

ETHICAL DILEMMA AND MARKETING DECISIONS OF PACKAGED FOOD PRODUCTS IN TRIPURA.

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ABSTRACT

The food industry exists at the centre of consumer health, community well-being, and economic profit, making ethical issues in marketing decisions particularly challenging. Companies have to find an ideal balance between promoting their products and ensuring that their advertising strategies do not mislead or adversely affect customers. Issues such as advertising overly processed or unhealthy meals, targeting vulnerable populations such as children, and using deceptive labels or claims (e.g., "organic" or "natural" when they do not completely meet with standards) frequently come up. These activities may increase short-term sales, but they can have long-term consequences for public health and societal trust. Marketing decisions for food items meet ethical issues such as sustainability and fair trades. Consumers are increasingly looking for willingness about ingredient source, impact on the environment, and labour practices utilized during production. Confusing or ignoring to address these issues may result in charges of false advertising or exploitation, further losing confidence. For companies, the problem of ethics arises from a disagreement between the responsibility to shareholders and their responsibility to consumers and society as a whole

KeyWords *Ethics, Food , Marketing*

INTRODUCTION:

The food industry exists at the centre of consumer health, community well-being, and economic profit, making ethical issues in marketing decisions particularly challenging. Companies have to find an ideal balance between promoting their products and ensuring that their advertising strategies do not mislead or adversely affect customers. Issues such as advertising overly processed or unhealthy meals, targeting vulnerable populations such as children, and using deceptive labels or claims (e.g., "organic" or "natural" when they do not completely meet with standards) frequently come up.

An ethical dilemma in marketing happens when a company is forced to choose between doing what is right and what would make more money. Making these choices might be difficult because what is profitable may not be always the greatest option for the consumer or society. For example, a company may consider making misleading or false claims in its ads to make things appear better than they actually are. While this may help sell more things in the short term, it is unethical and can harm the company's image in the long run. Marketing is the process by which a company connects with its consumers, so the way they promote their products or services is quite important. Ethical marketing decisions include being true not misleading, and protecting client privacy. Consumers trust companies that are honest about what their products can and cannot do. However, if they deceive customers with false advertisements, companies risk losing confidence, receiving negative feedback, or possibly suffering legal consequences. Companies may also face problems about the collection and use of client data. While data collection might help businesses improve their goods or sell more, they need to take precaution not to violate people's privacy. Using someone else's personal information without their permission is illegal, even if it makes it simpler to sell items. Making ethical choices regarding advertising matters for long-term success. When companies prioritize being fair and honest with their consumers, they foster better connections and loyalty. Customers are more willing to return to a company they trust. Even while it may be easy to take shortcuts or make decisions that simply benefit the company in the short term, the most successful companies understand how their actions will influence their customers, workers, and society. In the end, companies that value ethical standards tend to perform better and stay longer. Marketing decisions for packaged food should focus on the local languages spoken, such as Kokborok and Bengali. It is important to use these languages on packaging and in advertisements so that consumers can easily understand and trust the product. Offering food that matches local tastes and cultural preferences is essential. Transparent labelling with clear information about ingredients and expiration dates is key to building trust. Additionally, using environmentally friendly packaging can appeal to consumers who value sustainability. These strategies can help businesses succeed by better connecting with the local population.

LITERATURE REVIEWS:

Thøgersen (1999) worked on *The Ethical Consumer. Moral Norms and Packaging Choice* the studies aim to investigate whether environmental attitudes based on moral reasoning influence consumer purchasing behaviour, specifically regarding packaging choices. The study is based on a case study involving Danish consumers. It examines their packaging choices, particularly with respect to environmentally friendly options. The research measures self-reported norms the study finds that consumers' choices for environmentally friendly packaging are influenced by personal moral norms. Consumers who have developed personal norms about environmentally friendly packaging are more likely to make ethical choices, though perceived costs do not significantly influence these decisions. Monnot et.al (2019) worked on “Thinking outside the packaging box”: should brands consider store shelf context when eliminating overpackaging? The study aims to explore the impact of overpackaging on consumer behaviour, specifically how removing overpackaging affects brand image and purchase intention an experiment was conducted with 218 consumers. The study compared their reactions to overpackaged versus non-overpackaged products, focusing on their environmental consciousness and how competing products were packaged. The results showed that reducing packaging negatively impacts purchase intention, especially among consumers who are not environmentally conscious. Rokka et.al (2008) work on *Preference for green packaging in consumer product choices – Do consumers care?* The study aims to analyse the importance of green (environmentally friendly) packaging compared to other product attributes, such as brand, price, and convenience, in consumer choices, The research uses a choice-based conjoint analysis on a sample of 330 consumers who purchase functional drink products. the study highlights the growing importance of ethical and environmental factors in product choices and suggests shifting consumer research focus from general attitudes to actual product behaviours. Roe et.al (2020) worked on *Some Issues in the Ethics of Food Waste*, the article aims to explores ethical issues related to food waste and resource reallocation. It reviews existing literature and raises ethical questions for discussion. Key ethical concerns include food donation, "ugly food"

markets, guilt-based messaging to reduce waste, and food labelling practices. Frohlich (2020) worked on Buyer be-aware: the ethics of food labelling reform and 'mobilising the consumer' The aim is to uncover how nutrition labels are both a tool for consumer empowerment and a reflection of expert biases and industry influence. The methodology involves a historical and critical review of U.S. nutrition labelling, analysing policy evolution, scientific and legal challenges, and expert influence. It includes case studies, expert interviews, and consumer behaviour analysis to evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of labelling practices. The study finds that while nutrition labels are intended to empower consumers and promote healthier choices, they are influenced by expert biases, mainly benefit those who are already informed, and can be manipulated by marketing. McEachern et.al (2002) work on Organic purchasing motivations and attitudes: are they ethical? he objective of the study is to investigate how ethical beliefs influence Scottish consumers' perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and purchasing decisions regarding organic dairy products, The methodology involves conducting surveys with Scottish consumers to collect data on their perceptions, beliefs, and purchasing motivations related to organic dairy products. The study uses statistical analysis to identify key motivators and patterns, such as self-interest versus altruism, and examines how these factors influence purchasing decisions. This approach helps in understanding consumer behaviours and informing strategies for educational marketing to expand the market for organic dairy products. the findings reveal that Scottish consumers are primarily motivated by selfinterest factors, such as better taste and perceived safety, rather than altruistic reasons like ethical or environmental concerns. Whellams et.al (2007) worked on Corporate Decisions about Labelling Genetically Modified Foods, the paper examines whether individual companies have an ethical duty to label their Genetically Modified (GM) foods, given the prevailing consumer concerns and lack of government regulation. The study analyses the context in which GM foods are sold, including consumer apprehensions and the lack of market and governmental responses. It also considers the perspectives of consumer advocacy groups and activists who support GM food labelling, The paper finds no substantial evidence linking GM foods to health risks and acknowledges the significant market disadvantages and costs associated with voluntary labeling by individual companies. Popovic et.al (2019) work

on Factors Influencing Consumers' Decision to Purchase Food in Environmentally Friendly Packaging: What Do We Know and Where Do We Go from Here? The objective of the paper is to systematically review studies on the factors that influence consumer decisions to purchase food in environmentally friendly packaging, According to Singh et.al (2016) work on "Active packaging of food products: recent trends" The purpose of this paper is to review the recent trends in the development of active packaging (AP) for foods, The most up-to-date and pertinent studies within the literature have been included and summated in this paper, – Fresh foods are widely consumed and are becoming a major component of the international food market. During the last decades, the social and scientific modernization, the boom in customer's needs and demands, along with the major changes in the way food products are manufactured, distributed and retailed, led to the development of alternative or novel methods for the production and preservation of food products. Amarnatha et.al (2011) work on Rural Consumers' Attitude towards Branded Packaged Food Products. The purpose of this study is to find the factors behind the change of attitude of a rural consumer towards branded packaged food. The questionnaires based on the Food Choice Questionnaire (FCQ) are handed out to 100 rural respondents in order to investigate their motivation on branded packaged food choice. Mitul et.al (2012) work on Role of Packaging on Consumer Buying Behaviour–Patan District. - The aim of this article is to study the point towards role of packaging on consumer buying behaviour. The basic purpose of this it is to find out how such factors are behind the success of packaging. The data has been collected from 150 respondents through questioner where Response–145, non-response – 05. Betty (2018) work on packaging attributes and consumer buying behaviour of packaged foods in Kenya. The study helps to determine the effect of package graphics and colour on consumer's buying behaviour in Kenya. The data has been collected from 370 respondents through questioner which t provides the design of research, the target population, the sample size, sampling procedure and the data collection methods. Norton et.al (2022) work on Exploring Consumers' Understanding and Perception of Sustainable Food Packaging in the UK, the aim of this study is to investigate UK consumers' understanding, perception and preferences relating to sustainable food packaging and the impact, Data was collected through the use of questionnaire from 300

individuals. Kapoor et.al (2019) work on does packaging influence purchase decisions of food products? A study of young consumers of India. The aim of the study was to find out how young consumers attach importance to food packaging in their purchase decisions, the data was collected from 300 respondents. the present study has attempted to know how young consumers perceive functional attributes of packaging, and how food packaging influences their food purchase choices. Zdenka et.al (2020) work on the impact of packaging on consumer behavior in the private label market – the case of Slovak consumers under 25 years of age. This paper aims to find out the influence of packaging on consumer purchasing decisions in the yoghurt segment. the data was collected from 549 respondents the paper focused on the issue of private labels, their perception by the young generation of Slovak consumers (under 25), and, in particular, on the impact of packaging on the purchasing decisions of consumers under the age of 25 in the dairy segment. Langley et.al (2021) worked on The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Food Packaging and Consumers. This research focuses on consumer perceptions of the role of packaging and on-pack labelling in reducing household food waste, the data was collected through secondary or primary both with 37 respondents. The results of the studies show consumers are unlikely to consider food packaging or reducing food waste as a primary motivation in their food purchasing decisions. The studies also show reducing packaging, including plastic packaging, is seen as more important than reducing food waste. Honkanen et.al (2006) work on Ethical values and motives driving organic food choice the objective of this study was to examine the role of ethical motives in influencing consumers' choice of organic food among Norwegian adults, self-administered questionnaire was conducted with a sample of 1,283 Norwegian adults. A structural equation model (SEM) was used to analyse the relationships between ethical food choice motives, attitudes, and the intention to consume organic food, these factors had a significant positive influence on attitudes toward organic food, indicating that those concerned with these issues were more likely to adopt positive attitudes and intentions toward consuming organic products. Patel et.al (2017) work on Ready to eat Food Perception, Food Preferences and Food Choice: A Theoretical Discussion. The study points out what are the factors affect food perception, preferences and thereby try to explain the many reasons for differing food choice and preferences, it also aim to give

a general overview over factors affecting ready to eat food choice and the actual decision-making process used for food preference and choice. Bhattacharya et.al (2022) work on Consumers' Perception About Front of Package Food Labels (FOPL) in India: A Survey of 14 States. The objective of the study was to understanding of the consumers' knowledge on different types of FOPL label practiced across the world was determined and the data was collected through secondary data. Saida et.al (2014) work on Assessing Consumers' Perception, Knowledge and Religiosity on Malaysia's Halal Food Products. The aim of the study was the factors that could influence consumers' perception towards Malaysia Halal food products. the data was collected from 740 respondents. The findings indicate that different nationalities have different perception towards Malaysia Malaysia's Halal food products. Samoggia et.al (2021) work on Price Fairness of Processed Tomato Agro-Food Chain: The Italian Consumers' Perception Perspective. The current study aims at exploring consumers' perception and understanding of price fairness, focusing on the processed tomato products agro-food chain. the data was collected from 832 respondents. The current study analysed consumers' perception of fair price distribution and how consumers perceive the concept of fairness in the processed tomato agro-food chain. Herrmann et.al (2022) worked on Consumers' sustainabilityrelated perception of and willingness-to-pay for food packaging alternatives. The aim of the study is are consumers willing to pay more for plastic alternatives in comparison to ordinary plastic packaging and how do these WTP rates relate to each other? the data was collected from 296 participants took part, 254 completed the survey. Rakesh, (2014), work on Impact of Demographic Factors on Consumer Behaviour- A Consumer Behaviour Survey in Himachal Pradesh. In this study there are various factor which affects consumer behaviour. As the change comes in these factors, consumer behaviour also changes. The demographic factors which affect consumer behavior are: (1) age (2) sex (3) marital status (4) income (5) family background (6) education (7) occupation (8) family size (9) geographic factors (10) psychological factors. Amirtha, et.al (2022) work on A study on buying behaviour of consumers towards Packaged food products (with reference to Chennai city) the study aims is to identify the predominant feature that affects the packaged food products. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire from 150

individuals. The findings of the study are marketplace largely depends on the convenience in purchasing at the marketplace along with the availability of additional services, the attraction for children, basic amenities and affordability. Amelie et.al (2020) work on Influence of Food and Beverage Companies on Retailer Marketing Strategies and Consumer Behaviour. The aim of the study is to describe how these retailer marketing strategies affect consumer purchasing behaviour and attitudes. the data was collected from secondary data. This research was supported by Healthy Eating Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Training support for A.A.H. was provided through the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future-Lerner Fellowship. Siddiqui et.al (2022) worked on Consumer behaviour towards nano packaging - A new trend in the food industry, Studies showed that consumer social and psychological factors influence directly or indirectly the application of nano packaging. Social norms, social concerns, and social media behaviour are the social factors that drive consumer behaviour. the data was collected from secondary data. Igor et.al (2019) work on Factors Influencing Consumers' Decision to Purchase Food in Environmentally Friendly Packaging: What Do We Know and Where Do We Go from Here? This study is: Which factors influence the consumers' decision to purchase food in environmentally friendly packaging, Data was collected through the use of questionnaire from primary data. The purpose of this paper was to present a systematic literature review of all studies on the predictors of consumer food purchasing in environmentally friendly packaging published in the period 1994–2019. Raquel et.al (2020) work on The Link between the Consumer and the Innovations in Food Product Development. The objective of this review was to explore some aspects related to the role of consumer in the development of new foods, the factors that determine consumers' acceptance, the innovation in traditional products, the increasing market of novel healthy foods and willingness-to-pay for innovations in food product development. the data was collected from secondary data, The study of consumer behaviour and attitudes towards new foods encompasses multiple aspects, such as preference, choice, desire to eat certain foods, buying intentions and frequency of consumption. Additionally, both the consumers' willingness to purchase and the willingness to pay a premium are important in NPD, launching and success. Waheed et.al (2018) work on Product Packaging and Consumer Purchase

Intentions, the aim of the study is to measure the effect of product packaging (i.e. packaging colour, packaging material, font style, packaging design and printed information) on consumer purchase intentions. The sample size for the study was 278 comprising a response rate of 95%. The results also indicate that product packaging has a significant effect on consumer purchase intentions. It was also found that packaging material has the strongest influence on consumer purchase intentions followed by packaging colour, font style, packaging design and printed information. According to Deakin, (2011) work on “consumers find food labels confusing and too small to read” The aim of this research was to determine whether consumers are able to read and understand food labels, A structured interview was conducted during September 2009 with 176 consumers from across section of the population. Consumers, from teenagers to pensioners, were interviewed in a variety of locations including a town centre, a cafe, a supermarket, a commercial workplace, a leisure centre and a fast-food restaurant, it was concluded that the majority of consumers try to lead a healthy lifestyle and eat a healthy diet but find food labels confusing and too small to read. Educational material with an integral magnifying glass may assist consumers in making healthier food choices. Soyoung, et.al (2016) worked on Consumers’ Attitude toward Sustainable Food Products: Ingredients vs. Packaging. it is important to focus not only on the eco-friendly ingredients but also on the eco-friendly packaging because packaging has recently been found to be a primary cause of pollution. the data was collected from 302 respondents. this article investigated the interaction between the effect of consumers’ willingness to buy, the price premium for eco-friendliness (internal: eco-friendly ingredients vs. external: eco-friendly packaging), and the product’s attributes, Jeżewska-Zychowicz et.al (2015) work on consumers’ behaviours related to packaging and their attitudes towards environment, The aim of the research was to establish the relationship between the attitude of consumers towards the environment and their behaviours when choosing food products taking into consideration their packaging, Questionnaire study was carried out in 2010 within 548 adults from Warsaw, findings suggest that consumers are generally not very aware of various factors that have significant impact on the environment. Ageliki et.al (2020) work on Investigating Food Packaging Elements from a Consumer’s Perspective, this study aims to identify and evaluate packaging elements

in the food industry, taking into account various business areas/disciplines. The research was conducted with a sample of 1219 customers. The findings are informed by the consumer attitudes and predispositions towards packaging, thus having useful managerial applications., Asnate et.al (2019) worked on consumer awareness and attitudes towards active and intelligent packaging systems in the Latvian market, The main objective of every packaging design is to protect food from damage and contamination and extend storage time. It provides information (graphics, labels), protection (quality, safety, freshness), isolation (product hold) and practicality or utility. However, there are many other obscure strengths of packaging, which can be beneficial for both the manufacturer and the consumer. A survey was conducted to study consumer awareness and attitudes towards active and intelligent packaging and their introduction in the Latvian market. 865 respondents from different region, the results show that the majority of respondents have insufficient knowledge and understanding about smart packaging. Muizniece et.al (2011) worked on consumers knowledge and attitude to traditional and environmentally friendly food packaging materials in market of Latvia, the aim of food packaging is to contain the food, to protect food products from external influences and damage, to preserve food safety and minimize the environmental impact, 1200 respondents have been taken for sample size. Most of consumers in Latvia consider too much polymer packaging applied for food products. 82% of respondents in Latvia support the idea of new eco-friendly food packaging implementation, nevertheless only small part of consumers agrees to pay more for environment protection from used packaging. The packaging protects the product within. It protects the product from physical damage like striking, soaking, and bruising. Packaging ensures that the product reaches the consumer in the most cost-effective manner feasible while also making storage easier. Another important job is to make it easy for the consumer to choose and use the information it contains. The weight, price, production date, use by date, ingredients, name of manufacturer business, and usage information printed on the container provide significant ease to both the seller and the consumer. Packaging may notify the consumer about all of the product's features. It's almost the "tongue" of the product. According to Ogba et.al (2010) packaging does affect the product preferences

of children. Also, children are particularly interested in influencing the purchase of unhealthy foods.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To Study truthfulness in marketing effects on customer trust and a company's image.
2. To Identify the main issues companies, facing while trying to balance between money and being fair.
3. To Explore what extent the customers feedback impacts ethical marketing and business success.

HYPOTHESES:

1. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between being truthful in marketing and gaining customer trust and reputation.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between being truthful in marketing and gaining customer trust and reputation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

a. Research design:

The study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative method to gather data with the help of primary data through questionnaire and as well as secondary data through magazines, articles and many more sites.

b. Sample, sampling size:

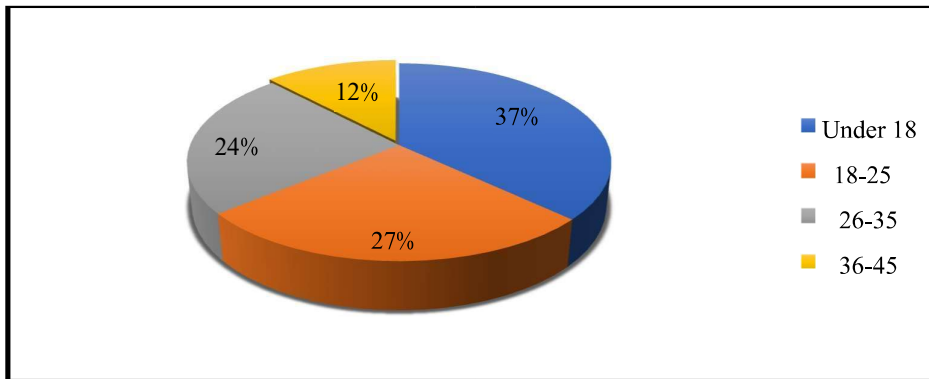
The collection of the study will be taken from Tripura and sampling is collected through random sampling. The study is based on primary and secondary data. The secondary data will be collected from internet, articles, advertisement and many more and the primary data is be collected through questionnaire from 100 respondents.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

1. Age group of the respondents

AGE GROUP	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Under 18	37	37%
18-25	27	27%
25-35	24	24%
35-45	12	12%

Source: primary data



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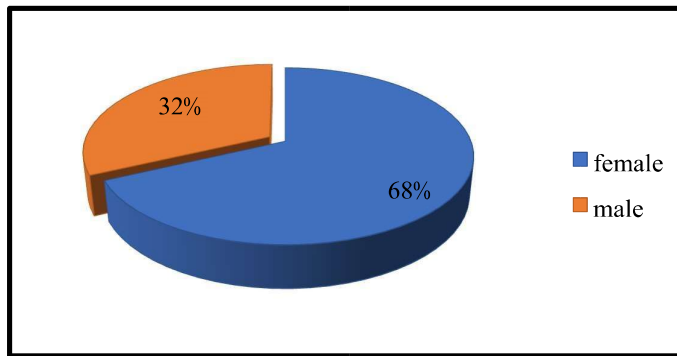
compiled from self-made questionnaire

According to the study there are 37% of people whose age group is below 27, 37% of people whose age group is 18-25, 24% of people whose age group is 25-35 and 12% of people whose age group is 35-45 who have responded to this survey.

2. Gender of the respondents

Gender:	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Female	68	68%
Male	32	32%

Source: primary data



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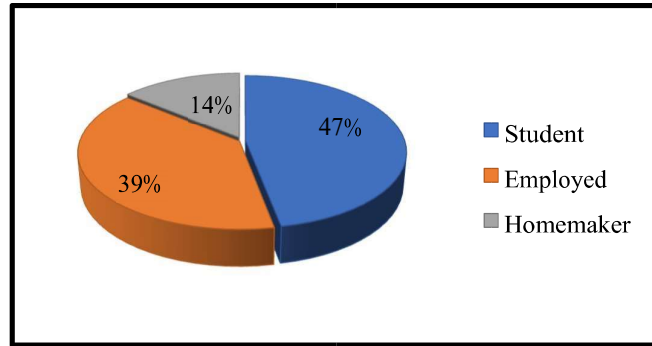
compiled from self-made questionnaire

The percentage of respondents by gender is displayed in the above diagram. According to the study 68% are female and 32% are male who have responded to this survey.

3. Occupation of the respondents

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Student	47	47%
Employed	39	39%
Homemaker	14	14%

Source: primary data



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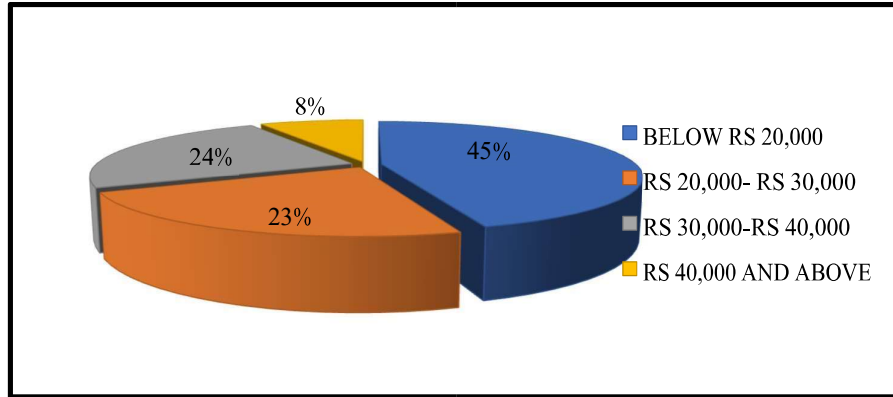
compiled from self-made questionnaire

The above graph indicates that 47% of respondents are students, 39% are employed, and 14% are home makers. This information helps us to understand about the occupation of the respondent in this survey.

4. Monthly income of the respondent

MONTHLY INCOME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
BELOW RS 20,000	45	45%
RS 20,000- RS 30,000	23	23%
RS 30,000-RS 40,000	24	24%
RS 40,000 AND ABOVE	8	8%

Source: primary data



Source: compiled

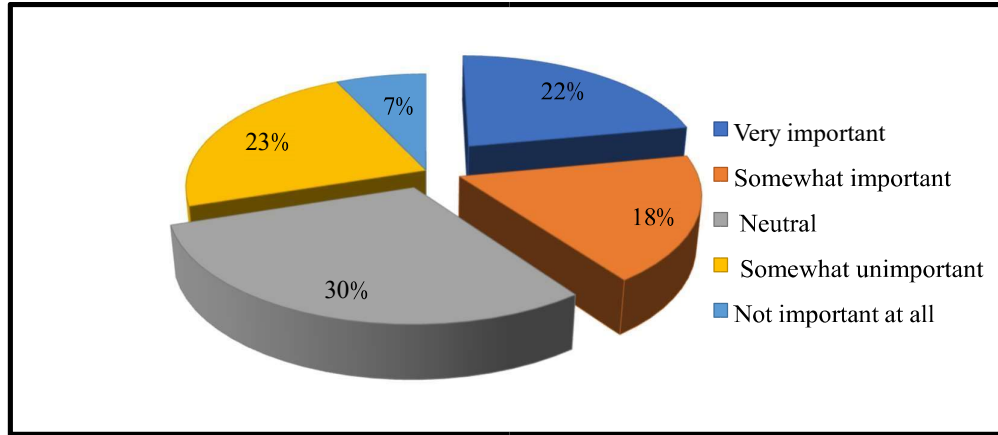
from self-made questionnaire

According to the survey out of 100 respondents 45% family income are below Rs 20,000, 23% family income are between Rs 20,000-30,000, 24% are between Rs 30,000-40,000 and 23% of the family income are Rs 40,000 and above.

5. How important that packaged food companies provide clear and truthful information about their products?

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very important	22	22%
Somewhat important	18	18%
Neutral	30	30%
Somewhat unimportant	23	23%
Not important at all	7	7%

Source: primary data



Source:

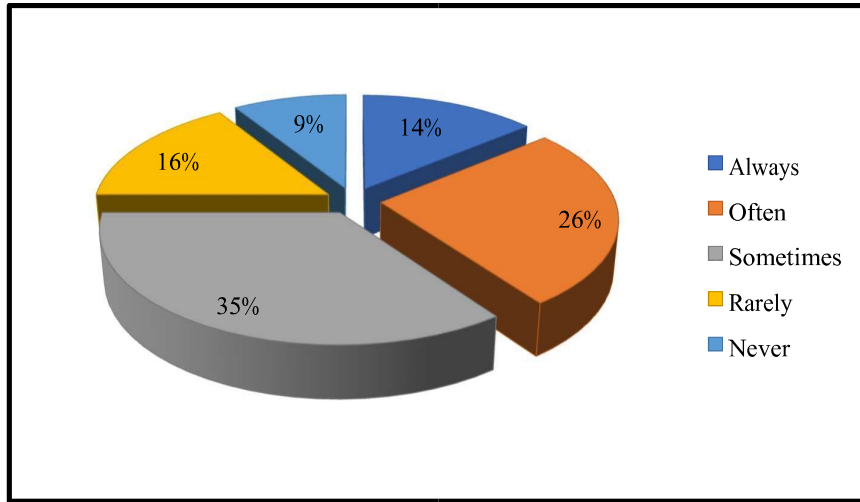
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According to the survey out of 100 respondents 22 respondents are agree with the facts that it's very important that packaged food companies provide clear and truthful information about their products.

6. How often do you feel that packaged food marketing accurately represents the product inside?

PARTICULAR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Always	14	14%
Often	26	26%
Sometimes	35	35%
Rarely	16	16%
Never	9	9%

Source: primary data



Source: compiled

from self-made questionnaire

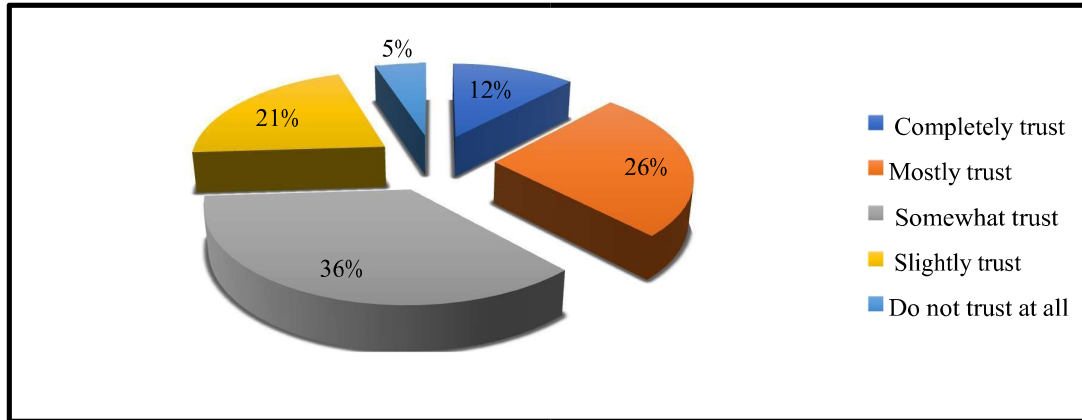
According to the survey out of 100 respondents 14% respondents always feel that packaged food marketing accurately represents the product inside, 26% often, 35% sometimes, 16% rarely, 9% never.

7. How much do you trust the nutritional information provided on packaged food labels?

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Completely trust	12	12%
Mostly trust	26	26%
Somewhat trust	36	36%

Slightly trust	21	21%
Do not trust at all	5	5%

Source: primary data



Source: compiled

from self-made questionnaire

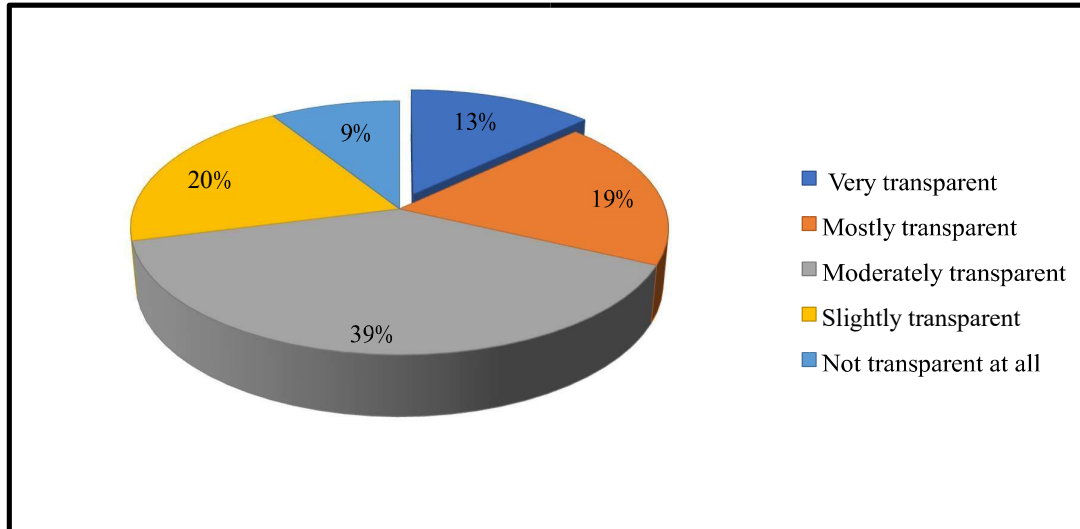
According to the survey out of 100 12% respondents trust the nutritional information provided on packaged food labels, 26% mostly trust, 36% somewhat trust, 21% and 5% slightly trust and don't trust at all.

8. How transparent do you find the marketing claims on packaged food products?

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very transparent	13	13%
Mostly transparent	19	19%
Moderately transparent	39	39%
Slightly transparent	20	20%

Not transparent at all	9	9%
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Source: primary data



Reference

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