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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring yogurt awareness and purchase behaviour among Indian consumers

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Abstract: India's probiotic industry shows promising growth, understanding consumer dynamics becomes imperative for stakeholders. This study investigated yogurt consumption among Indian consumers which unveils critical insights into awareness and purchasing pattern in this dynamic market. This comprehensive analysis was conducted with 409 respondents from pan India. Chi -square test revealed the association between various socio demographic variables and factors like yogurt awareness, sources of information, places of purchase, and reason and purpose to buy yogurt. Urban females display the highest yogurt awareness, reflecting a key market segment. The Indian yogurt market operates on a push marketing model with dominance of relatives/friends as the primary information source. Supermarkets and hypermarkets serve as primary yogurt purchase points in India. This research aims to fill important gaps in knowledge by providing practical insights. These insights can help make strategic decisions easier for those looking to enter India's dynamic yogurt market and contribute to the ongoing growth of its dairy industry.

Keywords: Awareness, Health consciousness, Probiotics, Purchase point, Yogurt

Introduction

Globally, the dairy industry reached nearly USD 947.11 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow at about 6.12 per cent annually through 2032 ("Fortune Business Insights," 2025). The Asian market has a maximum share of 41.2 per cent in the Global dairy industry in 2024 ("Fortune Business Insights," 2025). The Indian dairy market topped at a value of INR 18,975 billion (approximately USD 135.30 billion) in 2024 (Chaturvedi et al. 2025). Government initiatives have played a pivotal role in shaping the dairy sector in India. Policies such as allowing 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) and providing concessions under the GST regime have facilitated the growth of the dairy industry (Kansara et al. 2020). The Indian dairy market has undergone a significant transformation in dietary habits over the past two decades (Prashant, 2025). This shift is influenced by increased consumer awareness, urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and greater exposure to health and wellness trends (Ohlan, 2016; John & Babu, 2022; Kumar et al. 2022). These shifts have driven a significant increase in demand for value-added dairy products, such as flavoured yogurt and probiotic beverages, which are now growing at an annual rate of 15-20 per cent (Farm, 2025).

Yogurt is a fermented milk product rich in nutrients like high-quality protein, calcium, and B vitamins such as riboflavin, B6, and B12 (Hadjimbei et al., 2022). The fermentation process, using bacteria like *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*, makes minerals like calcium and magnesium easier to absorb and adds helpful probiotics (Saleem et al., 2024). These live bacteria support a healthy gut, improve digestion, boost immunity, and may even benefit mental health (Aziz et al., 2024). Sarýtaþ et al. (2024) highlighted that yogurt can help with diarrhea, lactose digestion, weight management, and reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes and cancers.

Wang et al. (2024) outlined the advancement in global yogurt market, with innovations focusing on enhancing protein content, lowering sugar levels, using organic ingredients, and providing convenient packaging. These technological advances drive new flavors, non-dairy options, and more plant-based yogurts. (Khan, 2024). However, consumption patterns vary across countries, as noted by Fisberg and Machado (2015). In places like the United States and Brazil, only a small portion of the population eats yogurt daily. Usually, yogurt is more popular among people with healthier lifestyles, higher education levels, and especially women (Tremblay & Panahi, 2017).

The favorable conditions and government support indicate a positive long-term outlook for the yogurt industry. .However, challenges exist, as Pandey and Yadav (2020) discussed in the

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case of Danone India. Danone renowned for producing high-quality nutritional products, faced difficulties in adapting to local market conditions, which ultimately resulted in its withdrawal from India. This case underscores the importance of understanding local market dynamics and consumer preferences when entering new markets, particularly in highly competitive sectors such as the Indian dairy business.

Aravkar (2021) pointed out that Indian consumers treat *dahi* (curd) and yogurt as similar products. In reality, these two products differ in processing, taste, and texture (Mudgal & Prajapati, 2017). Raghuwanshi et al. (2014) have highlighted that there is little literature and studies about the consumer preference regarding yogurt in India. This research paper aims to address this critical gap in knowledge. By exploring the specific dynamics of the Indian yogurt market, we seek to identify key opportunities and challenges for both domestic and international stakeholders. The study findings would offer valuable insights for devising effective strategies to capitalize on this rapidly expanding market segment, ultimately contributing to the ongoing advancement of the Indian dairy industry.

Materials and Methods

This paper explores the status of the yogurt industry among Indian consumers, focusing on awareness, information sources, purchase locations, reasons for buying, and health factors influencing choices. It compares these aspects across different socio-demographic groups, based on a survey of 409 respondents nationwide using a structured Google form. The Chi-Square Association Test is employed to determine whether two variables are related, functioning as a test of independence. The null hypothesis assumes the variables are independent, while the alternative suggests an association. This non-parametric test analyzes categorical variables through cross-tabulation, with each cell showing the number of cases for a specific category pair. The test statistic is then compared to the critical value from a distribution table, using degrees of freedom (df = (R - 1)(C - 1)) and a pre-set confidence level. If the estimated value exceeds the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected. In SPSS software, the p-value's significance is assessed, and the null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value is below 0.05.

$$\chi 2 = \sum_{i=1}^{r}\sum_{j=1}^{c}\frac{\left(O_{ij}-E_{ij}\right)^2}{E_{ij}}$$

It was calculated as follows:

Where,

5ØØÞ2 = Chi-Square test of association

Oij= Observed cell count in the ith row and jth column of the table

Eij= Expected cell count in the ith row and jth column of the table

r= number of rows

c= number of columns

Results and Discussion

Awareness about yogurt among Indian consumers

The respondents were categorised as aware if they had heard about yogurt or otherwise. Numerous socio-demographic characteristics influence yogurt awareness. Chi-square test (test of association) was used to understand the significant factor responsible for awareness, as reflected in Table 1. Only gender and area of respondents showed a significant value of Chi Square. Female respondents were more aware of the yogurt than male respondents (χ2=11.601, p=0.001). Kusumastuti et al. (2013) also found similar results in the case study of consumer perception in Malang city Burnett (2018) explained various scientific, social, and cultural influences that account for women being more aware of yogurt and also consume more yogurt than men. The urban population had more awareness regarding yogurt than the suburban and rural populations (χ2 =16.599, p= <0.001). Many consumers of semi-urban and rural areas are unaware of the yogurt products on the market, even with the expansion of organised retail and the improved availability of branded yoghurt (Ambaliya et al. 2025).

The distribution of two significant factors was checked together to understand the respondents' awareness of yogurt. Table 2 shows that females from urban backgrounds made up 62.50 per cent of the segmentation based on gender and area combined who were aware of Yogurt, followed by males from urban areas (54.20 per cent). Males in suburban areas and females in rural areas were the least aware groups, accounting for 19.33 per cent and 15.63 per cent, respectively.

Sources of information about yogurt in India

The source of information on yogurt is one of the vital factor in assessing its status with regard to consumers. The source of information was highly significantly associated with the two socio-demographic variables that are gender (χ2 =18.598, p= 0.010) and area (χ2 =33.102, p= 0.003), as evident from table 3.

Distribution of sources of information is shown with significant variables in figure 1. Sources of information, area wise shows that relatives and friends were the primary sources of information in all cases, followed by social media blogs in urban regions, social media blogs and advertisements in sub-urban areas, and social media in rural areas. Social media guides consumers through the entire buying process. Social media raises awareness and demand for a product, offers information and real-time feedback for comparison, and after purchase, enables user feedback, brand interaction, and community building (Yang 2024). In all scenarios of area, Google searches are the least used source of information. Regarding gender, relatives and friends were the primary sources of information, followed by blogs on social media for both genders. This situation indicates that in the yogurt industry, pull marketing, rather than push marketing, is currently popular.

Place of purchase of yogurt in India

Place of purchase is again an important determinent of the sale of product. It was aimed to check the association of different socio-demographic variables with the place of purchase. Place of purchase is significantly associated only with respondents' area, monthly income, and occupation with value ($\chi2$ =20.989, p= 0.021), ($\chi2$ =49.070, p=< 0.001) and ($\chi2$=82.726, p= <0.001) respectively, as seen in table 4.

Table 5 shows the distribution of place of purchase according to significantly associated factors, clearly illustrates that urban consumers (38 per cent) prefer supermarkets and hypermarkets for their yogurt purchases, while rural consumers (38.7 per cent)

Table 1: Test of association with different demographic variables with awareness

Test of Association		n=409 Heard About Yogurt					
		No		Yes			
		Frequency	Per centage	Frequency	Per centage	$\chi2$	p-value
Gender	Female	4	3	128	97.0	11.60**	(0.001)
	Male	39	14.1	238	85.9		
Generations	After Google	17	13.7	107	86.3	2.15	0.541
	Conventionalists	5	10.0	45	90.0		
	Die-Hards	0	0.0	2	100.0		
	Progressive	21	9.0	212	91.0		
Zone	North	12	7.9	139	92.1	2.024	0.568
	South	5	12.2	36	87.8		
	East	6	10.0	54	90.0		
	West	20	12.7	137	87.3		
Area	Rural	21	20.2	83	79.8	16.60**	(0.000)
	Sub-urban	10	11.9	74	88.1		
	Urban	12	5.4	209	94.6		
Income (Monthly)	upto 10,000	10	10.6	84	89.4	4.816	0.307
	10,001 - 30,000	11	15.1	62	84.9		
	30,001 - 60,000	13	11.8	97	88.2		
	60,001 - 90,000	2	3.6	54	96.4		
	90,001 and above	7	9.2	69	90.8		
Occupation	Business Owner	1	16.7	5	83.3	2.442	0.964
	Housewife	0	0.0	5	100.0		
	Retired	0	0.0	4	100.0		
	Salaried Govt. Employee	3	7.1	39	92.9		
	Salaried Private Employee	21	10.9	171	89.1		
	Self- employed	6	13.6	38	86.4		
	Unemployed	12	10.3	104	89.7		
Education	Diploma	0	0.0	2	100.0	4.321	0.633
	Graduation	6	7.1	78	92.9		
	MPhil	0	0.0	1	100.0		
	Ph.D.	6	18.2	27	81.8		
	Post-graduation	31	11.0	251	89.0		
	upto 10	0	0.0	2	100.0		
	upto 12	0	0.0	5	100.0		

Source: Researcher's computation from the survey prefer convenience stores like local milk parlours or booths. The northern region consumers (37.4 per cent) generally prefer convenience store for purchasing yogurt like Mother dairy has extensive network of their milk booth in NCR region.The supermarket/hypermarket is main place of purchase for southern India (43.6 per cent) and western India (38.4 per cent). Convenience store is also preferred by major eastern consumers (36.8 per cent). Suburban consumers (35.3 per cent) enjoy purchasing yogurt from supermarkets/ hypermarkets and convenience stores. Low-income group (less than 30,000) prefer convenience stores for yogurt purchases, ranging from 41 to 46 per cent. If income exceeds 30,000 rupees monthly, the shopping destination for yogurt shifted from convenience stores to supermarkets/hypermarkets. May be due to yogurt's short shelf life, online consumers of any income group do not favour online purchasing. Supermarkets and hypermarkets are the first choice for shopping for yogurt by homemakers, retired personnel, and salaried private employees. The business owners prefer convenience stores; salaried housewives, retirees, and salaried private employees typically shop for yogurt at supermarkets and hypermarkets. Business owners, salaried government employees, self-employed people, and the unemployed choose convenience stores. Only salaried workers (10–11 per cent) across all professions made purchases from online market places.

According to a report by Mordor Intelligence (2025), the yogurt industry has changed due to shifting consumer preferences and retail trends. Supermarkets and hypermarkets are the most popular places to buy yogurt, accounting for over 61 per cent of sales in 2022 because they offer variety at better prices and offers.

Reasons and purposes to buy yogurt in India

Yogurt fulfils various purposes, and there are numerous reasons for its purchase. As indicated in Table 6, the motive is linked to the intended purpose. When individuals crave yogurt, 37.5 per cent are motivated to purchase it for its taste, while 22.5 per cent buy it due to established food habits. Nearly 48 per cent of consumers purchase yogurt when their supply is depleted and it is part of their regular dietary routine. Taste plays a crucial role in converting potential consumers during grocery shopping, with 32.2 per cent influenced by taste, 39.5 per cent by discounts on the product, and 44.3 per cent when their preferred flavour is available. Additionally, half of the population purchases yogurt upon medical recommendation, considering it a health concern. Mordor Intelligence (2025) highlights that the rising global demand for yogurt comes from a growing awareness of its health benefits, along with the wide variety of available flavors and uses. Acquiring yogurt for product exploration constitutes a minor reason for consumers, who are generally aware of the benefits and applications of the product.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to awareness about Yogurt

Gender	Area	No	Yes
Female	Rural	25.00	15.63
	Sub-urban	25.00	21.88
	Urban	50.00	62.50
Subtotal		9.30	34.97
Male	Rural	51.28	26.47
	Sub-urban	23.08	19.33
	Urban	25.64	54.20
Subtotal		90.70	65.03
Grand Total		100.00	100.00

Source: Researcher's computation from the survey

Table 3: Test of association between source of information and demographic variables

Source of information	χ2	P-VALUE
Gender	18.598	0.010*
Generations	21.152	0.45
Zone	87.782	0.713
Area	33.102	0.003*
Income (Monthly)	35.064	0.168
Occupation	49.877	0.705
Education	23.097	0.992

Source: Researcher's computation from the survey

Table 4: Test of association between place of purchase and demographic variables

Place of Purchase	χ2	P-VALUE
Gender	2.109	0.834
Generations	22.717	0.09
Zone	27.485*	0.025
Area	20.989*	0.021
Income (Monthly)	49.070*	0.000
Occupation	82.726*	0.000
Education	12.605	0.998

Source: Researcher's computation from the survey

Conclusion

The study shows that awareness and buying habits for yogurt

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to place of purchase for significant factors associated

Categories		Supermarket/ Hypermarket Freq.	Supermarket/ Hypermarket Per cent	Convenience store Freq.	Convenience store Per cent	Independent small grocers Freq.	Independent small grocers Per cent	Online Freq.	Online Per cent	Total Freq
Area	Rural	27	24.3	43	38.7	31	27.9	10	9.0	111
	Sub-urban	42	35.3	42	35.3	27	22.7	8	6.7	119
	Urban	122	38.0	112	34.9	59	18.4	28	8.7	321
Zone	North	62	29.4	79	37.4	55	26.1	15	7.1	211
	South	24	43.6	18	32.7	7	12.7	6	10.9	55
	East	32	33.7	35	36.8	20	21.1	8	8.4	95
	West	73	38.4	65	34.2	35	18.4	17	8.9	190
Income (Monthly)	Less than 10,000	29	26.6	50	45.9	27	24.8	3	2.8	109
	10,000 - 30,000	24	27.6	36	41.4	19	21.8	8	9.2	87
	30,000 - 60,000	56	36.1	52	33.5	34	21.9	13	8.4	155
	60,000 - 90,000	30	38.0	26	32.9	16	20.3	7	8.9	79
	More than 90,000	52	43.0	33	27.3	21	17.4	15	12.4	121
Occupation	Business Owner	1	25.0	3	75.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4
	Housewife	4	57.1	1	14.3	2	28.6	0	0.0	7
	Retired	4	66.7	2	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	6
	Salaried Govt. Employee	20	33.3	22	36.7	11	18.3	7	11.7	60
	Salaried Private Employee	106	37.7	88	31.3	57	20.3	30	10.7	281
	Self- employed	18	34.0	20	37.7	13	24.5	2	3.8	53
	Unemployed	38	27.1	61	43.6	34	24.3	7	5.0	140

Row wise total was used to calculate the per centage under different categories
Source: Researcher's computation from the survey

Table 6: Reason and purpose for buying yogurt

Reason for buying yogurt	Dessert Freq.	Dessert Perc.	Explore the product Freq.	Explore the product Perc.	Food habit Freq.	Food habit Perc.	Health Concern Freq.	Health Concern Perc.	Taste Freq.	Taste Perc.	Total Freq.
Buy when I felt Cravings for Yogurt	20	12.5	13	8.1	36	22.5	31	19.4	60	37.5	160
Buy when my stock gets empty	4	6.1	2	3.0	32	48.5	18	27.3	9	13.6	65
Buy when I go for Grocery shopping	21	14.1	17	11.4	31	20.8	32	21.5	48	32.2	149
Buy when I saw the discount on product	3	7.9	6	15.8	4	10.5	10	26.3	15	39.5	38
Buy when my favourite Flavour is available	10	12.7	5	6.3	12	15.2	17	21.5	35	44.3	79
Buy when doctor recommends	1	4.2	4	16.7	3	12.5	12	50.0	4	16.7	24

Row wise total was used to calculate the per centage under different categories
Source: Researcher's computation from the survey

vary across different groups in India. Urban women are the most informed, with urban men close behind, especially in city areas. Meanwhile, awareness is lower among suburban men and rural women, highlighting the need for targeted campaigns in these groups.The Indian yogurt market mostly relies on word of mouth rather than online search, making in-store visibility and personal recommendations more effective than digital marketing alone.

Urban consumers mainly buy yogurt from supermarkets and hypermarkets, while rural consumers prefer local convenience stores. Suburban buyers are split evenly between these outlets. Online sales remain limited across all groups, emphasizing the ongoing importance of physical stores. People buy yogurt mainly for taste, habit, and health reasons. Factors like discounts, favourite flavours, and doctor recommendations also influence consumers' choice. To better serve these insights, brands should focus on product visibility in stores, especially supermarkets and convenience shops. Offering attractive, smaller packages also encourages first-time buys and repeat purchases, especially among budget-conscious consumers.

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