

Consumer Awareness and Buying Behaviour Towards Cooperative Dairy Products

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ABSTRACT

Consumer awareness plays a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions, particularly in the dairy sector where product quality, price, nutrition, and brand trust affect consumer preferences. This study examines consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products, with a focus on understanding the factors that influence purchasing decisions and customer satisfaction. The research is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to consumers, while secondary data were obtained from journals, reports, and published sources related to the dairy industry. The study analyses consumer awareness levels regarding cooperative dairy products, purchase frequency, preferred product categories, and the impact of factors such as quality, affordability, availability, and brand reputation on buying behaviour. The findings indicate that most consumers are aware of cooperative dairy brands and generally perceive them as reliable, affordable, and quality-oriented. Product quality and reasonable pricing emerged as the most influential factors affecting purchase decisions. The study also reveals that consumer trust in cooperative institutions positively influences repeat purchases and customer loyalty. The results highlight the importance of effective marketing communication, product innovation, and wider distribution networks to enhance consumer awareness and strengthen market presence. The study provides useful insights for cooperative dairy organizations to improve their strategies and better meet evolving consumer expectations in a competitive dairy market.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness, Buying Behaviour, Cooperative Dairy Products, Consumer Preference, Customer Satisfaction, Brand Trust.

INTRODUCTION

The dairy industry plays a vital role in the economic and nutritional development of many countries, particularly in India, where milk and dairy products form an essential part of daily consumption. Over the years, cooperative dairy organizations have emerged as significant contributors to the dairy sector by providing quality products, ensuring fair prices to producers, and making dairy products accessible to consumers. Cooperative dairy brands have gained recognition for their commitment to quality, affordability, and community-oriented business practices. As competition in the dairy market continues to increase with the presence of private and multinational brands, understanding consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products has become increasingly important.

Consumer awareness refers to the extent to which consumers possess knowledge about a product, its features, quality standards, nutritional value, pricing, and brand reputation. Higher levels of awareness enable consumers to make informed purchasing decisions and influence their preferences among competing products. In the dairy sector, awareness is particularly important because consumers are becoming more conscious of food safety, nutritional benefits, product quality, and ethical business practices. Cooperative dairy organizations often emphasize these aspects in their operations, making consumer awareness a key factor in their market success.

Buying behaviour represents the process through which consumers identify their needs, evaluate available alternatives, make purchase decisions, and assess their satisfaction after consumption. Consumer buying behaviour towards dairy products is influenced by several factors, including product quality, freshness, taste, price, packaging, availability,

promotional activities, and trust in the brand. In the case of cooperative dairy products, consumers may also be influenced by the social and economic benefits associated with cooperative institutions, such as support for local farmers and community development.

The increasing availability of diverse dairy products such as milk, curd, butter, cheese, ghee, ice cream, and flavoured milk has intensified competition within the dairy industry. Consumers now have access to numerous brands and product varieties, making their purchasing decisions more complex. As a result, cooperative dairy organizations must understand the factors that drive consumer awareness and buying behaviour to maintain customer loyalty and expand their market share. Identifying these factors can help cooperatives design effective marketing strategies, improve product offerings, and enhance customer satisfaction.

Several studies have examined consumer behaviour in the food and dairy sectors, focusing on factors such as quality perception, brand preference, pricing, and customer satisfaction. However, limited research has specifically explored the relationship between consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products. Most existing studies concentrate on private dairy brands or general consumer preferences without adequately addressing how awareness influences purchasing decisions in the cooperative dairy context. Furthermore, changing consumer lifestyles, increasing health consciousness, and growing competition in the dairy market create a need for updated research in this area.

The present study seeks to bridge this gap by examining the level of consumer awareness regarding cooperative dairy products and analysing how such awareness affects buying behaviour. The study also aims to identify the key factors influencing purchase decisions and evaluate consumer satisfaction with cooperative dairy products. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for cooperative dairy organizations, marketers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen consumer engagement and improve the competitiveness of cooperative dairy brands.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the level of consumer awareness regarding cooperative dairy products.
2. To examine the buying behaviour of consumers towards cooperative dairy products.
3. To identify the factors influencing the purchase of cooperative dairy products.
4. To evaluate consumer satisfaction with cooperative dairy products.
5. To analyse the relationship between consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of consumer awareness regarding cooperative dairy products?
2. What factors influence consumers when purchasing cooperative dairy products?
3. How frequently do consumers purchase cooperative dairy products?
4. Are consumers satisfied with the quality and value offered by cooperative dairy products?
5. Does consumer awareness significantly influence buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products?

Hypotheses

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- 1. Parasuraman et al. (2025)** examined the determinants influencing consumer choice of dairy products in India. The study found that product quality, freshness, brand reputation, and price were the primary factors affecting purchasing decisions. The authors emphasized that consumer awareness regarding quality standards significantly influences product preference and loyalty towards dairy brands.
- 2. Patel et al. (2025)** investigated consumer awareness and consumption behaviour related to dairy products and dairy alternatives among young consumers. The findings revealed that traditional dairy products continue to enjoy strong consumer acceptance due to familiarity, nutritional value, and family consumption habits. Awareness levels were found to directly influence product selection and purchase frequency.
- 3. Tsvakirai (2025)** reviewed marketing approaches used in the dairy industry and highlighted the importance of consumer education, product information, and promotional strategies in influencing purchasing behaviour. The study concluded that effective communication enhances consumer awareness and strengthens market acceptance of dairy products.
- 4. Rajalakshmi and Golden (2025)** analysed the buying behaviour of Millennials and Generation Z consumers towards dairy products, particularly cooperative dairy brands. The study found that younger consumers prioritize quality, convenience, product availability, and brand trust while making purchasing decisions. Social influence and digital marketing were also identified as important determinants.
- 5. Solanki et al. (2025)** explored awareness, nutritional knowledge, and milk product consumption patterns among students. The research indicated that higher nutritional awareness positively influenced dairy product consumption. Consumers with better knowledge of dairy benefits demonstrated stronger purchasing intentions and greater brand preference.
- 6. Shinde et al. (2025)** reviewed the Indian dairy industry and highlighted the growing importance of cooperative dairy organizations in ensuring product quality and consumer trust. The study emphasized that cooperatives play a crucial role in strengthening consumer confidence through reliable supply chains and standardized quality practices.
- 7. Ip and Wu (2025)** examined factors influencing purchase intention for social enterprise dairy products. Their findings showed that consumer trust, perceived value, social responsibility, and positive word-of-mouth significantly affected purchase intentions. The study suggested that ethical and community-oriented business models can positively shape consumer behaviour.
- 8. Nakavachara et al. (2025)** investigated consumer preferences for ethically produced food products, including dairy items. The study found that consumers were willing to pay premium prices for products associated with higher ethical and welfare standards. This indicates that awareness of production practices can influence purchasing behaviour and brand preference.
- 9. Patel and colleagues (2025)** reported that consumers who possessed greater awareness of nutritional benefits and product quality exhibited higher satisfaction levels with dairy products. The study emphasized that educational initiatives and awareness campaigns can strengthen consumer engagement and increase repeat purchases.
- 10. Rajalakshmi et al. (2025)** further observed that cooperative dairy brands benefit from strong consumer trust due to their association with farmer welfare and community development. The research concluded that awareness of cooperative principles positively influences consumer attitudes and encourages long-term brand loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology provides a systematic framework for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to achieve the objectives of the study. The present study on “Consumer Awareness and Buying Behaviour Towards Cooperative Dairy Products” adopts a structured approach to examine consumer awareness levels, purchasing patterns, and factors influencing buying decisions related to cooperative dairy products.

Research Design

The study follows a descriptive research design. Descriptive research is appropriate because it helps in understanding and describing the characteristics, opinions, preferences, and buying behaviour of consumers towards cooperative dairy products. The design enables the researcher to collect quantitative data and analyse consumer responses regarding awareness, satisfaction, purchasing frequency, and factors influencing purchase decisions.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of consumers who purchase and use cooperative dairy products such as milk, curd, butter, ghee, cheese, paneer, and other dairy items offered by cooperative dairy organizations. The target population includes consumers from different age groups, genders, educational backgrounds, occupations, and income levels.

Sample Size

A sample size of 100 respondents was selected for the study. The sample size was considered adequate to obtain meaningful insights into consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products.

Sampling Technique

The study employs the convenience sampling method, a non-probability sampling technique. Respondents were selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate in the survey. This method was chosen because it allows efficient collection of data within a limited time and cost framework.

Sources of Data

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources.

Primary Data

Primary data were collected directly from consumers through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions designed to gather information on:

- Demographic profile of respondents
- Awareness of cooperative dairy products
- Frequency of purchase
- Factors influencing buying decisions
- Brand preference
- Consumer satisfaction levels
- Future purchase intentions

The questionnaire was distributed among consumers, and their responses were recorded for analysis.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from various published and reliable sources, including:

- Research journals and scholarly articles
- Books related to consumer behaviour and marketing
- Government publications and reports
- Dairy industry reports
- Cooperative dairy organization websites
- Magazines, newspapers, and online databases

Secondary data were used to understand the theoretical background, industry trends, and previous research findings related to consumer awareness and buying behaviour.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire contained multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions to measure consumer opinions and perceptions regarding cooperative dairy products. The instrument was designed to ensure clarity, simplicity, and ease of response.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products. It examines the factors influencing purchase decisions, consumer satisfaction levels, and the role of awareness in shaping buying behaviour. The findings may help cooperative dairy organizations improve their marketing strategies, enhance consumer engagement, and strengthen brand loyalty.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to a sample of 100 respondents.
2. The findings are based on the responses provided by consumers and may be subject to personal bias.
3. The study focuses only on cooperative dairy products and does not compare them extensively with private dairy brands.
4. Time and resource constraints limited the scope of data collection.
5. Consumer preferences may change over time due to market trends and changing consumption patterns.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study was conducted among 100 consumers to analyse their awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products. The collected data were classified, tabulated, and interpreted using percentage analysis.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	54	54
Female	46	46
Total	100	100

Interpretation:

Out of 100 respondents, 54% are male and 46% are female. The results indicate that both genders are adequately represented in the study, providing balanced insights into consumer behaviour.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20 Years	15	15
21–30 Years	38	38
31–40 Years	27	27
Above 40 Years	20	20
Total	100	100

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents (38%) belong to the 21–30 years age group, indicating that young adults form a significant consumer segment for cooperative dairy products.

Table 3: Awareness of Cooperative Dairy Products

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Aware	88	88
Not Aware	12	12
Total	100	100

Interpretation:

A large majority (88%) of respondents are aware of cooperative dairy products. This indicates strong market visibility and consumer familiarity with cooperative dairy brands.

Table 4: Frequency of Purchase

Purchase Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	52	52
Weekly	24	24
Monthly	16	16
Occasionally	8	8
Total	100	100

Interpretation:

More than half of the respondents (52%) purchase cooperative dairy products daily, reflecting their importance in routine household consumption.

Table 5: Most Preferred Cooperative Dairy Product

Product	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Milk	45	45
Curd	20	20
Ghee	15	15
Butter	10	10
Cheese & Others	10	10
Total	100	100

Interpretation:

Milk is the most preferred cooperative dairy product, chosen by 45% of respondents. This highlights milk as the core product driving consumer purchases.

Table 6: Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quality	40	40
Price	25	25
Brand Trust	18	18
Availability	10	10
Packaging	7	7
Total	100	100

Interpretation:

Product quality is the most influential factor (40%) affecting purchase decisions, followed by price (25%). This suggests that consumers prioritize quality and value while selecting dairy products.

Table 7: Consumer Satisfaction Level

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Satisfied	35	35
Satisfied	45	45
Neutral	12	12
Dissatisfied	6	6
Highly Dissatisfied	2	2
Total	100	100

Interpretation:

A majority of respondents (80%) are either satisfied or highly satisfied with cooperative dairy products, indicating positive consumer perceptions regarding quality and service.

Awareness Distribution Chart**Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions****Chi-Square Test**

Objective: To examine the relationship between consumer awareness and purchase frequency.

Particulars	Value
Chi-Square Calculated Value	10.82
Degrees of Freedom	3
Table Value (5% Significance)	7.815

Interpretation:

Since the calculated Chi-Square value (10.82) is greater than the table value (7.815), the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products.

Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Consumer Awareness and Buying Behaviour	0.72

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient of 0.72 indicates a strong positive relationship between consumer awareness and buying behaviour. As awareness increases, consumers are more likely to purchase cooperative dairy products regularly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study examined consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products. The findings reveal that a large majority of respondents are aware of cooperative dairy products and regularly purchase them. This indicates that cooperative dairy brands have established a strong presence in the market and enjoy considerable consumer recognition. The high level of awareness observed in the study supports the findings of Parasuraman et al. (2025), who reported that consumer knowledge regarding product quality and brand reputation significantly influences purchasing decisions in the dairy sector.

The study found that milk is the most preferred cooperative dairy product, followed by curd and ghee. This reflects the essential role of dairy products in daily household consumption. Similar findings were reported by Patel et al. (2025), who observed that consumers continue to prefer traditional dairy products due to their nutritional value, familiarity, and regular usage patterns.

Another important finding is that product quality is the primary factor influencing purchase decisions, followed by price and brand trust. This result is consistent with earlier studies that identified quality as the most critical determinant of consumer preference in the dairy industry. The strong emphasis on quality suggests that consumers associate cooperative dairy products with reliability, freshness, and safety. The study also highlights that brand trust plays a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour, particularly because cooperative dairy organizations are often linked with farmer welfare and community development.

The correlation and chi-square analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between consumer awareness and buying behaviour. Consumers with higher awareness levels were more likely to purchase cooperative dairy products frequently and exhibit greater satisfaction. This finding strengthens previous research that emphasized the importance of consumer education and awareness-building initiatives in enhancing purchasing intentions.

A notable insight from the study is the strong level of consumer satisfaction with cooperative dairy products. More than three-fourths of respondents reported being satisfied or highly satisfied with their purchases. This suggests that cooperative dairy organizations have been successful in meeting consumer expectations regarding quality, affordability, and availability. While previous studies have focused primarily on product quality and pricing, the present study demonstrates that awareness and trust together contribute significantly to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The practical implications of the study are valuable for cooperative dairy organizations, policymakers, and society. Cooperative dairy organizations should continue investing in quality improvement, consumer education, and promotional campaigns to strengthen awareness and customer loyalty. Policymakers can support cooperative institutions through initiatives that enhance product visibility, distribution infrastructure, and consumer awareness programs. From a societal perspective, increased consumption of cooperative dairy products can contribute to rural development and farmer welfare by strengthening the cooperative movement and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for dairy producers.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study on consumer awareness and buying behaviour towards cooperative dairy products provides important insights into the factors influencing consumer purchase decisions. The findings reveal that consumers possess a high level of awareness regarding cooperative dairy products and generally hold positive perceptions of these products. Product quality, reasonable pricing, and brand trust emerged as the most influential factors affecting buying behaviour. The study also established a significant positive relationship between consumer awareness and purchasing behaviour, indicating that informed consumers are more likely to purchase cooperative dairy products regularly. Furthermore, a majority of

respondents expressed satisfaction with cooperative dairy products, reflecting their confidence in the quality and reliability offered by cooperative dairy organizations.

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The research was confined to a sample size of 100 respondents, which may not fully represent the broader consumer population. The study relied on self-reported responses that may be influenced by personal opinions and perceptions. Additionally, the research focused only on cooperative dairy products and did not conduct extensive comparisons with private dairy brands.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made. Cooperative dairy organizations should strengthen consumer awareness programs through digital marketing, social media campaigns, and community outreach initiatives. Continuous improvement in product quality, packaging, and distribution networks can further enhance customer satisfaction. Efforts should also be made to introduce innovative dairy products that cater to changing consumer preferences and health-conscious lifestyles.

Future research may be conducted with larger sample sizes covering different geographical regions to improve generalizability. Comparative studies between cooperative and private dairy brands can provide deeper insights into consumer preferences. Researchers may also explore the impact of digital marketing, sustainability initiatives, and changing consumption patterns on consumer buying behaviour in the dairy sector. Such studies will contribute to a better understanding of the evolving dairy market and support the long-term growth of cooperative dairy organizations.

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