

Purchasing Pattern Of Processed Foods And Awareness About Food Labelling Among Working And Non-Working Women

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Abstract:- Food consumption pattern in India is rapidly changing from unprocessed, unbranded low quality food products to the processed, packaged products. About 200 working and 200 non-working women were selected by convenience sampling method from Nagpur City, Maharashtra, India. The data on purchasing of processed food and reading food labels was collected using interview cum questionnaire method. The results of the study showed that the average age of working women was 39.39 + 6.15 years and non-working women was 38.36 + 5.7 years. The average monthly income of working and non-working women was Rs.38,12 + 19,55 and Rs. 40,62 + 20,82 respectively. There are multiple factors that affect the consumers' behaviour towards the purchasing of processed foods. Children (21.4%) were the major users in working women category whereas all the family members (26.7%) were the major consumers of processed food from non-working women category. TV/Radio/Internet (media) were the main source of information that affect purchasing of processed food in both working (37.6%) and non-working (37.8%) women category. Overall quality was the main factor considered by both working (36%) and non-working (40.9%) women while purchasing processed food. The highest consumption of processed food was found to be for special occasions in both working (21.9%) and non-working (20.4%) women. The majority of non-working (29.5%) women preferred to buy the processed food from super store whereas majority of working women (27.3%) preferred to buy processed food from local *kirana* shop. Most of the respondents read food labels before purchasing processed food in both working (49.6%) and non-working (49.6%) women. Health reasons were the major motivating factor for both working (28.3%) and non-working (29.8%) women. The major reason for not reading food labels was the trust of the buyers on the brand/outlet for both working (22.7%) and non-working (25%) women. Expiry date was the most read component of the food label for both working (43.5%) and non-working (43.2%) women. The small fonts (and hence difficulty in reading) was the major difficulty faced by both working (22.2%) and non-working (24.2%) women in reading the labels.

Keywords-*Non-working Women, Labelling, Processed food, Purchasing, Working Women,*

I. INTRODUCTION

Today's consumer is becoming more and more demanding about what he is consuming, what quality of food he is getting and how safe it is for his and his family's consumption (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). Consumers have a right to expect that the foods they purchase and consume will be safe and of high quality. Increasing urbanization, dynamic lifestyle changes and increasing number of working women and nuclear families are changing the global setting for the food industry. Shift in economic power and demographics are expected to change consumers' food preferences and lead to the evolution of the global food supply chains. This trend is resulting in greater consumer expectations with regards to safety, quality, integrity and traceability of food across all emerging economies [1]. Food consumption pattern in India is rapidly changing from unprocessed, unbranded low quality food products to the processed, packaged products [2]. The behavior of consumers on purchasing of branded processed food. Variables considered were brand attributes, brand endorsement, brand equity, ethical concerns and demography. They found that trust and safety are the two vital parameters driving consumers towards brands [3]. Even though there are other parameter influencing consumers but trust and safety creates long-lasting influence on consumer mind. Though several scientists [4-17] have carried out studies on processed foods and food labelling however there are negligible studies carried out in Central India on purchasing pattern and awareness about food labelling particularly with reference to working and non working women. Hence the present study was proposed to be carried out in Nagpur city.

II. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To study the socio-economic conditions of working and non-working women in Nagpur city.
- 2.2 To assess the purchasing pattern of processed food of working and non-working women of Nagpur city.

2.3 To study the awareness of food labelling among working and non-working women of Nagpur city.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Nagpur City, Maharashtra, India. About 200 working and non-working women each were selected by judgmental sampling method. The working women were selected from schools, colleges, hospitals and different institutions. The non-working women were selected from kitty parties, temples, gardens etc. The questionnaire cum interview method was used to elicit information. A structured questionnaire was developed to assess the socio-economic conditions, purchasing pattern of processed food products and awareness of food labelling. The data was collected by personal questionnaire method. Data was tabulated and was analyzed statistically using SPSS version 17. Mean, Standard Deviation and Chi square test were computed and the Confidence Interval was 95%.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are discussed below.

4.1 Demographic profile

The demographic profiles of working and non-working women under study are discussed below.

Table 4.1
Demographic Profile of working and nonworking women

Demographic Parameters	Category	Number of Consumers		
		Working N= 200	Non-working N =200	Total
Age(Years)	30-35	63(31.5)	71(35.5)	134
	36 - 40	59(29.5)	70(35.0)	129
	41 - 45	39(19.5)	30(15.0)	69
	46 - 50	39(19.5)	29(14.5)	68
Mean Age M + SD	39.39 +6.1		38.36 + 5.7	
Qualification	Undergraduate	14(7.0)	5(2.5)	19
	Graduate	28(14.0)	68(34.0)	96
	Graduate+	54(27.0)	33(16.5)	87
	Post Graduate	38(19.0)	69(34.5)	107
	Post Graduate+	66(33.0)	25(12.5)	91
Family Type	Nuclear	99(49.5)	84(42.0)	183
	Joint	101(50.5)	116(58.0)	217
Family Size	1- 4 members	130(65.0)	105(52.5)	235
	5 -10 members	69(34.5)	91(45.5)	160
	Above 10 members	1(0.5)	4(2.0)	5
Earning Members	1 member	17(8.5)	117(58.5)	134
	2 member	146(73.0)	47(23.5)	193
	above2 members	37(18.5)	36(18.0)	73
Monthly Income(Rs)	Up to 25,000	57(28.5)	43(21.5)	100
	25,000-50,000	77(38.5)	71(35.5)	148
	Above 50,000	66(33.0)	86(43.0)	152
M ± SD	38,125±19,550		40,625±20,825	
Monthly Income Spent on food (Rs)	Up to 10,000	162(81.0)	164(82.0)	326
	11000 to 20000	35(17.5)	34(17.0)	69
	Above 20000	3(1.5)	2(1.0)	5
M ± SD	8465.5±5181.08		8625±4716.25	
Monthly Income Spent on Processed Foods (Rs)	Up to 10000	149(74.5)	159(79.5)	308
	11000 to 20000	37(18.5)	28(14.0)	65
	Above 20000	14(7.0)	13(6.5)	27
M ± SD	1093.5±1126.94		1029±972.60	

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates percent cases.)

Table 4.1 shows distribution of working and non-working women according to their demographic profile. The average age of working women was 39.39 ± 6.15 years and that of non-working women was 38.36 ± 5.7 years. The majority of working women (33%) were post graduate with additional qualifications whereas majority

non-working women were either only graduate (34%) or post-graduate (34.5%). The working women were significantly ($\chi^2=53.45$, $p =.000$) more qualified than that of non-working women. About 50.5% working and 58% non-working women were from joint families. Also, majority of both working (65%) and non-working (52.5%) women had 1 to 4 members in their families and a significant association ($\chi^2 =7.48$, $p=.024$) was also observed between the working status of women and family size. The number of earning members were significantly more ($\chi^2 =12.42$, $p= 000$) in working women’s family (73%) as compared to non-working (58.5%) women. The average monthly income of working women was Rs. 38,125±19,550 and non-working women were Rs. 40,625±20,825. The average income spent on food by working women was Rs. 8465.5 ±5181.08 and non-working women was Rs.8625±4716.25. The average monthly income spent on processed food for working and non-working women was Rs 1093.5±1126.94 and Rs 1029±972.60 respectively.

V. PURCHASING OF PROCESSED FOODS

In the present investigation, an attempt was made to find out the factors that affect purchasing of processed food viz., users of processed foods in the family, source of information about processed foods, issues while purchasing processed food, frequency of consumption of processed food and places of purchase. The results of the study are presented below.

4.2 Users of Processed food

Consumer, irrespective of income groups, is mainly influenced by the opinions of their family members[4].The distribution of users of processed food in the family surveyed in present investigation is presented in Table 4.2.1 and Figure 4.2.1.

Table 4.2.1:

Distribution of working and non-working women according to users of processed food

SN	Users of Processed Foods	Working	Non-Working	Total
1	Children	84 (21.4)	72 (18.3)	156 (39.7)
2	College Going	16 (4.1)	16 (4.1)	32 (8.1)
3	Adults	22 (5.6)	10 (2.5)	32 (8.1)
4	All the Family Members	83 (21.1)	105 (26.7)	188 (47.8)
	Total	196 (49.9)	197 (50.1)	393 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)

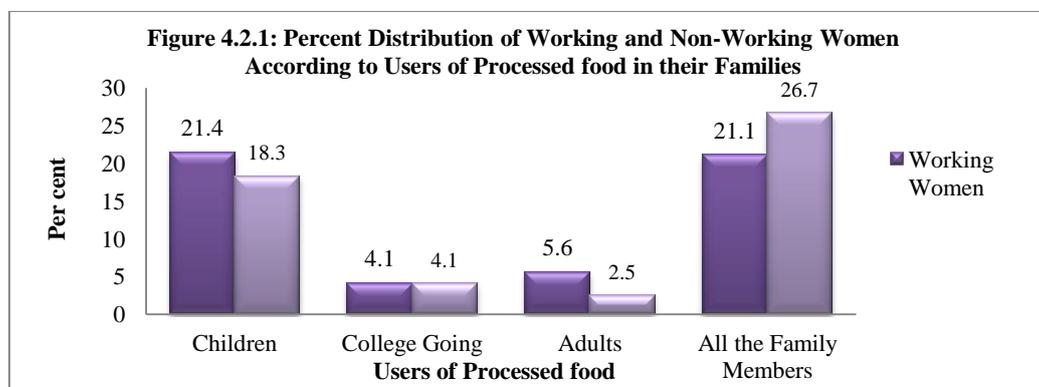


Table 4.2.1 and Figure 4.2.1 reveals that 'all the family members' (26.7%) were the major consumers of processed food from non-working women category whereas children (21.4%) were the major users in working women category. Children were the next important users of processed food. For both working and non-working women families, the college-going and adults were only minor users of processed food.

4.2.2 Source of Information or processed Foods

The source of information for purchasing of processed food in the family has been presented in Table 4.2.2 and Figure 4.2.2.

Table 4.2.2: Distribution of working and non-working women according to source of information

SN	Sources of Information	Working	Non-Working	Total
1	Shopkeeper	34 (8.5)	35 (8.8)	69 (17.3)
2	TV/Radio/Internet	150 (37.6)	151 (37.8)	301 (75.4)
3	Friends & Relatives	46 (11.5)	60 (15)	106 (26.6)
4	Newspapers & Magazines	26 (6.5)	33 (8.3)	59 (14.8)
5	Others	4 (1)	5 (1.3)	9 (2.3)
	Total	200 (50.1)	199 (49.9)	399 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)

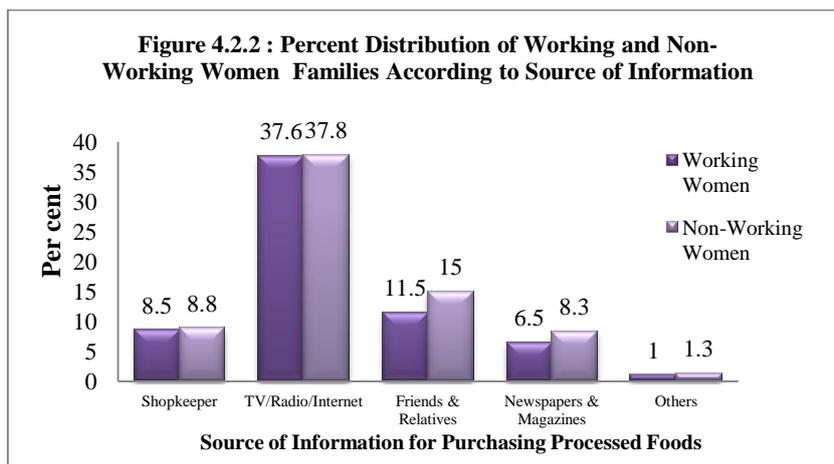


Table 4.2.2 and Figure 4.2.2 illustrate that TV/Radio/Internet (media) were the main source of information for purchase of processed food in both working (37.6%) and non-working (37.8%) women category. It shows that the reach of new technologies in spreading information/awareness surpasses any other source and is fairly same in working and non-working categories. While evaluating the impact of advertising on consumer durables market observed that ‘friends’ is the main influence followed by relatives and hence they should be given more emphasis while planning promotion strategies. Advertisement is the next major influencing factor for the consumer durables [5].

Most of the families take purchase decisions collectively in the case of consumer durables and also revealed that advertisement or publicity through mass media proves to be the best source of reaching the public closely followed by information from friends and relatives [6]. The rural consumers give more importance to the advertisements compared to urban consumers. Both rural and urban groups found that all the advertising media are equally important and effective [7].

4.2.3 Factors Affecting Purchasing of Processed Food

The quality of the product and its easy availability are the primary and the vital determinants of any consumer's buying behaviour [8]. The issues while purchasing processed food has been presented in Table 4.2.3 and Figure 4.2.3.

Table 4.2.3:
Distribution of working and non-working women according to factors affecting purchasing of processed food

SN	Issues while purchasing PF	Working	Non-working	Total
1	Price	39 (9.9)	28 (7.1)	67 (17)
2	Overall Quality	142 (36)	161 (40.9)	303 (76.9)
3	Convenience	17 (4.3)	16 (4.1)	33 (8.4)
4	Brand Image	42 (10.7)	35 (8.9)	77 (19.5)
5	Any other	10 (2.5)	8 (2)	18 (4.6)
	Total	197 (50)	197 (50)	394 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)

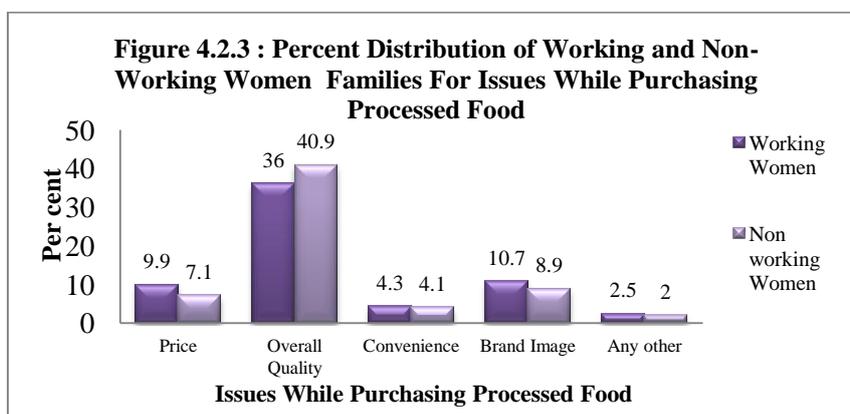


Table 4.2.3 and Figure 4.2.3 shows the issues while purchasing processed food. Overall quality of food was the main factor considered by both working (36%) and non-working (40.9%) women while purchasing processed food. Brand image was the next important issue while purchasing processed food for both working (10.7%) and non-working (8.9) women and was closely followed by price (working 9.9, non-working 7.1%) and convenience (working 4.3, non-working 4.1%). The religious and health issues were reasons under any other options for purchasing processed food. A well designed packaging acts as the main identifying feature for quality and quantity and make the consumers more informative and choosy. It further informs the consumers as to what quality, quantity and price, the package is worth off [9]. The majorities of consumers were highly enlightened and are concerned of quality of the products [10].

4.2.4 Frequency of Consumption of Processed Food

The frequency of consumption of processed food in the family has been presented in Table 4.2.4 and Figure 4.2.4.

Table 4.2.4
Distribution of working and non- working women according to frequency of consumption of processed food

SN	Frequency of consumption	Working	Non-working	Total
1	Weekdays	11 (2.9)	13 (3.4)	24 (6.3)
2	Weekends	42 (11)	55 (14.4)	97 (25.3)
3	Special Occasion	84 (21.9)	78 (20.4)	162 (42.3)
4	Festivals	17 (4.4)	22 (5.7)	39 (10.2)
5	Children's vacation	42 (11)	36 (9.4)	78 (20.4)
6	Throughout the year	25 (6.5)	27 (7)	52 (13.6)
	Total	187 (48.8)	196 (51.2)	383 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)

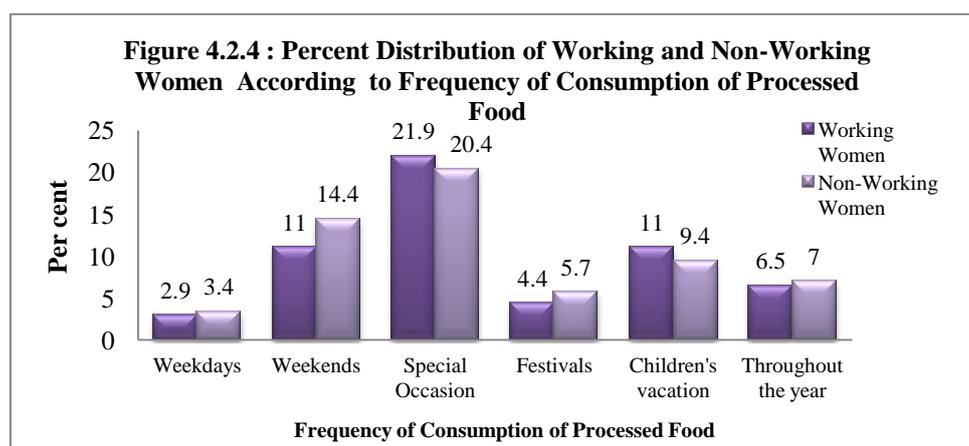


Table 4.2.4 and Figure 4.2.4 illustrates the frequency of consumption of processed food for working and non-working women category. The highest consumption of processed food was found to be for special occasions in both working (21.9%) and non-working (20.4%) women. The consumption of processed food at the time of festivals was found to be much lower as compared to at weekends and in children's vacation. This signifies that home-made traditional food is still preferred at the time of Festivals than readymade processed food.

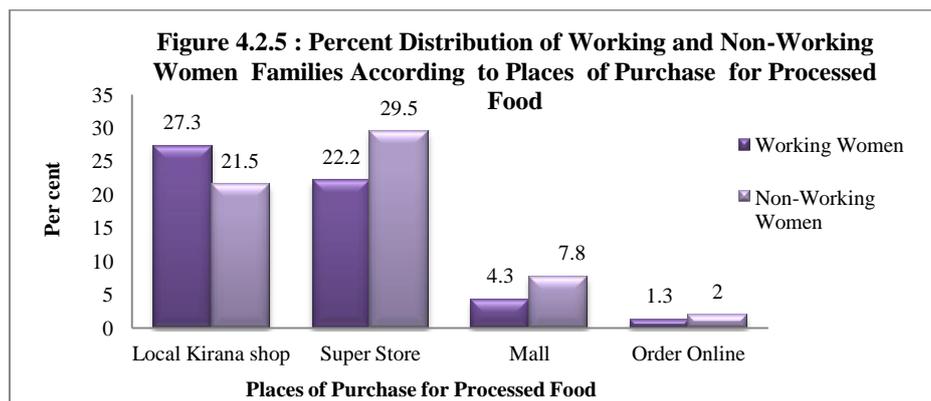
4.2.5 Places of Purchase for Processed Food

The places from where the purchase for processed food in the family has been presented in Table 4.2.5 and Figure 4.2.5.

Table 4.2.5
Distribution of working and non-working women according to places of purchase for processed food

SN	Places of Purchased for Processed Food	Working	Non-working	Total
1	Local kirana shop	108 (27.3)	85 (21.5)	193 (48.7)
2	Super Store	88 (22.2)	117 (29.5)	205 (51.8)
3	Mall	17 (4.3)	31 (7.8)	48 (12.1)
4	Order Online	5 (1.3)	8 (2)	13 (3.3)
	Total	197 (49.7)	199 (50.3)	396 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)



It is revealed from the Table 4.2.5 and Figure 4.2.5 that the majority of non-working(29.5%) women preferred to buy the processed food from super store whereas majority of working women(27.3%) preferred to buy processed food from local *kirana* shop. Online shopping for processed food was still found to be minimal and it may take time for people to adapt to this method of buying processed food. However, local *kirana* shop still has a prominent place in the choices for people to buy processed food from as it is more convenient especially for working women. The consumers uniformly, both in urban and rural areas, desire to have quality of the products at reasonable price and tend to rely more on the advice of the retailers [10].

4.3 Food Labels

Food labelling is found to be a very important public health tool aimed at providing consumers with information which may influence their purchasing decisions [11]. The aim of food labelling is to provide consumers with information which may influence their purchasing decisions. For example, consumers may want to know what ingredients are in a food product, how to cook it, how it should be stored, and its best-before or use-by date, its fat content or other nutritional properties. Detailed, honest and accurate labelling is essential to inform the consumer as to the exact nature and characteristics of the food product, enabling them to make a more informed choice[12].In the present investigation, an attempt was made to find out the factors that affect label reading of processed food viz., awareness about label reading, motivating factors to read food labels, reasons for not reading the food labels, most read component of the food label, difficulties in reading label. The results on the above discussed aspects of label reading in processed foods have been presented below.

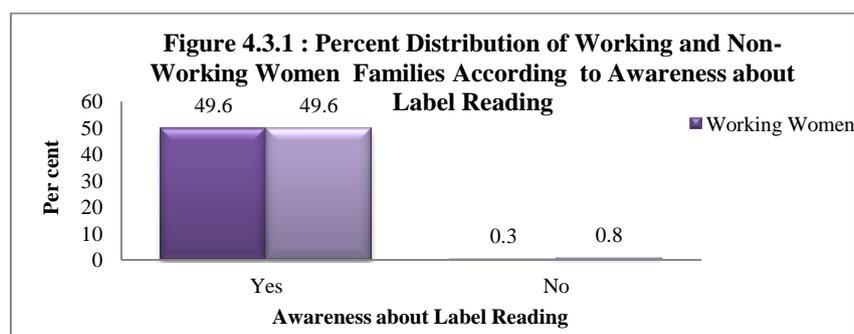
4.3.1 Awareness about Label Reading

Labelling is a very important tool for transferring information on product characteristics to consumers but its potential is not always well exploited [13].Distribution of working and non-workingwomen families according to awareness about label reading while purchasing processed food has been presented in Table 4.3.1 and Figure 4.3.1.

Table 4.3.1
Distribution of working and non-working women according to awareness about label reading

SN	Awareness about Label Reading	Working	Non-working	Total
1	Yes	196 (49.6)	196 (49.6)	392 (99.2)
2	No	1 (0.3)	3 (0.8)	4 (1)
	Total	197 (49.9)	198 (50.1)	395 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)



The data from Table 4.3.1 and Figure 4.3.1 shows that most of the respondents do read labels before purchasing processed food in both working (49.6%) and non-working(49.6%) women. This shows that today's

buyer is an informed buyer. Buyer tends to choose the products for which the information is published transparently. This information enables the buyer to make comparisons and arrive at a decision based on his/her requirements.

4.3.2 Motivating Factor to Read Labels

Package is one of the main elements of the product appearance and as such is an important source of information since consumers rely heavily on labels for product information and also packaging is a significant marketing expenditure larger than advertising itself[14]. Distribution of working and non-working women families according to motivating factors to read labels while purchasing processed food has been presented in Table 4.3.2 and Figure 4.3.2.

Table 4.3.2
Distribution of working and non-working women according to motivating factor to read labels

SN	Motivating Factor to Read Labels	Working	Non-working	Total
1	Product Appearance	27 (6.9)	24 (6.2)	51 (13.1)
2	Like to know specific information	69 (17.7)	55 (14.1)	124 (31.9)
3	Preference of some ingredients	51 (13.1)	40 (10.3)	91 (23.4)
4	Health Reasons	110 (28.3)	116 (29.8)	226 (58.1)
5	Religious beliefs	4 (1)	6 (1.5)	10 (2.6)
6	Advertisements or food promotion	15 (3.9)	22 (5.7)	37 (9.5)
7	Any other	8 (2.1)	7 (1.8)	15 (3.9)
	Total	193 (49.6)	196 (50.4)	389 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)

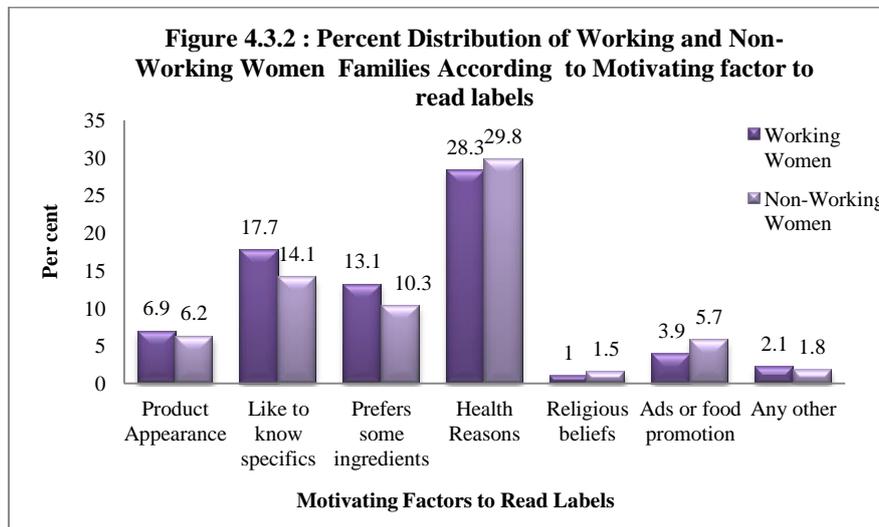


Table 4.3.2 and Figure 4.3.2 specifies the motivating factors to read labels among working and non-working women while purchasing processed food. Health reasons (Working women 28.3%, Nonworking 29.8%) were found to be the most opted motivating factor followed by like to know specifics (Working women 17.7%, Nonworking 14.1%), prefers some ingredients (Working women 13.1%, Non-working 10.3%), product appearance (Working women 6.9%, Nonworking 6.2%), advertisement or food promotions (Working women 3.9%, Non-working 5.7%). About 1% working and 1.5% non working women read labels due to religious believes. Consumers’ usage of food label varies enormously depending on their motivation, personal ability and shopping behaviour. Particularly, consumers’ usage of label elements depends on how important they value the labelled information [13].

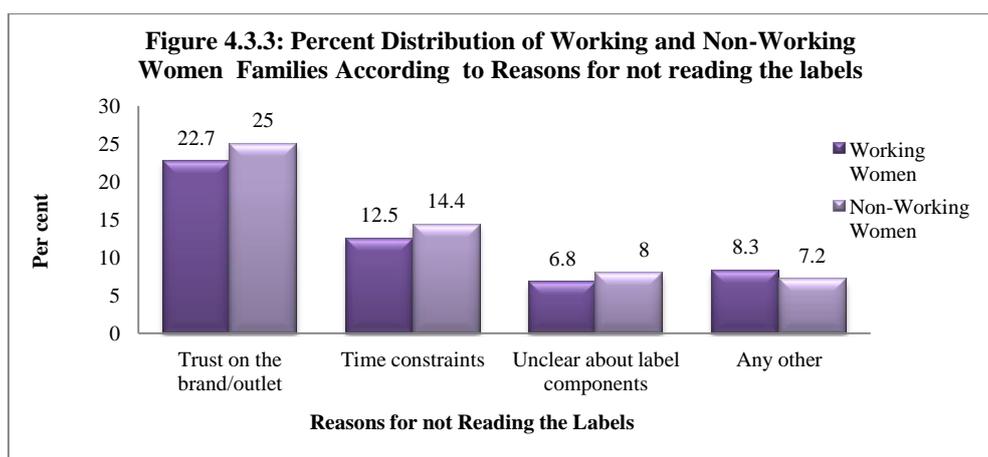
4.3.3 Reasons for Not Reading Food Labels

Distribution of working and non-working women families according to reasons for not reading food labels while purchasing processed food has been presented in Table 4.3.3 and Figure 4.3.3.

Table 4.3.3
Distribution of working and non-working women according to reasons for not reading the labels

SN	Reasons For Not Reading The Labels	Working	Non-working	Total
1	Familiarity/trust with the food/outlet	60 (22.7)	66 (25)	126 (47.7)
2	Time constraints	33 (12.5)	38 (14.4)	71 (26.9)
3	Unclear about full label component	18 (6.8)	21 (8)	39 (14.8)
4	Any other	22 (8.3)	19 (7.2)	41 (15.5)
	Total	125 (47.3)	139 (52.7)	264 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)



The data from Table 4.3.3 and Figure 4.3.3 shows that the major reason for not reading food labels was the trust of the buyers on the brand/outlet for both working (22.7%) and non-working (25%) women. Lack of time was also found to be another major reason for both working (12.5%) and non-working (14.4%) women to not read the labels. No interest, not having enough time to read labels or having a prior knowledge about food items were found as reasons for lack of attention to food labels in American subjects [15].

4.3.4 Most Read Component of the Food Label

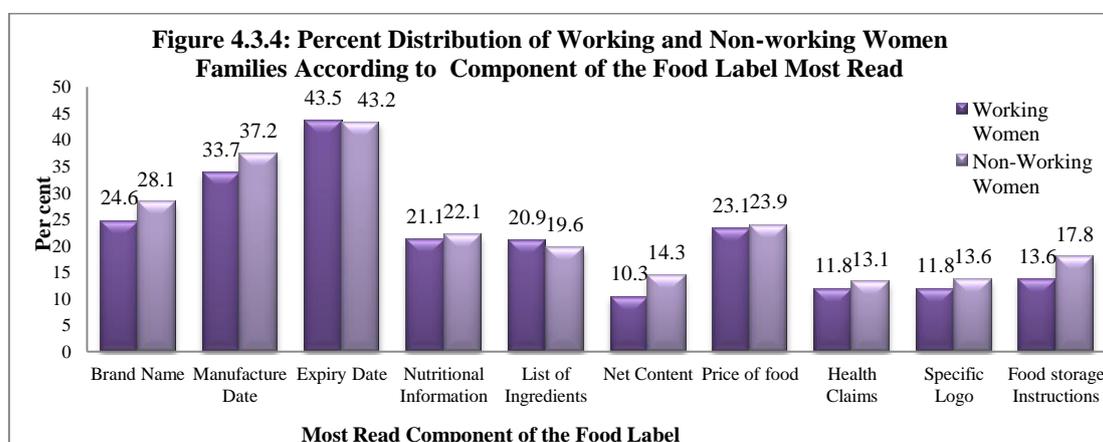
Accurate, easy-to-read, and scientifically valid nutrition and health information on food labels is an essential component of a comprehensive public health strategy to help consumers improve their diets and reduce their risk of diet-related diseases [16]. Distribution of working and non-working women families according to the most read component of food label while purchasing processed food has been presented in Table 4.3.4 and Figure 4.3.4.

Table 4.3.4

Distribution of working and non-working women according to most read component of the food label

SN	Most read component of the food label	Working	Non-working	Total
1	Brand Name	98 (24.6)	112 (28.1)	210 (52.8)
2	Manufacture Date	134 (33.7)	148 (37.2)	282 (70.9)
3	Expiry Date	173 (43.5)	172 (43.2)	345 (86.7)
4	Nutritional Information	84 (21.1)	88 (22.1)	172 (43.2)
5	List of Ingredients	83 (20.9)	78 (19.6)	161 (40.5)
6	Net Content	41 (10.3)	57 (14.3)	98 (24.6)
7	Price of food	92 (23.1)	95 (23.9)	187 (47)
8	Health Claims	47 (11.8)	52 (13.1)	99 (24.9)
9	Specific Logo	47 (11.8)	54 (13.6)	101 (25.4)
10	Food storage Instructions	54 (13.6)	71 (17.8)	125 (31.4)
	Total	198 (49.7)	200 (50.3)	398 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)



The data presented in Table 4.3.4 and Figure 4.3.4 reveals that expiry date was the most read component of the food label for both working (43.5%) and non-working (43.2%) women. The next important label component read was manufacture date for both working (33.7%) and non-working (37.2%) women and was closely followed by brand name (working 24.6%, non-working 28.1%) price of food(Working women 23.1%; Nonworking 23.9%) nutritional information (Working women 21.1%; Nonworking 22.1%), list of ingredients (Working women 20.9%, Non-working 19.6%), food storage instruction (Working women 13.6%, Nonworking 17.8%), specific logo (Working women 11.8%, Non-working 13.6%), health claims (Working women 11.8, Nonworking 13.1%), About 10.3% working and 14.3% non-working women check the net content written on the product.

Reading nutrition labels can help the buyer choose between processed food products and keep a check on the amount of processed foods (high in fat, salt and added sugars) included in the diet. Most pre-packed foods have a nutrition label on the back or side of the packaging. This type of label includes information on energy (kJ/kcal), fat, saturates (saturated fat), carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt. It may also provide additional information on certain nutrients such as fiber. All nutrition information is provided per 100 grams and sometimes per portion of the food [17].

4.3.5 Difficulties in Reading Label

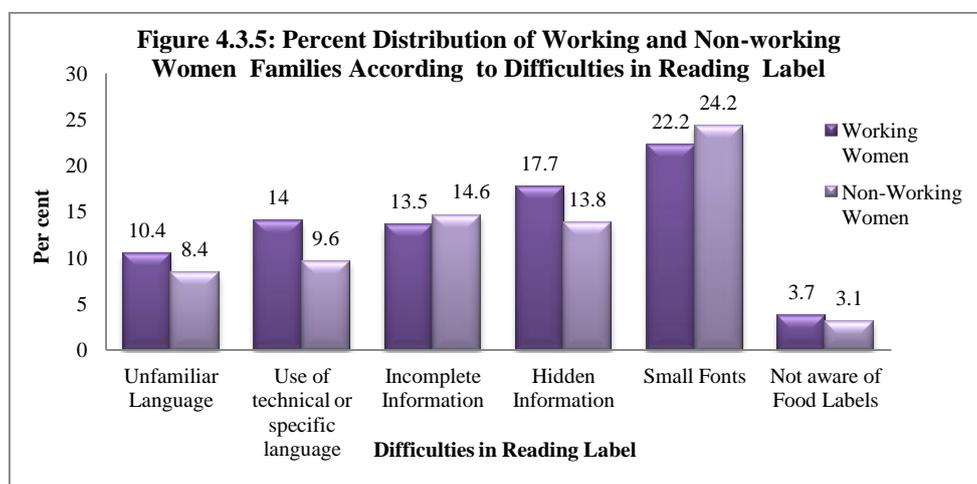
Distribution of working and non-working women families according to difficulties in reading label while purchasing processed food was surveyed in the present investigation and is presented in Table 4.3.5 and Figure 4.3.5.

Table 4.3.5

Distribution of working and non-working women according to difficulties in reading label

SN	Difficulties in Label Reading	Working	Non-working	Total
1	Unfamiliar Language	37 (10.4)	30 (8.4)	67 (18.8)
2	Use of technical or specific language	50 (14)	34 (9.6)	84 (23.6)
3	Incomplete Information	48 (13.5)	52 (14.6)	100 (28.1)
4	Hidden Information	63 (17.7)	49 (13.8)	112 (31.5)
5	Small Fonts	79 (22.2)	86 (24.2)	165 (46.3)
6	Not aware of Food Labels	13 (3.7)	11 (3.1)	24 (6.7)
	Total	179 (50.3)	177 (49.7)	356 (100)

(Numbers in parenthesis indicates per cent cases.)



The Table 4.3.5 and Figure 4.3.5 indicate that small fonts (and hence difficulty in reading) was the major difficulty faced by both working (22.2%) and non-working (24.2%) women. It was also found that very few working (3.7%) and non-working (3.1%) women were unaware of food labels. Low propensity to read and use nutritional labels is due to the way consumers perceive it. Most of respondents view these labels as too scientific and difficult to understand, complaining that the letters of the nutritional table are too small and scarcely visible and that the actual nutritional values related to a single serving are not easily comprehensible. It is also important to underline that a high percentage of consumers believe that nutrition claims are not very reliable [13].

VI. CONCLUSION

There are multiple factors that affect the consumers' behaviour towards the purchasing of processed foods. The working women were significantly ($p < 0.05$) more qualified, had one-four members in their families and number of earning members more than that of non-working women. Children were the major consumers of

processed food in working women category whereas all the family members were the consumers of processed food in families of non-working women. TV/Radio/Internet (media), overall quality of the product, special occasions/festivals were the main factor that affects purchasing of processed food in both working and non-working women category. The majority of non-working women preferred to buy the processed food from super market whereas majority of working women preferred to buy processed food from local *kirana* shop. Reading food labels for health reason and expiry date were the most important factors consider before purchasing processed food in both working and non-working women. The major reason for not reading food labels were the trust of the buyers on the brand/outlet and small font for both working and non-working women.

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