

Level of Consumers Awareness Regarding ISI, FPO & Agmark Standards

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Every purchase involves the use of standards of, quantity, quality and value. A standard is a measuring stick, standardization includes the establishment of standards for sorting and grading of products to confirm these standards, packaging and labelling to give information to the readers about the grade and standard. Awareness regarding different standard marks of quality marks on food items is very crucial from the health point of consumers as non-standardized and fake products are now flooded in the market which are sold at low rate but are deteriorated enough in quality to harm the consumers, Hira (2003) reported that quality is the ultimate criterion of the desirability of any food product. Quality assurance is a very essential step in the process of product manufacturing in order to check the health hazards, which could occur after consuming the substandard or degraded food products.

So, at this moment it is very urgent for the purchaser to be aware of quality marks to save the health of themselves and their families as well. Swamy (1990) reported that manifestation of consumer neglect is evident in the adulterated food we eat; the spurious, unsafe and substandard products we buy, the repeated shortage of essential commodities accompanied by black marketing and profiteering, the hazardous drugs that are pushed through the counter, the glossy, unethical and manipulative advertisements with which we are bombarded. the humiliation, indignity and harassment, we are subjected to, by the public sector organizations. So, this study was an attempt to determine the level of awareness amongst consumers for standard marks association of education

with the awareness of standard marks. Awareness of consumer regarding food items carrying different standard marks was assessed.

METHODOLOGY

To meet the objectives, study was conducted in Ludhiana city. As per the information obtained from Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana city has been divided into four zones. Two localities from each zone of Ludhiana city were selected at random for better representation of Ludhiana city i.e. BRS Nagar and Sarabha Nagar from zone I, PAU and Haibowal from zone 2. Jamalpur and Vishwakanna colony from zone 3 and from zone 4, Sundernagar and Jodhewal basti were selected. From each of these selected localities 15 homemakers were selected and thus total sample comprised of 120 homemakers. Finalized interview schedule was used to collect the data. Direct personal interview method was adopted for data collection. The data were collected during Nov. 2006 to Jan. 2007.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Awareness of the respondent regarding standard marks on the food items.

Perusal of Table I indicates that a vast majority of the respondents (89.17%) were aware of the ISI mark followed by awareness regarding Agmark (84.17%) whereas comparatively less percentage of respondents (42.50) were aware of FPO mark. These findings were in line with Singh (1997) who also revealed that maximum respondents (67.54%) were aware of ISI mark followed

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by Agmark (60.8%)) and only 29.2 per cent respondents were aware of FPO mark.

Association of education of respondents with the awareness of standard marks.

While determining the association of education of respondents with the awareness of standard marks. It can be seen in Table 2 that calculated value of chi-square worked out to be significant at 1 % level of significance, which revealed that awareness of the standard marks was dependent on the education of the respondents ($\chi^2=20.55, df=4$).

It is very necessary to beware of type of mark on different types of food items so that it is easy to be sure of quality of the products at the time of purchase. While discussed about standard marks on different food items, only correct awareness were collected, to know the real awareness amongst them.

It is evident from the data in Table 3 that 30 per

cent respondents reported Agmark on cereals and pulses. 25.83 per cent reported Agmark also on fats and oils, spices and condiments (25%), butter (23.33%). Comparatively lesser number of respondents were aware of Agmark on items like honey and eggs.

Regarding awareness of FPO mark on different food items 34.17 per cent respondents reported FPO on juices and squashes, followed by 25 per cent respondents who reported FPO also on jams and jellies, soft drinks and other beverages (18.33%) and only 16.67 per cent respondents were seen to be aware of FPO mark on canned fruits and vegetables.

In case of awareness of ISI on different food items, 30.83 per cent respondents reported ISI mark on ready to eat food items followed by 30 per cent respondents who reported salt was also carrying ISI mark, tea leaves feoffer (29.17%), ready to cook items (17.50%), processed cheese and weaning food (13.33% each).

Table-1. Awareness of the respondents regarding standard marks on the food items

N=120		
Marks	Number*	Percentage
Agmark	101	84.17
FPO	51	42.50
ISI	107	89.17

*Multiple Response

Table-2. Association of education of respondents with the awareness of standard marks

Educational level	Standard marks		
	Agmark	FPO	ISI
Up to matriculation	22	5	25
Graduation	17	13	62
Post-graduation	62	33	20

Table-3 Awareness of respondents regarding food items carrying different marks

N=120

Food Items	Agmark	
	Number*	Percentage
Cereals and Pulses	36	30.00
Fats and oils	31	25.83
Spices and Condiments	30	25.00
Butter	28	23.33
Honey	18	15.00
Eggs	15	12.50

FPO mark		
Juices and Squashes	41	34.17
Jams and Jellies	30	25.00
Soft drink and other beverages	22	18.33
Canned fruit and vegetables	20	16.67
ISI mark		
Ready to eat items	37	30.83
Salt	36	30.00
Tea leaves/coffee	35	29.17
Ready to cook items	21	17.50
Processed cheese	16	13.33
Weaning foods	16	13.33

*Multiple Responses

CONCLUSION

Less than half of the respondents were aware of different marks on different standard food items. The reason may be that they were lacking consumer education which has become the necessity of today's environment. Even educated consumers were not aware. as the general tendency of the people is to check the brand while purchasing. Very few people were found to be checking standard marks and food items.

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