



Youth dependency on FMCG food products and green marketing-driven transformation in India

Dr. Baldeva Ram¹ and Preeti Mishra^{2*}

¹ Assistant Professor, Moti Ram Babu Ram Government Post Graduate College, Haldwani, Uttarakhand, India

² Research Scholar, Moti Ram Babu Ram Government Post Graduate College, Haldwani, Uttarakhand, India

*Corresponding Author: Preeti Mishra

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Abstract

The increasing dependency of youth on Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) food products reflects significant changes in lifestyle, consumption patterns, and market dynamics in India. Alongside this trend, green marketing has emerged as an important strategy adopted by FMCG companies to promote environmentally responsible consumption and contribute to sustainable development. This study examines youth dependency on FMCG food products and analyses how green marketing practices are influencing consumption behaviour and driving market transformation in rural and urban areas of Uttarakhand. The research is descriptive and quantitative in nature and is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to youth respondents from selected rural and urban regions of Uttarakhand. A stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure balanced representation of both areas. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean scores, and comparative analysis were used to assess consumption frequency, dependency levels, awareness of green marketing practices, and their influence on purchase decisions.

The findings reveal a high level of dependency on FMCG food products among youth, with urban respondents exhibiting greater consumption frequency compared to rural youth. Green marketing elements such as eco-friendly packaging, organic ingredients, and environmental claims significantly influence youth purchase behaviour, particularly in urban areas. The study highlights noticeable rural–urban differences in awareness and perception of green marketing initiatives. The findings provide useful insights for marketers and policymakers to design effective green marketing strategies and promote sustainable consumption among Indian youth.

Keywords: Youth dependency, FMCG food products, Green marketing, Consumer behaviour, Rural–urban differences, Sustainable consumption, Uttarakhand

Introduction

India has witnessed rapid socio-economic transformation over the past two decades, leading to significant changes in consumption patterns, especially among the youth population. Youth, defined broadly as individuals aged between 15 and 29 years, constitute a major demographic segment in India and play a crucial role in shaping market demand and consumer trends. One of the most noticeable shifts in youth consumption behaviour is the increasing dependency on Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) food products such as packaged snacks, instant noodles, ready-to-eat meals, soft drinks, and packaged dairy products. Several factors have contributed to this growing dependency, including urbanisation, changing family structures, increased participation of women in education and employment, rising disposable incomes, exposure to mass media, and the fast-paced lifestyle of modern society. FMCG food products are perceived as convenient, time-saving, affordable, and easily accessible, making them particularly attractive to youth in both rural and urban areas. However, this rising dependency has also raised concerns related to health, nutrition, environmental sustainability, and

long-term consumer well-being. In response to growing environmental awareness and sustainability concerns, FMCG companies have increasingly adopted green marketing strategies. Green marketing refers to the promotion of products and practices that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and sustainable in nature. In the FMCG food sector, green marketing initiatives often include eco-friendly packaging, reduced plastic usage, recyclable materials, organic and natural ingredients, energy-efficient production processes, and environmental claims communicated through labels and advertisements. Uttarakhand, a Himalayan state with a unique mix of rural and urban characteristics, provides an important context for studying youth consumption behaviour and green marketing influence. The state exhibits sharp contrasts between its urban centres such as Dehradun and Haldwani and its rural and hilly regions, where access, awareness, and purchasing power vary considerably. Understanding how youth in these diverse settings respond to FMCG food products and green marketing initiatives is essential for designing region-specific marketing strategies and public policies. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to examine the level of dependency of

youth on FMCG food products and to analyse the role of green marketing practices in influencing youth consumption behaviour in rural and urban areas of Uttarakhand.

Review of literature

The burgeoning consumption of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) food products among youth has drawn significant academic attention in recent years, particularly within emerging economies like India where rapid urbanization, increasing disposable income, and lifestyle transformation have reshaped market dynamics (Kumar & Saini, 2021) [4]. FMCG products—characterized by frequent purchase, low cost, and high turnover—have become integral to modern consumption patterns, especially among adolescents and young adults who value convenience and time efficiency. Studies have highlighted that youth, owing to influences such as peer behaviour, media exposure, and digital marketing, tend to exhibit higher dependency on packaged and ready-to-eat products compared to older demographics (Singh & Yadav, 2020) [11]. This trend is particularly pronounced in urban contexts where access to organized retail formats and online platforms further accelerates consumption frequency. Several researchers have explored the rural–urban dichotomy in consumer behaviour, illustrating that urban consumers generally demonstrate higher consumption levels, greater brand awareness, and stronger preference for packaged goods than rural consumers (Sharma & Gupta, 2019) [9]. Rural areas, though increasingly integrated into mainstream markets, often display more price-sensitive and traditional consumption patterns, influenced by cultural norms and limited exposure to organized retail. Nonetheless, the influence of FMCG markets has steadily expanded into rural regions, driven by improved supply chains, increased advertising reach, and rising aspirations among youth (Raut & Nandan, 2018) [8]. Parallel to the growth in FMCG consumption, green marketing has emerged as a salient strategy adopted by companies seeking to align products with environmental sustainability and social responsibility. Green marketing involves promoting products based on their eco-friendly attributes—such as recyclable packaging, organic ingredients, reduced carbon footprint, and ethical sourcing—which appeals to environmentally conscious consumers (Peattie & Crane, 2005) [7]. Literature suggests that green marketing not only enhances brand image but also stimulates demand among certain consumer segments, particularly educated and younger cohorts who are more environmentally aware (D'Souza, Taghian & Khosla, 2007) [2]. Youth are increasingly sensitive to sustainability issues, often integrating environmental concerns into their consumption choices (Biswas & Roy, 2015) [1]. Empirical studies emphasize that awareness of green attributes and environmental claims significantly shapes purchase intentions. For instance, Biswas and Roy (2015) [1] noted that eco-labels and organic certifications positively influence consumer perception and willingness to pay a premium. Similarly, Nair and Paulose (2020) [5] found that Indian millennials show stronger preference for eco-labeled products, driven by health

consciousness and environmental ethics. However, rural consumers typically display lower green awareness due to informational constraints and economic priorities, although exposure to media campaigns is gradually increasing this awareness (Khan & Chowdhury, 2022) [3]. Within the Indian context, several studies have investigated green marketing's impact on FMCG consumption. Singh and Verma (2021) [10] revealed that urban consumers in metropolitan cities are more responsive to green marketing initiatives compared to those in smaller towns. Conversely, research by Patel and Sharma (2023) [6] indicates a growing trend among rural youth toward eco-friendly products, though adoption rates remain lower relative to urban counterparts. The existing literature underscores two critical themes relevant to the present study: first, that youth consumption of FMCG food products is shaped by socio-economic and lifestyle variables, with marked rural–urban differences; second, that green marketing elements significantly influence consumer behaviour, particularly among younger and urban populations. Nevertheless, gaps remain in empirical understanding of these phenomena within specific regional contexts such as Nainital district of Uttarakhand, where socio-cultural landscapes intersect with evolving market structures. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the literature by bridging these gaps through an empirical examination of youth dependency on FMCG food products and the role of green marketing practices in a mixed rural–urban setting.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the level of dependency of youth on FMCG food products in rural and urban areas of Uttarakhand.
- To analyse the frequency and patterns of FMCG food product consumption among youth.
- To assess the level of awareness of green marketing practices among youth respondents.
- To examine the influence of green marketing elements on youth purchase decisions.
- To compare rural and urban youth perceptions regarding green marketing initiatives of FMCG companies.

Research methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine youth dependency on Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) food products and to analyse the influence of green marketing practices on consumption behaviour in rural and urban areas of Nainital district of Uttarakhand. The descriptive approach is appropriate as it enables systematic description of existing consumption patterns, awareness levels, and behavioural responses of youth toward green marketing initiatives. The quantitative method facilitates statistical measurement and objective comparison between rural and urban respondents.

The study area comprises selected rural villages and urban centres such as Haldwani and Nainital, which represent a mix of traditional and modern market environments. The target population includes youth aged 18–30 years residing in these

areas. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure balanced representation of both rural and urban youth. The population was divided into two strata—rural and urban—and respondents were selected proportionately from each group. A total sample size of 200 respondents was considered adequate to ensure reliability and meaningful comparative analysis.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of close-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into sections covering demographic profile, frequency of FMCG food consumption, level of dependency on packaged food products, awareness of green marketing concepts, and the influence of green marketing elements such as eco-friendly packaging, organic ingredients, and environmental claims on purchase decisions. A five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” was used to measure perceptions and attitudes. Before final administration, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of respondents to ensure clarity, consistency, and reliability.

Secondary data were gathered from research journals, government publications, industry reports, and academic literature related to FMCG markets and green marketing practices. The collected data were analyzed using statistical

tools such as percentage analysis, mean score calculation, and comparative analysis to identify rural–urban differences in dependency and awareness levels. Tabular representations were used for clear interpretation. This methodological framework ensures systematic evaluation of youth consumption behaviour and provides empirical insights into the role of green marketing in shaping sustainable consumption patterns in Nainital district.

Data analysis and interpretation

The data analysis is based on responses collected from 200 youth respondents (100 rural and 100 urban) from Nainital district of Uttarakhand. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean score analysis, and comparative analysis were applied to examine FMCG dependency and the influence of green marketing practices.

Table 1: Demographic profile

Category	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Total (%)
Male	52	55	53.5
Female	48	45	46.5
Age(18-24)	60	65	62.5
Age(25-30)	40	35	37.5

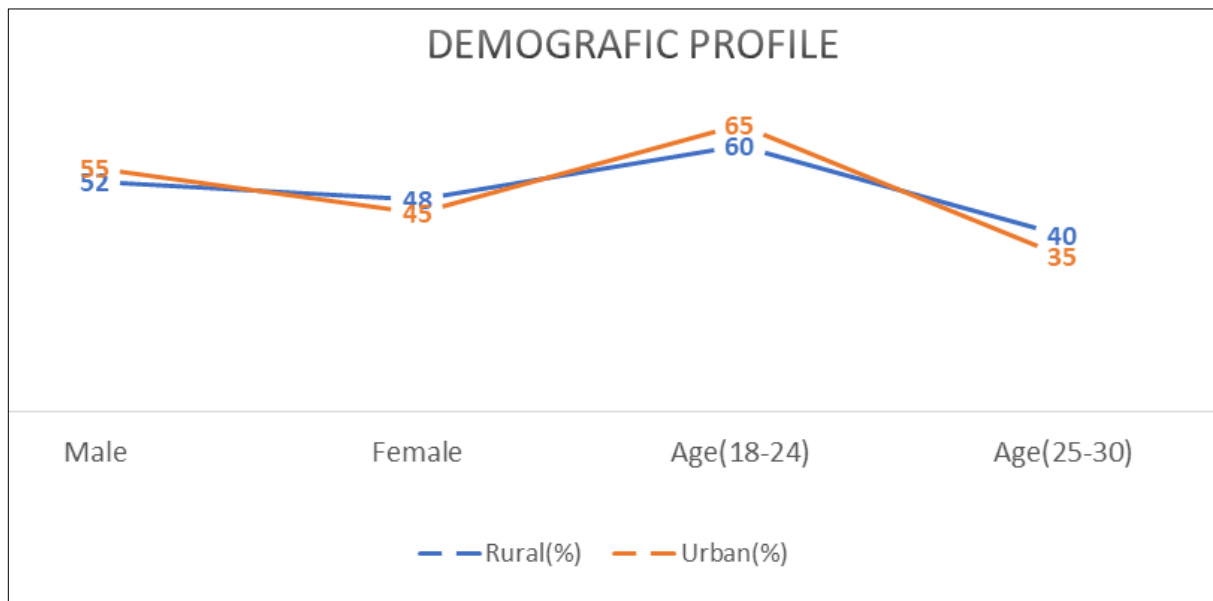


Fig 1

Interpretation: The majority of respondents belong to the 18–24 age group, indicating higher FMCG consumption among

college-going and early working youth. Gender distribution is balanced, ensuring representativeness.

Table 2: Frequency of FMCG Food Consumption

Frequency	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Daily	38	62
Weekly	42	28
Occasionally	20	10

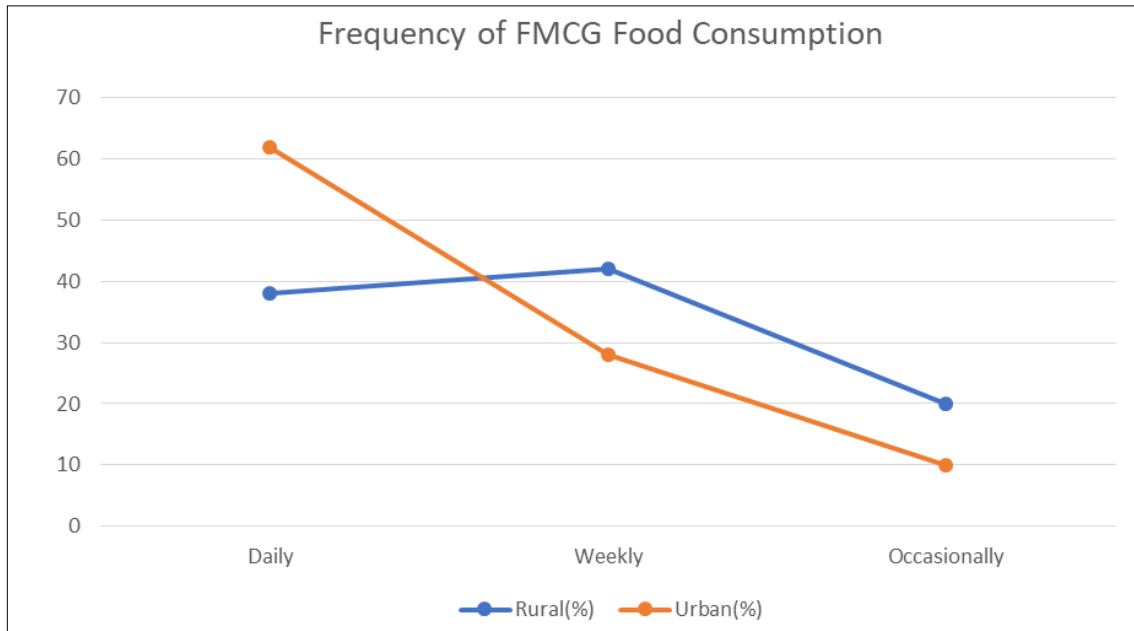


Fig 2

Interpretation: Urban youth show significantly higher daily consumption (62%) compared to rural youth (38%). Rural respondents consume FMCG food products mainly on a weekly basis. This indicates stronger dependency in urban areas due to lifestyle changes, exposure to retail chains, and busy schedules.

Table 3: Level of Dependency on FMCG Food Products (Mean Score on 5-point scale)

Area	Mean Score
Rural	3.42
Urban	4.18

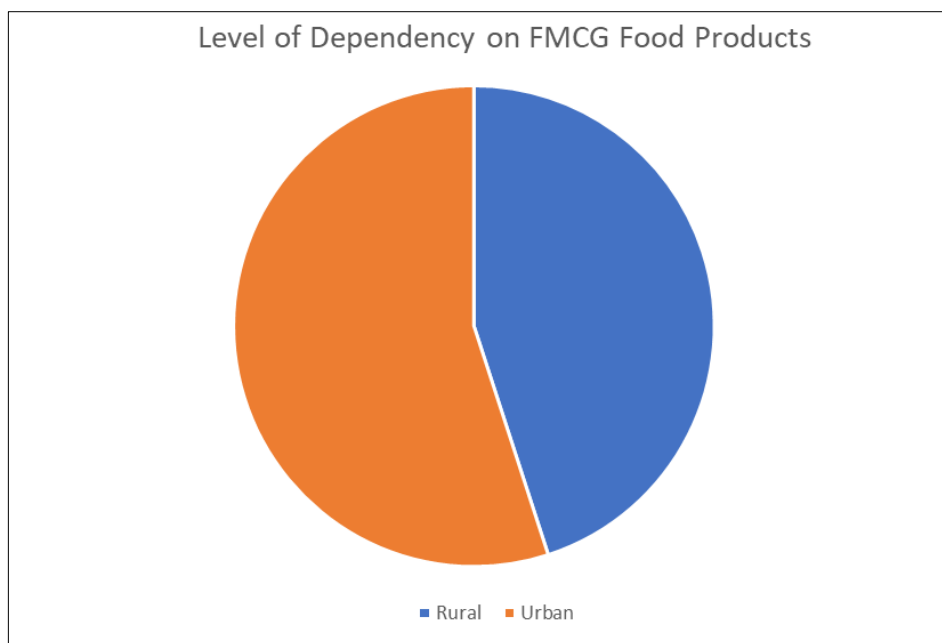


Fig 3

Interpretation: The mean score for urban youth (4.18) is higher than rural youth (3.42), indicating greater reliance on packaged and ready-to-eat food products in urban centres like Haldwani and Nainital. Urban lifestyle patterns, higher disposable income, and availability of branded products contribute to this difference.

Table 4: Awareness of Green Marketing Practices

Awareness level	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
High	30	58
Moderate	44	32
Low	26	10

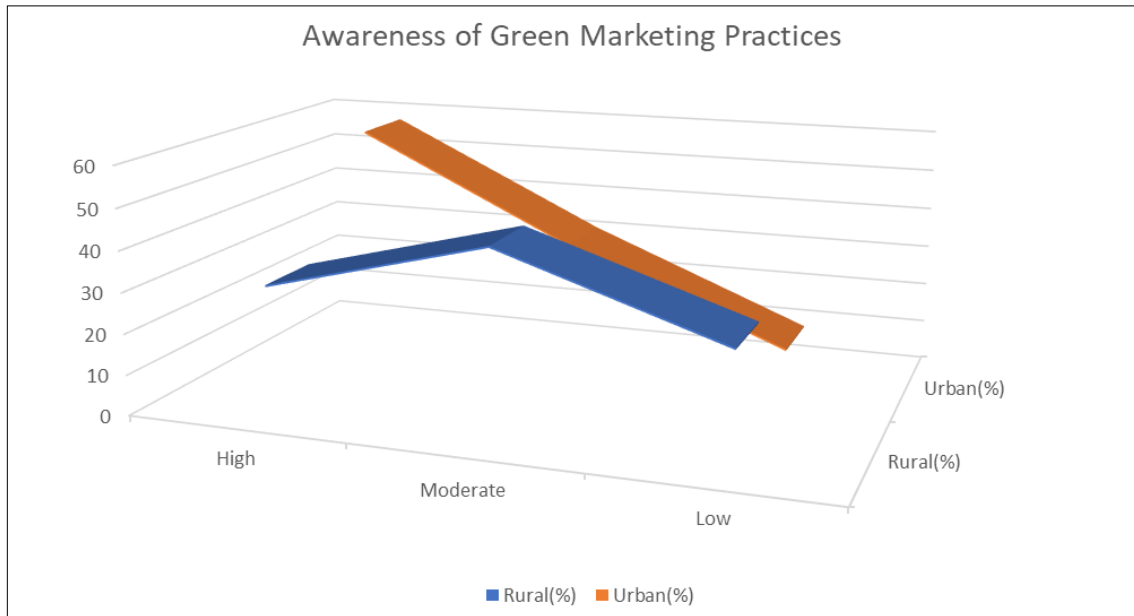


Fig 4

Interpretation: Urban respondents demonstrate higher awareness (58%) of eco-friendly packaging, organic labels, and sustainability claims. Rural youth show moderate awareness

(44%), suggesting limited exposure to environmental campaigns and digital marketing.

Table 5: Influence of Green Marketing Elements on Purchase Decision

(Mean Scores)

Green marketing factors	Rural	Urban
Eco-friendly packaging	3.20	4.05
Organic ingredients	3.55	4.30
Environmental claims	3.10	3.95

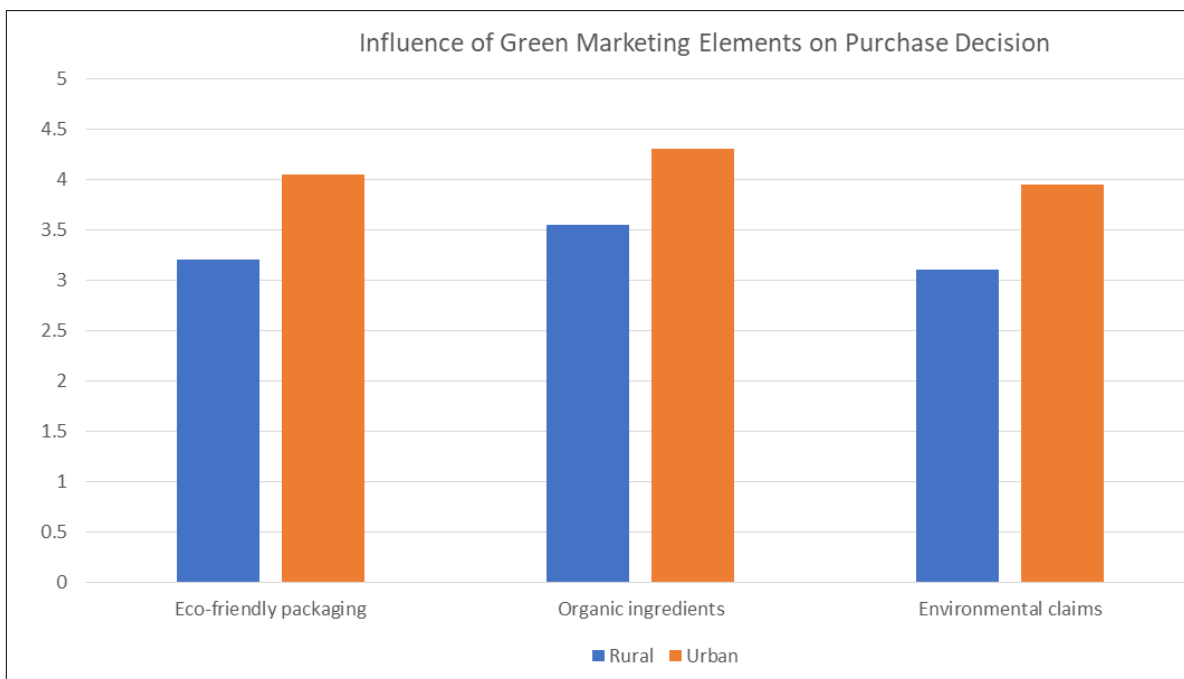


Fig 5

Interpretation: Organic ingredients receive the highest mean score in both rural (3.55) and urban (4.30) areas, showing that health consciousness is a major purchase driver. Urban youth

are more influenced by eco-friendly packaging and environmental branding. This confirms that green marketing strategies have stronger behavioural impact in urban markets.

Findings of the study

Based on the quantitative analysis of 200 youth respondents from Nainital district of Uttarakhand, the following major findings were derived:

1. High dependency on FMCG food products

The study reveals that youth in both rural and urban areas show considerable dependency on FMCG food products. However, urban youth exhibit a significantly higher level of daily consumption compared to rural youth. This indicates that changing lifestyles, time constraints, and exposure to modern retail formats are increasing reliance on packaged and ready-to-eat food items.

2. Rural–urban consumption gap

There is a clear rural–urban difference in consumption frequency. Urban respondents from areas such as Haldwani and Nainital demonstrate greater consumption frequency and stronger brand preference than rural youth. Rural respondents consume FMCG food products more on a weekly or occasional basis.

3. Greater awareness of green marketing in urban areas

Urban youth show higher awareness of green marketing concepts such as eco-friendly packaging, organic labelling, and environmental claims. Rural youth display moderate awareness, suggesting limited exposure to sustainability campaigns and digital advertisements.

4. Significant influence of green marketing on purchase behaviour

Green marketing elements significantly influence youth purchasing decisions. Among all factors, organic ingredients emerged as the most influential determinant in both rural and urban areas, reflecting increasing health consciousness among youth. Eco-friendly packaging and environmental claims have a stronger impact in urban markets.

5. Positive attitude towards sustainable consumption

A majority of respondents expressed a positive attitude toward environmentally responsible products. Urban youth are more willing to prefer green-labelled products even at slightly higher prices, while rural youth are comparatively price-sensitive.

6. Market transformation through green strategies

The findings suggest that green marketing practices adopted by FMCG companies are gradually transforming consumer behaviour in Nainital district. Urban markets are responding faster to sustainability initiatives, whereas rural markets show potential for future growth.

Discussion

The present study examined youth dependency on FMCG food products and the role of green marketing practices in shaping consumption behaviour in Nainital district of Uttarakhand. The findings reveal significant rural–urban differences, which can be interpreted in light of socio-economic and market exposure

variations. First, the higher dependency of urban youth on FMCG food products supports the argument that urbanization, fast-paced lifestyles, higher disposable income, and easy access to supermarkets and branded outlets increase packaged food consumption. Urban centres such as Haldwani and Nainital provide greater exposure to organized retail and digital advertising, which further strengthens brand influence and habitual consumption patterns. Second, the study confirms that green marketing practices significantly influence youth purchase behaviour, particularly in urban areas. Factors such as organic ingredients, eco-friendly packaging, and environmental claims received higher mean scores among urban respondents. This suggests growing environmental awareness and health consciousness among educated youth. Rural youth also showed a positive inclination toward organic ingredients; however, price sensitivity and limited awareness reduced the overall impact of green marketing strategies. Third, the noticeable rural–urban gap in awareness highlights the uneven diffusion of sustainability campaigns. While urban youth are more exposed to environmental discourse through social media and academic institutions, rural youth have comparatively limited access to such information channels. This indicates the need for localized awareness programs and community-based green marketing initiatives.

Overall, the discussion suggests that green marketing is not only influencing purchase decisions but also contributing to gradual behavioural transformation toward sustainable consumption among youth.

Conclusion

The study concludes that youth dependency on FMCG food products is significantly high in Nainital district, with urban youth demonstrating greater consumption frequency and stronger brand attachment than rural youth. Lifestyle changes, convenience, and market accessibility are key drivers of this dependency. Green marketing practices play a crucial role in influencing youth purchase behaviour. Organic ingredients, eco-friendly packaging, and environmental claims positively affect decision-making, particularly among urban respondents. The research confirms significant rural–urban differences in both dependency levels and awareness of sustainability initiatives. The findings highlight that FMCG companies can strengthen sustainable consumption by expanding green marketing strategies, especially in rural areas through awareness campaigns and affordable eco-friendly products. Policymakers can also support environmental education programs to enhance responsible consumption patterns.

In conclusion, green marketing is emerging as an effective tool for market transformation and sustainable development among Indian youth, while the rural market of Uttarakhand presents promising opportunities for future expansion.

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