

A Study on Brand Awareness of Y.G® Asafoetida in Kolathur Area, Chennai

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the extent of brand awareness of Y.G® Asafoetida (commonly known as Perungayam) among households in the Kolathur region of North Chennai. A structured survey was conducted with 110 regular users of asafoetida. The study combined unaided and aided recall techniques together with Likert-scale items to evaluate awareness sources, consumer perceptions, buying patterns, and obstacles to adoption. Results indicate moderate aided recognition of Y.G® at 41.8%, while unaided recall stands at a low 9.1%, placing it behind leading competitors such as Aachi, LG, and TT Perungayam. Although the brand receives favourable ratings for quality, purity, aroma, and compatibility with South Indian dishes, it suffers from poor visibility, inconsistent availability in neighbourhood stores, and limited preference (only 10.9%). Word-of-mouth and in-store displays remain the dominant awareness channels, with digital media showing negligible impact. Statistical tests confirmed that age plays a notable role in awareness levels, traditional communication channels outperform digital ones, and perceived quality exhibits a strong positive link with purchase intention. Primary barriers include loyalty to established brands and insufficient exposure. Participants recommended better local stock availability, intensified promotional activities, and targeted marketing drives. Overall, Y.G® possesses a strong heritage and quality base but requires focused efforts in distribution, visibility, and area-specific promotion to gain stronger footing in growing suburban markets such as Kolathur.

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic FMCG landscape, especially within the spices and condiments category, brand awareness serves as the cornerstone for long-term consumer preference and market success. It refers to the consumer's ability to recognise or remember a brand, either spontaneously (unaided) or when prompted (aided). This awareness directly shapes buying decisions, perceived trustworthiness, and resistance to competitive pressures. In habitual, low-involvement product categories like spices, strong brand recall often translates into greater shelf presence, higher trial rates, and repeat purchases. India, widely regarded as the global spice hub, produces and consumes a wide variety of spices that form an integral part of daily cooking, festivals, traditional medicine, and modern wellness

practices. Among these, asafoetida (hing in Hindi and Perungayam in Tamil) occupies a distinctive position as an essential flavouring agent, particularly in vegetarian and sattvic cuisines. Y.G® has established itself as a trusted heritage brand in Tamil Nadu's spice sector. Founded in 1932, the company has maintained a legacy of over nine decades by focusing on purity, natural aroma, and authentic taste. The present study specifically examines brand awareness of Y.G® in Kolathur, a rapidly urbanising residential hub in North Chennai. The locality represents a typical mix of middle-class families, working professionals, and traditional households where purchasing decisions are influenced by both kirana stores and modern retail outlets. Despite its strong regional reputation, the brand appears to face stiff competition from national players in terms of visibility and shelf space. This research therefore seeks to provide a clear picture of current awareness levels and practical strategies to strengthen the brand's position in such suburban settings.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Primary Objective

- To assess the overall level of brand awareness of Y.G® Asafoetida among consumers residing in the Kolathur area of Chennai.

Secondary Objectives

- To determine the major sources and channels through which consumers learn about Y.G® and competing asafoetida brands (traditional versus contemporary media).
- To analyse how demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, and income affect awareness levels of the Y.G® brand.
- To evaluate consumer attitudes, purchasing behaviour, perceived barriers, and future purchase likelihood regarding Y.G® in comparison with rival brands.
- To offer practical, location-specific recommendations for enhancing brand visibility and market presence.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gobbilla (2025) observed that targeted digital campaigns and real-time consumer engagement significantly outperform conventional advertising in building immediate brand recall.

Mahesh Prajapati (2024) highlighted the growing importance of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok for FMCG brands, noting that shoppable content and influencer partnerships help create emotional bonds and improve loyalty among younger urban buyers.

Shah (2025) reported that Indian FMCG firms are allocating nearly 20% of their marketing budget to digital channels (expected to rise to 25% by 2026), with AI-powered personalised advertisements playing a key role in boosting recall in competitive city markets.

Sharma et al. (2024) found that national brands enjoy higher aided recall, whereas regional heritage brands continue to depend largely on word-of-mouth and retail visibility, especially in suburban pockets of South India.

Rao and Gupta (2023) examined consumer preferences for asafoetida and concluded that attributes such as perceived purity, distinctive aroma, and suitability for regional recipes strongly influence choice, yet many smaller brands suffer from weak spontaneous recall.

(UNCTAD, 2022) indicate that rising health awareness after the pandemic has increased demand for natural and pure spices; however, in semi-urban areas, traditional communication channels still dominate awareness creation.

Haralambides (2023) noted similar structural challenges faced by regional players in gaining shelf space and digital presence, underscoring the need for targeted localisation strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study follows a descriptive research design aimed at capturing the existing state of brand awareness of Y.G® Asafoetida in Kolathur and identifying associated factors such as awareness sources, perceptions, and purchase barriers.

Sources of Data

- Primary Data – Collected via a structured questionnaire from 110 respondents.
- Secondary Data – Gathered from academic journals, industry reports, company websites, and published literature on FMCG and the spices sector.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was employed to select regular asafoetida users in the Kolathur locality.

Sample Size

A total of 110 respondents participated in the survey.

Area of Study

The research was conducted among households in the Kolathur area of Chennai.

Statistical Tools Used

Data were analysed using: • Percentage Analysis • Chi-square Test • One-Way ANOVA • Pearson Correlation

Hypothesis

- H0: There is no significant association between demographic factors and awareness levels of Y.G® Asafoetida.
- H1: There is a significant association between demographic factors and awareness levels of Y.G® Asafoetida.

Table Showing Respondents' Opinion on Y.G® Asafoetida Brand Perceptions

STATEMENTS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Y.G® offers superior quality and purity compared to other brands	5	8	12	45	40	110
Y.G® has a strong and pleasant aroma suitable for South Indian recipes	4	7	15	42	42	110

STATEMENTS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I prefer Y.G® over competitors due to its heritage and trust	6	10	18	38	38	110
Limited availability in local stores prevents me from purchasing Y.G®	3	6	14	40	47	110
Digital marketing and promotions would increase my awareness of Y.G®	8	9	16	39	38	110

INTERPRETATION

- 77% of respondents (45% agree + 32% strongly agree) viewed Y.G® as superior in quality and purity.
- 76% agreed that the brand delivers a strong aroma well-suited to traditional South Indian cooking.
- While traditional channels remain influential, participants noted that improved availability and promotional efforts could significantly enhance preference.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Chi-Square

Chi-Square tests were performed to examine the link between demographic variables and brand awareness of Y.G® Asafoetida.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant association between demographic factors (age, income, education) and Y.G® brand awareness levels.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant association between demographic factors and Y.G® brand awareness levels.

Chi-Square Test Table

S. No	Variables Tested	Chi-Square Value	p-value	Decision
1	Demographic factors * Awareness Level	18.76	0.043	Significant

INTERPRETATION

The test reveals a statistically significant association ($p = 0.043 < 0.05$) between demographic factors and awareness levels, indicating that variables such as age notably affect how well consumers recognise the Y.G® brand.

Pearson Correlation

Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between perceived quality/purity and purchase intention for Y.G® Asafoetida.

Null Hypothesis (H₀):

There is no significant correlation between perceived quality and purchase intent.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):

Perceived quality/purity of Y.G® has a positive correlation with purchase intent and loyalty.

Pearson Correlation Table

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Strength & Decision
Perceived Quality/Purity vs Intent to Try/Switch	0.682	0.001	Strong Positive

INTERPRETATION

A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.001$) exists between perceived quality and the intention to try or switch to Y.G® Asafoetida, demonstrating that favourable quality perceptions substantially drive purchase decisions and brand loyalty.

FINDINGS

- Unaided recall was led by Aachi (24.2%) and LG (21.2%); Y.G® recorded only 9.1%. • Aided recognition for Y.G® stood at a moderate 41.8%.
- Consumers rated the brand highly on quality, purity, and aroma. • Preference for Y.G® remained low at 10.9%, mainly due to limited local availability.
- Word-of-mouth and retail displays emerged as the primary awareness sources.
- Demographic factors, especially age, showed a significant influence on awareness levels.
- Perceived quality exhibited a strong positive correlation with purchase intention.

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen distribution networks by partnering with more kirana stores and supermarkets in Kolathur.
- Enhance in-store visibility through prominent displays, special offers, and sampling activities.
- Combine traditional word-of-mouth strategies with carefully selected digital campaigns on locally popular platforms.
- Direct marketing messages toward middle-aged consumers by highlighting the brand's heritage and purity.

- Introduce varied pack sizes and attractive promotional schemes to encourage trial and repeat purchases.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The research is limited to the Kolathur area of Chennai and may not represent other regions.
- Convenience sampling restricts the generalisability of results.
- Data collection reflects consumer views during January–April 2026 only.
- As an academic project, access to detailed internal sales data from the company was restricted.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that brand awareness of Y.G® Asafoetida in Kolathur remains moderate when prompted but very low in spontaneous recall. Although the brand enjoys positive perceptions regarding quality, purity, aroma, and cultural fit, it struggles with visibility and shelf presence compared to national competitors. Demographic variables significantly shape awareness, and perceived quality strongly predicts purchase intention.

Y.G® benefits from a rich legacy and strong product attributes, yet it requires immediate action in the areas of local distribution, retail visibility, and targeted promotional campaigns. Implementing the suggested measures can help the brand bridge existing gaps and establish a more prominent position in Chennai's suburban markets.

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