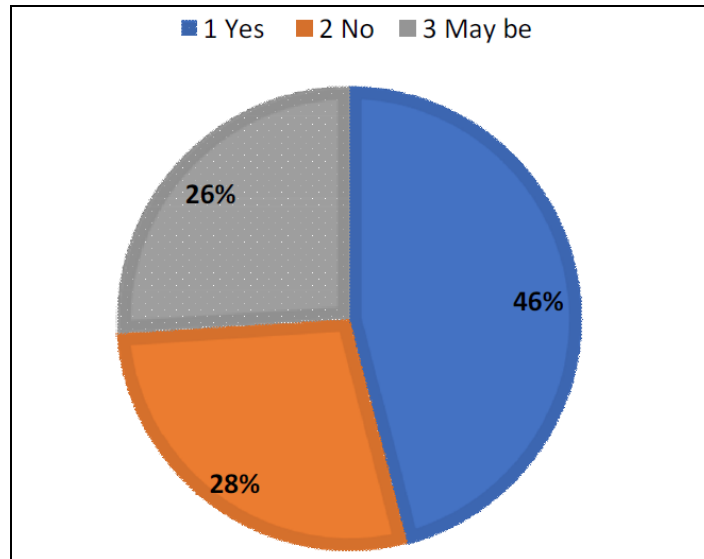


Figure 4. Impact of advertisements in consumer purchase decision

46% of the respondents believe that advertisements and/or posters impact consumer buying decision whereas 28% of the respondents

denied the statement. There was 26% of the population that was not sure about the same as mentioned in Table 4 and Figure 4.

Q.2 Do you agree that fear appeal factor into the customer decision making process?

Table 5. Effect of fear appeal on consumer decision making process

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	3	3%
2	Disagree	17	17%
3	Neutral	26	26%
4	Agree	33	33%
5	Strongly agree	21	21%
	Total	100	100%

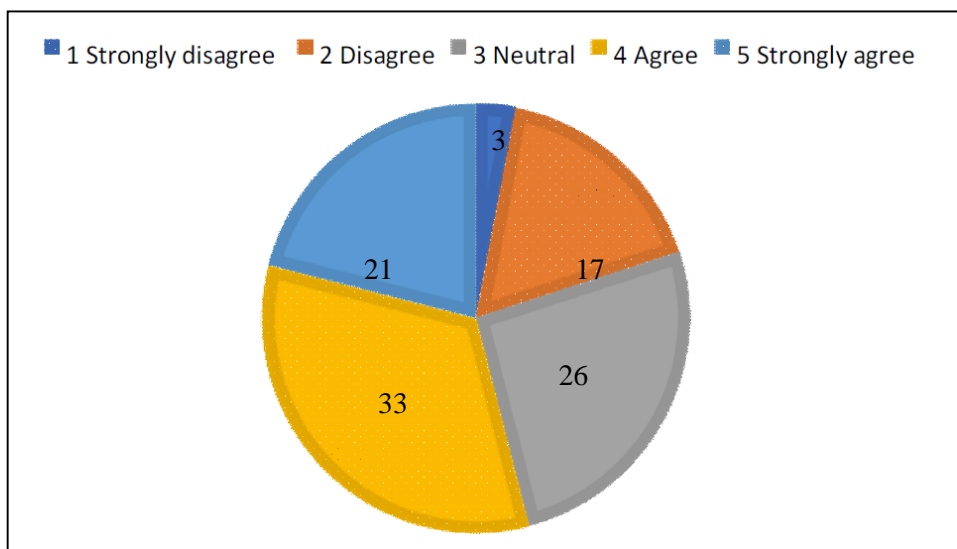


Figure 5. Effect of fear appeal on consumer decision making process

As per table 5 and figure 5, more than majority of the respondents (33% agree and 21% strongly agree) believe that fear appeal is a driving force to influence consumer buying process whereas only

20% (17% disagree and 3% strongly disagree) respondents say otherwise. Around 26% of the population were neutral to the fear appeal implying it did not influence their buying decision.

Q3- Does simulating an environment that is conducive to fitness impact the selection of healthy drinks over sugary drinks?

Table 6. Impact of environment simulation to induce selection of healthy drinks

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	1	1%
2	Disagree	6	6%
3	Neutral	28	28%
4	Agree	45	45%
5	Strongly agree	20	20%
	Total	100	100%

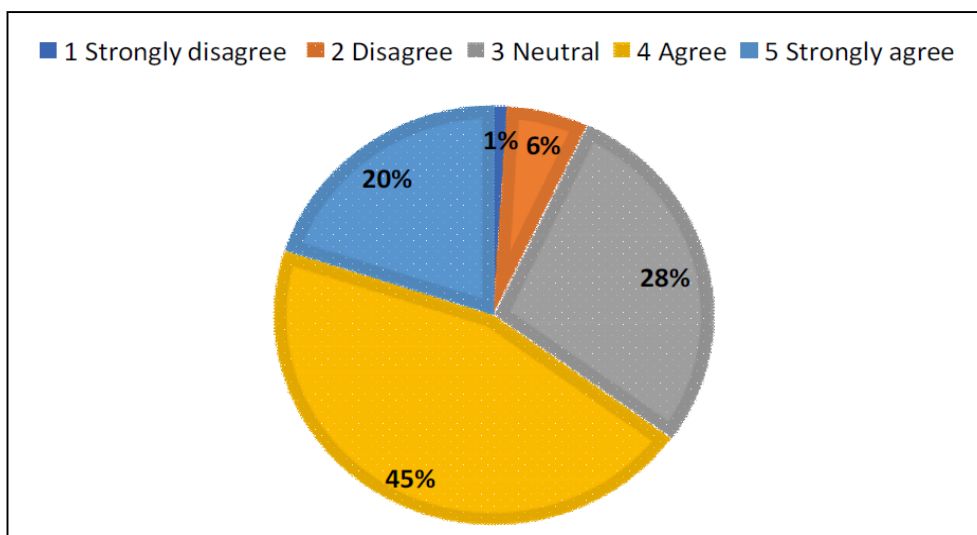


Figure 6. Impact of environment simulation to induce selection of healthy drinks

Table 6 and figure 6 depicts that majority of the population (45% agree and 20% strongly agree) cites that simulating environment conducive to fitness impacts consumer perception towards the

product. Only 7% (6% disagree and 1% strongly disagree) denied being influenced by such simulations. 28% of the population were neutral to the same.

Q4- Do packaging and/or product information on the package impact healthy drink selection?

Table 7. Impact of packaging or product information in healthy drink selection

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	16	16%
3	Neutral	28	28%
4	Agree	45	45%
5	Strongly agree	11	11%
	Total	100	100%

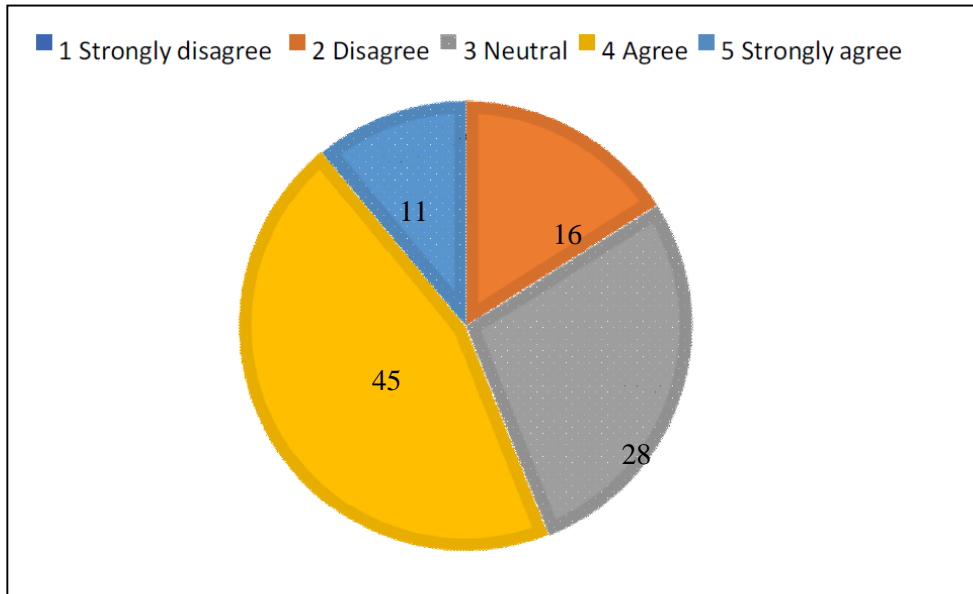


Figure 7. Impact of packaging or product information in healthy drink selection

As per table 7 and figure 7, 56% of the population (45% agree and 11% strongly agree) believes that packaging of the product is one of the factors

influencing consumer perception whereas 16% of the respondents disagrees to the statement. 28% of the population was neutral.

Q5- How many packaged healthy drink brands are you aware of?

Table 8. Consumer awareness of healthy drinks in India

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	1 to 2	21	21%
2	2 to 5	55	55%
3	More than 5	24	24%
	Total	100	100%

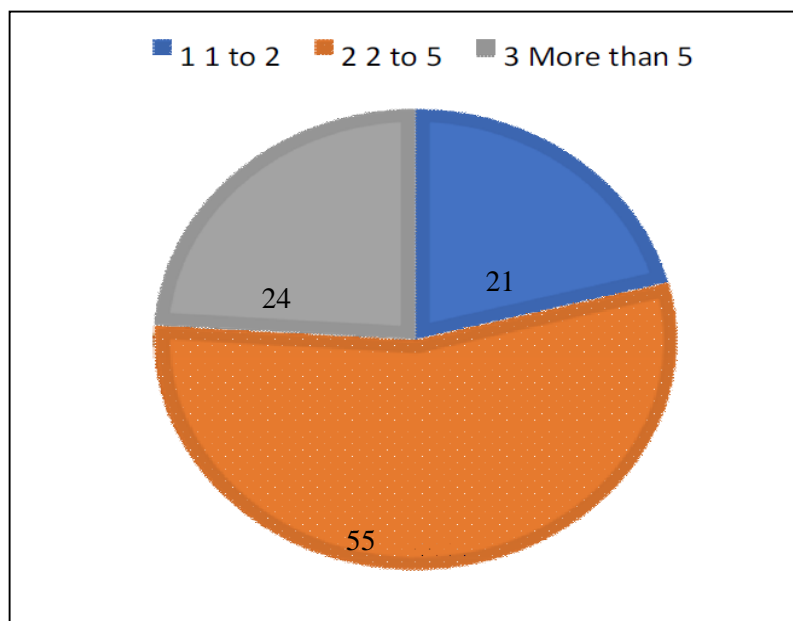


Figure 8. Consumer awareness of healthy drinks in India

Table 8 and figure 8 shows that 21% of the respondents were aware of around 1 to 2 healthy drinks' brands whereas majority of the respondents (55%) knew 2 to 5 brands. 24% of the population knew more than 5 brands selling health drinks.

Q6- Are you aware of the health benefits offered by such drinks?

Table 9. Consumer awareness of health benefits offered by healthy drinks

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	79	79%
2	No	11	11%
3	Maybe	10	10%
	Total	100	100%

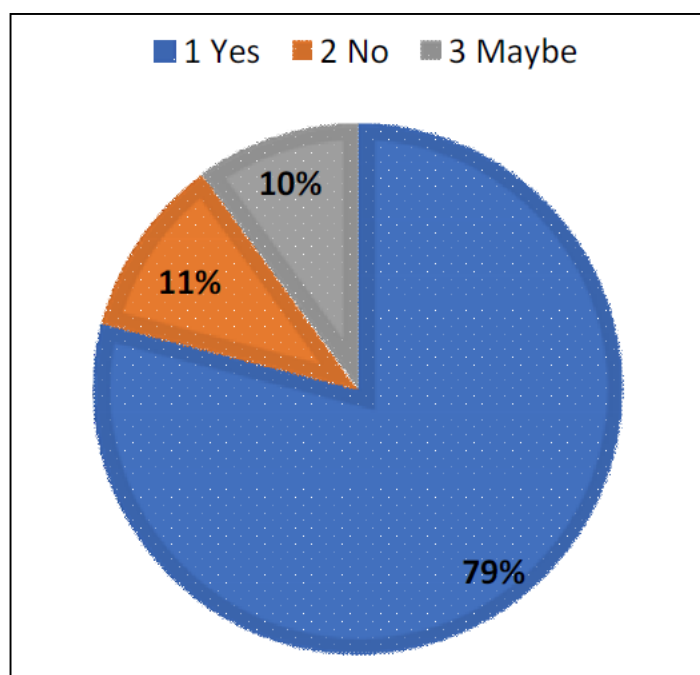


Figure 9. Consumer awareness of health benefits offered by healthy drinks

79% of the respondents were fully aware of the health benefits offered by health drinks whereas only 11% were not aware of all the health benefits offered by such drinks. 10% of the population was not sure about the same as shown by table 9 and figure 9.

Q7- Are you aware about the difference in healthy drinks and other sugary or carbonated drinks?

Table 10. Consumer awareness about the difference between healthy drinks and others

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	68	68%
2	No	13	13%
3	Maybe	19	19%
	Total	100	100%

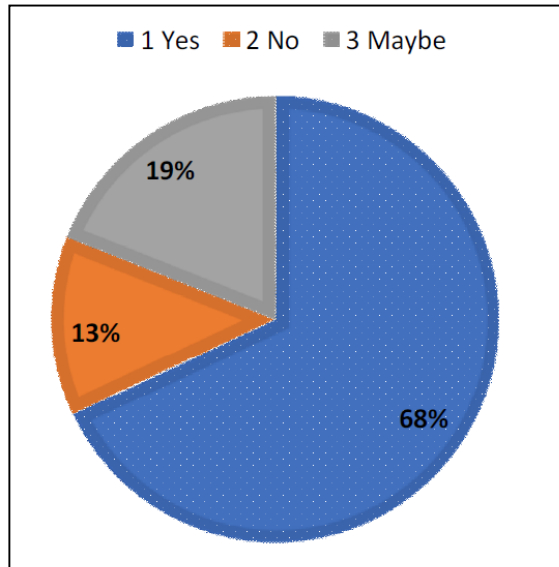


Figure 10. Consumer awareness about the difference between healthy drinks and others

Table 10 and figure 10 suggests that majority of the respondents (68%) were aware of the difference between health drinks and other sugary/carbonated drinks whereas only 13% of

the population did not know the exact difference between the two. 19% of the respondents was not sure of the same.

Q8- Do you think attractive packaging is important in order to make customers notice such products?

Table 11. Customer opinion on impact of packaging on purchase decision

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	9	9%
3	Neutral	28	28%
4	Agree	51	51%
5	Strongly agree	12	12%
	Total	100	100%

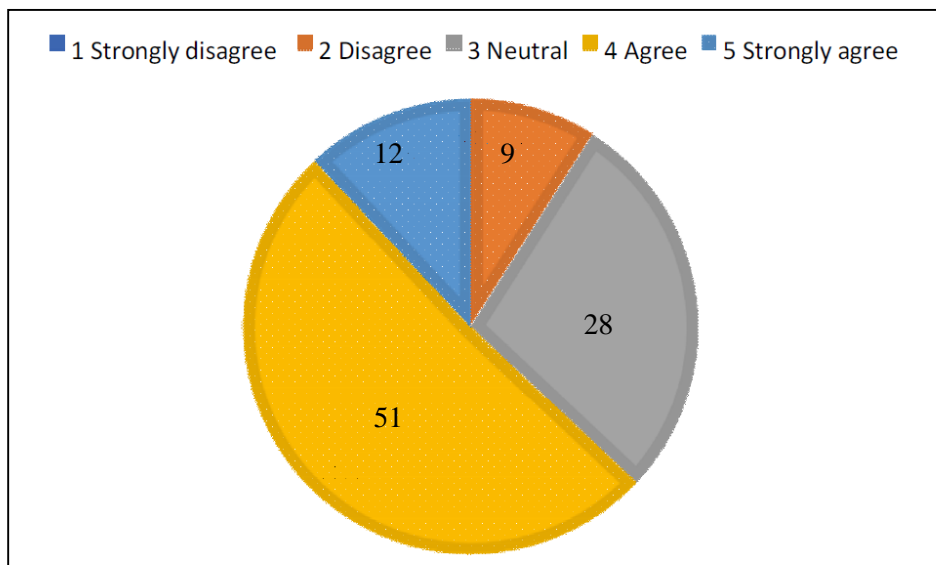


Figure 11. Customer opinion on impact of packaging on purchase decision

Around 51% and 12% of the respondents agree and strongly agree respectively that an attractive packaging is important for customers to notice such health drinks whereas only 9% of the

population disagrees to the statement. 28% were unsure about the impact of packaging on consumer perception as shown in table 11 and figure 11.

Q9- How likely will you buy such drinks if you find the packaging interesting enough?

Table 12. Likelihood of consumers buying the drink if the packaging is attractive

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Most likely	24	24%
2	Likely	37	37%
3	Unsure	32	32%
4	Unlikely	7	7%
	Total	100	100%

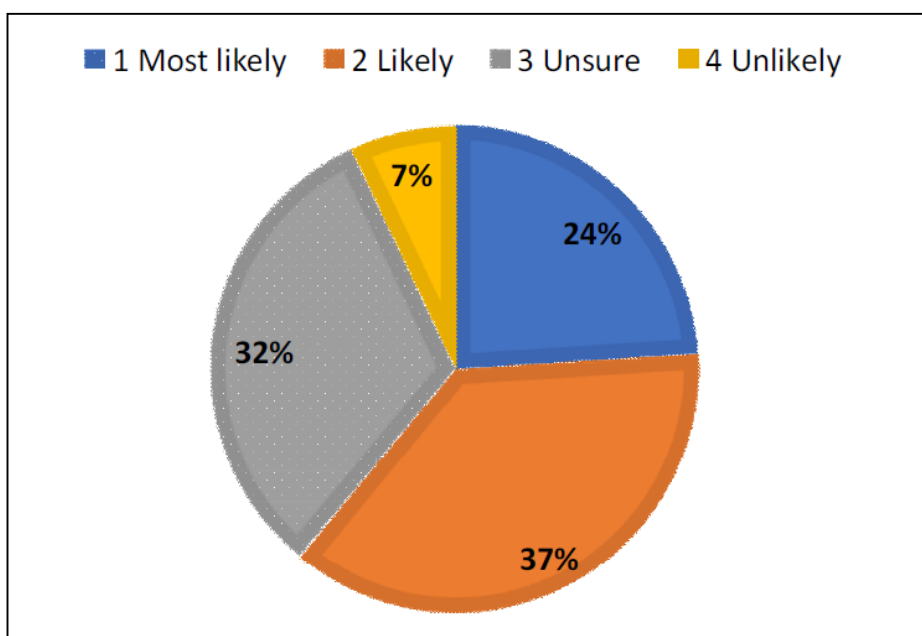


Figure 12. Likelihood of consumers buying the drink if the packaging is attractive

61% of the respondents (24% most likely and 37% likely) will buy a health drink if they find its packaging attractive. Only 7% believe that

packaging will not influence them into buying such drinks. 32% of the population were unsure of the same as presented by table 12 and figure 12.

Q10- Do you think that healthy drinks are costlier than sugary/carbonated drinks?

Table 13. Consumer perception on price of healthy drinks

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly disagree	19	19%
2	Disagree	41	41%
3	Neutral	24	24%
4	Agree	11	11%
5	Strongly agree	5	5%
	Total	100	100%

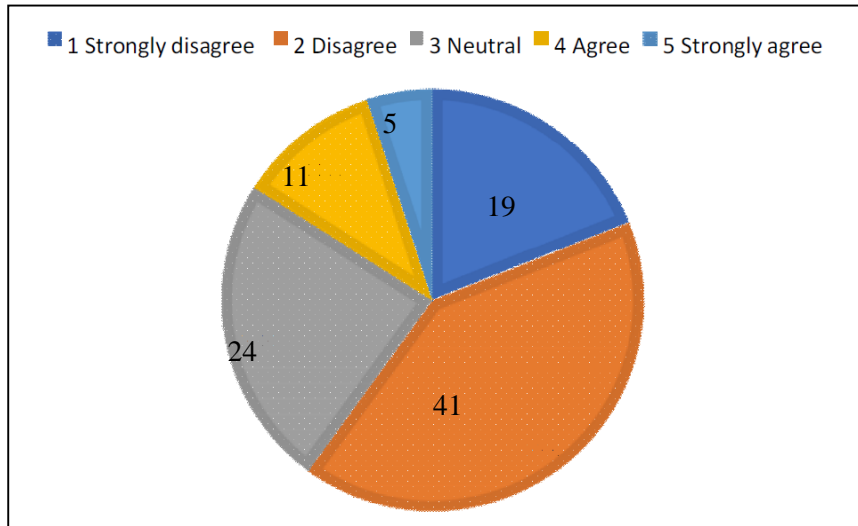


Figure 13. Consumer perception on price of healthy drinks

Table 13 and figure 13 shows that majority of the respondents (41% disagree and 19% strongly disagree) believe that healthy options to carbonated or sugary drinks are not expensive

whereas 16% of the population say that health drinks are costlier than other drinks. 24% of the respondents were not sure of the same.

Q11- How likely will you buy a healthy drink irrespective of the price of product?

Table 14. Likelihood of consumers to buy a healthy drink irrespective of its price

S. No.	Answers	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Most likely	13	13%
2	Likely	21	21%
3	Unsure	46	46%
4	Unlikely	20	20%
	Total	100	100%

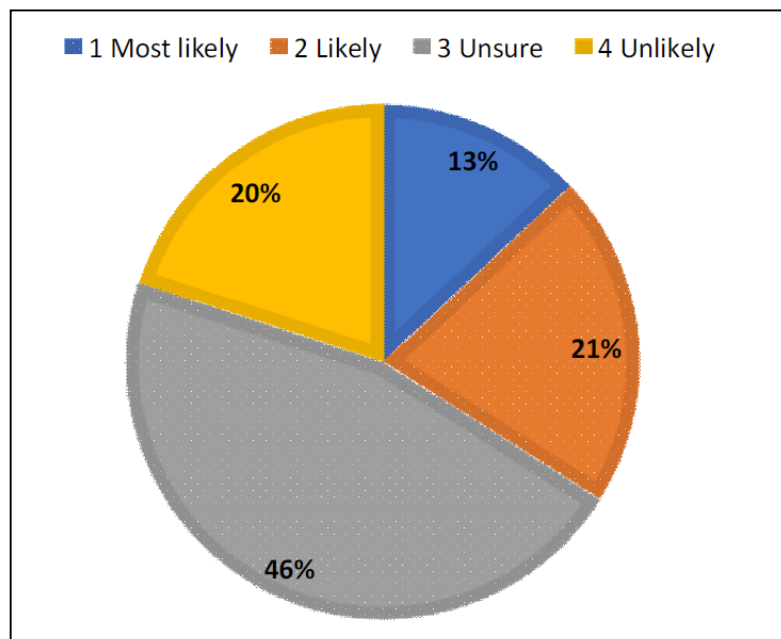


Figure 14. Likelihood of consumers to buy a healthy drink irrespective of its price

As per table 14 and figure 14, around 33% of the population (13% most likely and 21% likely) are likely to buy a health drink irrespective of the price of the product whereas 20% say that it is

unlikely to buy such drinks without considering their price. 46% of the respondents were not sure of the same.

Q12- Which of the following factors do you think affects consumer perception towards healthy drinks the most?

Table 15. Factors affecting consumer perception towards healthy drinks the most

Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Consumer awareness	3%	9%	28%	35%	25%	100
Price	2%	6%	29%	36%	27%	100
Packaging	5%	11%	32%	41%	11%	100
Advertisements	1%	6%	27%	48%	18%	100

DISCUSSIONS

Majority of the respondents in this study were of age between 21 to 40 (44%) which means that the younger generation is more focused towards shifting from sugary and carbonated drinks to a healthy substitute. Due to lack of awareness amongst elder population, only 10% of the population were of age greater than 60. Awareness amongst both men and women is equally distributed as shown by figure 2. 54% of the population was male and 46% were female showing nearly equal response from both sexes. Education qualification of the respondent shows the stage where the population is mostly educated about such products. According to the data collected, majority of the respondents were under-graduates (68%) followed by post-graduates and high school pass students (13% each) which means the population between 21 to 40 years of age is and under- graduates are most educated about the health drinks market. Nearly half of the respondents (46%) cited that, advertisements and/or posters of healthy drinks is an influencing factor in order to build positive consumer perception towards such drinks. Nearly one-fourth of the population was unsure about the same which depicts lack of attention paid by customers to such ads and posters.

Inducing fear of disease and prolonged ailments can be factored to make customers believe that

they need to shift from unhealthy to healthy drinks as per this study. More than half of the population (56%) agreed to the same while a small margin of the population (16%) was against the notion. Stimulating environments that are fitness friendly has been positively absorbed by the consumers and has influenced their perception towards healthy drinks as per this study. 65% of the population agreed to the same whereas merely 7% of the population denied being affected by it. 28% of the population was unsure of the same since other factors like, taste and texture, price of the product, etc also comes into play. As per more than half of the respondents in this study, packaging of the product is an important factor which makes customers' perception towards a drink. Better the packaging of the product will be, more consumers will be attracted towards the product. The population which was unsure of the same had an argument that better packaging leads to increase in price of the product which is also a factor influencing consumer perception. Since most of the respondents were of age 21 to 40 and were graduates, nearly 55% of them knew 2 to 5 different brands of health drink available in India. The other half of the respondents were almost equally divided with 21% respondents being aware of 1 or 2 brands and remaining 24% being aware of more than 5 brands.

More than three-fourth of the respondents (79%) said that they are aware of the health benefits offered by healthy drinks which indicates positive consumer awareness of health drinks in India. The remainder population was almost equally divided with 11% of the respondents being unaware of the health benefits attached to healthy drinks and 11% being unsure about the benefits offered by it. A fair portion of the population (68%) were aware of the difference between health drinks and other sugary/ carbonated drinks available in the market. This clearly shows how well advertisements and awareness drives about healthy drinks in India is being implemented.

More than half of the population (63%) agreed to the fact that attractive packaging can be an influencing factor for consumers to buy that particular health drink. Various studies have shown packaging of the product being a crucial factor in building brand image and creating a positive consumer perception about the brand as well as the product. More than one-fourth of the population (28%) however were unsure of the same which represents consumer negligence towards packaging of the product pertaining to other factors like price, taste, possibility of utility satisfaction, etc. 60% of the respondents said that health drinks aren't more expensive than other carbonated drinks. In the current scenario, where market trends incline towards healthier alternatives of almost every food or drink item that is deemed to be unhealthy, prices of healthier substitutes cannot be higher than their competition in order to increase awareness as well as sales. Majority of the respondents (46%) were unsure if they would buy a health drink irrespective of the price of the product. No rational consumer would give an extremely higher price for something he can buy at much less cost ignoring the health benefits added to its expensive counterpart. Hence, prices of health drinks must be kept equal to or less than other carbonated drinks in order to induce customers to

buy a healthier alternative with the same price.

Since consumer perception is a wide concept, many more variables can be taken into consideration like taste and texture of the product., reference groups, product placement, etc. Since more than three-fourth of the respondents (79%) said that they are aware of the health benefits offered by healthy drinks and a fair portion of the population feared of diseases and prolonged ailments and believed that they need to shift from unhealthy to healthy drinks, advertisements and poster should be more centric to such issues to increase awareness and sales of their product. Only 100 responses were collected for this study while the concept of consumer perception has no boundaries in terms of consumers. It is suggested that a wider span of research should be taken into account before coming to any conclusion about consumer perception in this case.

CONCLUSION, POLICY IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATION

The market for healthy drinks has been growing rapidly since past few years. Every new product that has been launched in the market has to go through the same process of marketing and sales in order to increase brand loyalty amongst customers. Consumer perception towards a product hugely influences its growth and profitability. Consumer is the prime factor whose positive adoption of a product leads to success of the brand. Through this study, consumer perception of various health drinks available in India was analysed based on four major variables namely, price of the product, packaging of the product, consumer response to advertisements and level of consumer awareness.

This study consisted of analysing consumer perception by asking random consumers to fill a questionnaire consisting of various questions regarding the factors affecting consumer perception about healthy drinks. The data

collected from 100 respondents came to a conclusion that price of the drink, packaging of the drink, consumer awareness of the product and consumer response to advertisements, all the four variables that have been taken are imperative to consumer perception and buying behaviour.

The concept of healthy beverages has been introduced not so long ago. With the introduction of internet and connectivity, there were no barriers left in terms of distance or feasibility. New cultures and cuisines were introduced throughout every country and different countries started adopting new cultures accordingly. With the introduction of multiple cuisines in India came along multiple disease or ailments that follows. Obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiac diseases, cardiovascular disease are some of the examples of diseases that are caused by unhealthy consumption of food and drinks as well as irregular routine due to continuous work stress.

Hence healthy eating and healthy drinking is the major mantra for healthy living which called for introduction of various health promoting drinks that are now available in the market. But due to consumers' reluctance to change, it was difficult in the initial stages to make consumers aware of the health benefits of such drinks. Hence, extensive advertisements, and awareness drives were initiated to make people aware of the new introduction in food and beverage industry. Since the concept of healthy eating and healthy drinking has been newly introduced in India, consumer perception about the products that promote this agenda is imperative to understand and analyse. Hence, this study is a step forward in understanding consumer behaviour towards such healthy drinks in general.

The period of the study being limited, the sample size had to be restricted; hence, it may not be fully representative in nature. Since healthy beverages has gained popularity in recent years, enough research has not been done in terms of

market share of the beverage, its market growth, consumer response to the product and comparison of various brands available in the market which resulted in difficulty in gathering secondary data for information.

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