



**Title :** What Information are Consumers' in Mumbai Seeking on Food Labels?

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### **Introduction:**

Consumers today are increasingly purchasing and consuming ready-to-eat snacks and also are becoming more conscious about healthy eating. WHO-FAO defines a food label is an instrument that shares information between producers and consumers, as well as reduces the search costs for consumers to meet their desired choices. The majority of shoppers in India do not use nutrition labels when purchasing foods to make informed choices. This study attempts to get an insight to what and why are consumers looking at on food labels so that initiatives can be directed to build consumer trust for the using food labels on a larger scale.

### **Methodology:**

A study on the food label usage habits of 206 consumers from the city of Mumbai was conducted by self-administered questionnaire which focused on what do consumers look at on a food label, what are their motives or constraints, which are the food categories that they purchase, who are the target consumers and how frequently they use the Nutrition information Panel on select categories of ready to eat foods.

### **Result:**

The reasons that discourage their regular use of labels, the major limitations reported were time constraint (45.1 %), followed by small font size and 25% respondents have reported difficulty in understanding the information on the nutrition labels. The motives that encourage the use nutrition labels are fitness (50.5%), disease control (26.7%) and disease prevention (25.2%).The most referred to nutrients on the label were fat (47.1%) and cholesterol (43.6%). Majority of consumers shop for ready to eat foods (RTE foods) in grocery stores (44.7%).Most consumers ranked the brand as the most important criteria for selection of RTE foods. Nutrition claims were reportedly used at by 53.4% of consumers, followed by ingredients (45.6%) and health claims (40.8%).About one-fourth of the consumers claim to not look at the nutrient content (25.2%) and 14% don't read labels at all. The food category which emerged as the most purchased one was bakery (biscuits). The end-use consumers for biscuits were reported as the entire family and the frequency of nutrition label reading by the consumers is 28%.

### **Conclusion:**

These results indicate that though few consumers use nutrition labels but, they do use the information on select product categories. Also efforts need to be directed towards making consumer-centric food labels which aid the consumers in selecting healthy foods from more categories to meet their needs of fitness, disease control & prevention.

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