

# The Next Generation of Packaging – Driving Towards Sustainability

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## ABSTRACT

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The role of packaging can neither be ignored nor overlooked, making it a crucial element of the marketing mix. The term "eco-friendly packaging" is no longer just a buzzword. The way companies handle packaging is going to develop and alter as a result of a worldwide shift toward combating climate change. Rather than being a secondary consideration, ecologically friendly sustainable packaging will become increasingly significant. Especially in an incredibly competitive industry that is food, sustainable packaging gives a competitive advantage to food and beverage brands and allows them to hold an identity of their own.

This research mainly aims to understand the role of sustainable packaging in the food industry, its logistical and branding roles while identifying the various elements that make a good packaging design and how food and beverage brands can develop strategies to better cater to customer needs and wants. This research is based on primary quantitative data along with an intensive analysis of research papers, articles, and journals. The findings suggested that the sustainable packaging industry is a competitive market but yet still untapped to its maximum in India. However, the spread of knowledge today has made brands aware of it, and they are consciously making efforts to incorporate sustainability in their food packages. Customers are able to point out the difference between sustainably packaged products from a sea of average packaging designs and actively want to be associated with environmentally focused brands. Incorporating sustainable packaging also helps brands increase their brand identity and leverage brand awareness to tap into newer and potential customers.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Packaging, Food and Beverage Industry, Branding, Loyalty, Environment Friendly

## Introduction

Over the past two decades the interests of all the stakeholders of an organisation have been increasing shifting towards making packaging more sustainable. If we take a moment to recall the last purchase we made, be it something we could eat, drink, apply or wear the first image that comes to our mind is the initial packaging of the product which makes a lasting impression on the customer's mind. Packaging's importance in the safe delivery and transportation of items along the food supply chain cannot be underestimated. A good package especially in the food and beverage category should guarantee that food quality and safety are maintained, right from transit through storage of the product to reduce food waste and loss (Otto et al., 2021). However, some of the biggest drawbacks of packaging are that it adds to

the cost of the product and its carbon footprint as it is usually disposed of shortly after use. Thus, contributing adversely to the world's environmental impact. For product packaging paper is one of the most common materials used followed by wood, glass, metal, and different sorts of plastics and polymers including cardboard (Magnier and Schoormans, 2015).

Today companies are increasingly conscious that not just a wonderful product, but even superior packaging is required to impress their customers. Recent packaging research has highlighted and emphasised sustainability and how packaging materials can be made more environmentally friendly (Vila-Lopez N et al, 2020). Sustainable packaging is technically defined as packaging that has a minimal

environmental effect based on life-cycle assessments (Glavič & Lukman, 2007). On the other hand, a sustainable package may be defined as "a packaging design that invokes expressly or implicitly the container's environmental-friendliness" (Magnier L et al, 2015). Sustainable packaging is known by various different words today but they all mean the same thing. Some of the synonyms for sustainable packaging are 'Green packaging', 'eco-green packaging,' 'eco-friendly packaging, or 'recyclable packaging,' that makes use of environmentally friendly materials for packaging while keeping in mind that the products are functional and safe for both human health and the environment (Pauer, 2019).

Sustainable packaging is a novel and new concept that has received a lot of attention in recent years. It is, without a doubt, a critical problem to examine in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, with social and economic ramifications (Fonseca L, 2020).

Only 21 out of 46 papers assessed by Ketelsen et al. were focused on consumer responses to ecologically friendly packaging, indicating that this field of study is under-explored and suggesting the need for additional research in this area. To date, little research has assessed how consumers weigh these attributes with regards to sustainable packaging and the key motivators that lead customers to shift their purchase decisions from products with conventional packaging to products with sustainable packaging. Furthermore, this research aims to cover the unexplored gap addressing various business and consumer dimensions with regards to sustainable packaging. This paper aims to close this information gap by diving deep into finding out the motivators that lead customers towards purchasing products with sustainable packaging and how brands can adapt their offerings to best suit the customers growing needs.

Thus, the value of product packaging is multifaceted, and it may go a long way toward establishing a positive first impression and fostering long-term brand loyalty. Thus, making sustainable packaging critical for preserving food quality, avoiding food waste, and lowering the usage of

preservatives in food.

## **Purpose**

This paper aims to examine and highlight the shifts in packaging that have taken place from traditional ways of packaging to adopting sustainable and eco-friendly packaging today. It deals with the in-depth study of the factors that motivate and attract customers to adopt products with sustainable packaging as the go-to-option for their day-to-day food and beverage purchases. This paper is also designed to call attention to and discuss the different functions of sustainable packaging in the food industry, its influence on consumer buying behaviour and its importance on branding. This will help brands better devise strategies to adapt their packaging and marketing campaigns to reach their target audience effectively.

## **Literature Review**

Concerns over single-use packaging waste are combining with other strong trends to force significant changes in consumer packaging (Berg et al., 2020). Regulators are taking action, and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) businesses and retailers are making strong pledges to enhance package sustainability and radically rethink their packaging systems (Guillard et al., 2018). A few FMCG firms have already begun to investigate smaller, reusable packaging in order to swiftly transform into sustainable packaging, lowering costs and elevating the company's total value development objectives. Unilever and Walmart, for example, are collaborating with Algramo on an app-driven, intelligent reusable packaging solution that has flourished throughout the lockdown (Gupta S, 2022).

Packaging is an important part of the solution to the major difficulties of sustainable food consumption, since it helps to reduce the environmental impact of packaged foods. These issues will be addressed through creative and innovative sustainable packaging (Toyota & World Economic Forum, 2018). Sustainable packaging is defined as packaging with a low environmental impact, recyclable, and safe for humans. It's also known as "environmentally friendly packaging." Sustainable packaging comes with a great deal of

advantages. It complies with product price and performance benchmarks. It makes use of renewable energy that can be obtained, created, transported, and recycled. This packaging style uses raw materials that can last for the duration of the product's life cycle (Henia K, 2021). Today customers find the use of excessive and over packaging off-putting. Plastic packaging is a big issue in today's food packaging, with people debating the environmental impact of these polymers.

However, on the other hand, paper-based packaging is seen as a more environmentally friendly alternative to the plastic and polystyrene packaging that is presently used for various food items. Consumers are eager to spend money on environmentally friendly items. When it comes to everyday purchases, they are looking for items that are recyclable or made from sustainable materials. Companies who wish to attract eco-conscious customers are working hard to fulfil the need for environmentally friendly packaging (Oloyede & Lignou, 2021). Sustainable packaging is important to eco-conscious customers. Today customers care a lot about the environment and are prepared to support businesses that share their concerns and want to support firms that safeguard the environment. Shoppers desire to support environmentally responsible businesses.

This, along with their understanding of their role in the supply chain, indicates that they are prepared to change in order to uphold their principles and companies who wish to attract eco-conscious customers are working hard to fulfil the need for environmentally friendly packaging (Gilsenan, 2019). Brands can adopt a comprehensive approach to sustainability by engaging in several areas and making sustainable packaging visible to consumers. It will also be necessary to have a detailed understanding of end-user segments: there is no general answer, and customers do not always know what to anticipate in terms of package sustainability. Brands should interact with their value-chain partners as soon as possible in order to be proactive, using an experimental approach to producing solutions and effectively expressing narratives about them. Finally, brands should not focus just on sustainability without considering COVID-19's implications for hygiene

and food safety, as well as other megatrends like e-commerce. As sustainability is a major industry-shaping trend, the approaches adopted during COVID-19 would not be enough to address the trend.

Thus, brands have a unique opportunity to redesign their packaging portfolios, generate growth, and capture value by knowing today's consumer preferences (Feber et al., 2020). Price, brand, quantity, use-by-date, nutrition information, and eco-labels affect customer awareness, perceived importance, and purchase decisions (Grunert et al., 2014). Individual variables, product qualities and marketing, and societal factors are the three areas that influence green buying behaviour. Green purchasing is an action decision made by consumers through a theoretical mechanism or a fragmented environment, and customers are rational and sociable individuals. (Zhang & Dong, 2020). As it has now become a priority for both companies and customers – more than ever before – sustainable packaging is becoming a new trend and a need for brands to adopt sustainable packaging for their products. To protect the environment and boost brand loyalty among eco-conscious consumers, businesses must embody the ideals of "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle." Thus, the green movement has resulted in a slew of new environmentally friendly packaging alternatives to conventional materials. Sustainable packaging appeals to brands because it generates a win-win scenario for the company, the client, and society as a whole (Henia K, 2021).

## **Methodology**

For the research methodology primary quantitative data was adopted, and results from primary research via an online survey were analyzed. For this a quantitative survey was conducted, whereby convenience sampling was used. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts - the first focusing on awareness, the second on attitude towards sustainable packaging and its impact on brand loyalty and positioning and the third section focused on the perception and motivating factors to the customers towards sustainable packaging in the food industry. The data were analysed using SPSS software, several statistical tests were performed and data was compiled. A detailed and triangulated secondary data analysis was also used by reviewing fundamental

literature in journals, articles, and published papers to identify and analyse the disruption caused by sustainable packaging and customer motivation factors. The target audience belonged to the age group of 18-46 years. The final sample size achieved was 74. SPSS 24 was used for the data analysis.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The following insights were drawn after going through the data analysed from primary surveys.

TABLE 1: Age Groups

Age			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	18-24	27	36.5
	25-34	18	24.3
	35-44	10	13.5
	45+	19	25.7
	Total	74	100.0

The sample size is composed of a mix of different age groups and generations. Young Millennials (18-24) make up 36.5% of the respondents, followed by elder GenX (45+) making up 25.7%, older millennial (25-24) constituting 24.3% and finally young GenX (34-44) constituting 13.5%. This helps highlight that millennial and GenX are the main focus target audience for this research. (Lifshitz I, 2016) Millennials have become the largest consumer generation in the retail trade in recent years, and food and beverage brands must keep a careful eye on Gen X and Boomer purchase decisions since their packaging functionality preferences are likely to alter as their population ages.

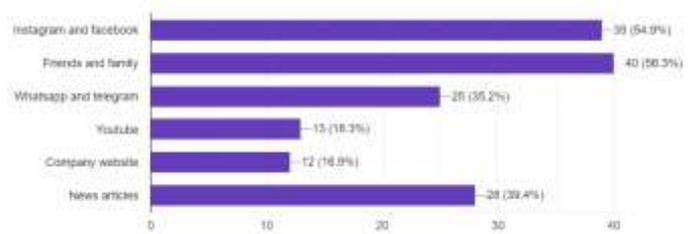
TABLE 2: Awareness levels of respondents towards sustainable packaging

Awareness			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	yes	68	91.9
	No	6	8.1
	Total	74	100.0

Awareness amongst the respondents is extremely high for sustainable packaging with regards to the food and beverage industry. 91.9% of the respondents were aware of the concept of sustainable packaging, showing that it is more than a buzzword today. People are shifting their attention towards being aware of the

packaging of daily food products purchased by them. (Oloyede & Lignou, 2021) To alleviate consumers' understanding of what constitutes a sustainable product, as well as their difficulty in identifying what constitutes a sustainable product, they need to be better informed and educated about the packaging manufacturing process in order to make better judgments.

GRAPH 1: Channels through which respondents learn about sustainable packaging



A major source of information for respondents about sustainable packaging in the food and beverage industry was mainly derived from social media platforms. Instagram and Facebook were the most popular, followed by messaging platforms like WhatsApp and telegram and then eventually YouTube videos. The influence of peers and family also plays a great role in spreading awareness and knowledge about sustainable packaging. As sustainable packaging is yet a relatively new concept in India and people do not have the complete and exact knowledge about sustainable packaging, many people also greatly rely on news articles and company websites to get information straight from the source. Thus, it shows that food and beverage brands should meet customers where they are and leverage channels that suit the customer demographics the best while relying heavily on positive PR and spreading informational news content over websites and print mediums. (Scanlux Packaging, 2021) Brands that are honest and real are important to Generation Z and millennials. They want raw footage and honesty, and they won't be fooled by hollow promises. Generation X is seeking for brands that reflect their beliefs, but they are less insistent on openness. Generation Z demand complete openness and verification of what businesses actually do and this should come across through all the brand communications across all platforms.

TABLE 3: Level of identification of food products based on their packaging

Identification of food products based on their packaging			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	yes	55	74.3
	No	7	9.5
	sometimes	12	16.2
	Total	74	100.0

Furthermore, along with awareness the identification factor is also high amongst the respondents showing that they are not only aware but also take to notice and pay special attention to actually identifying and differentiating between product packaging. 74.3% of the respondents could clearly distinguish between food products on the basis of the packaging while 16.2% of the respondents were still unsure regarding product packaging differentiation. This goes to show that customers not only actively distinguish between products based on their packaging but also identify the packaging in dept which allows them to notice the shift made by brands towards sustainable packaging.

TABLE 4: Cross tabulation of awareness and identification levels of sustainable food packaging

Awareness * identification of food products based on their packaging (Crosstabulation)					
		yes	no	sometimes	Total
Awareness	yes	52	6	10	68
	no	3	1	2	6
Total		55	7	12	74

The respondents who showed a high awareness of sustainable packaging could easily identify such products based on their packaging. On the other hand, it was also noticed that while awareness regarding sustainable packaging was present, sometimes people found it hard to identify products on this basis. Thus, highlighting that due knowledge must be spread via various awareness campaigns and new articles to the customers to leverage their awareness and lead to better brand and product packaging identification- helping brands stand out in the market. (Petro G, 2021) When compared to previous generations, Gen Z and millennial consumers appear

to be the most conscious of environmental concerns and sustainable behaviours and it's possible that their influence on older generations, such as Gen X, can have a great impact.

TABLE 5: Level of encouragement to buy products with labelling specifying 'sustainable', 'organic' etc. written on the package

Encouraged to buy products that have the words 'sustainable', 'healthy', 'organic' etc. written on its package			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	yes	58	78.4
	no	4	5.4
	maybe	12	16.2
	Total	74	100.0

Overall, 78.4% of the respondents are encouraged to buy products that have the words 'sustainable', 'healthy', 'organic' etc. written on its package, with only merely 5.4% of the respondents being unphased by such words on packaging. 16.2% of the respondents were also unsure- showing that sustainable packaging is still at a very nascent stage in India and people need more information and knowledge about sustainable packaging of food products and its benefits that would help create a positive image and encourage them better to look for such words on product packaging. When (Rokka J. et al 2008) compared green packaging with several product attributes and how these attributes affect consumer choice, they discovered that one-third of the consumers in the study agreed that environmentally labelled packaging was one of the most important criteria in their decision.

TABLE 6: Cross Tabulation of age and level of encouragement to buy products with labelling specifying 'sustainable', 'organic' etc. written on the packages

Age * encouraged to buy products that have the words 'sustainable', 'healthy', 'organic' etc written on its package Crosstabulation					
		yes	no	maybe	Total
Age	18-24	16	2	9	27
	25-34	15	1	2	18
	35-44	9	1	0	10
	45+	18	0	1	19
Total		58	4	12	74

When we further dive into the encouragement factor

by words like 'sustainable', 'healthy', 'organic' etc. written on food packages, it is observed that there is a health balance better younger millennial being encouraged when it comes to encouragement to purchase based on sustainable packaging labelling. However, on the other hand older millennial and Gen X are lesser inclined towards such words on product packaging and are just starting out to actively look for such words to be mentioned on food product packaging. This goes to show that that the 35+ age group is much more affected by the growing sustainability trends while younger millennial are yet to realise its importance. Eco-efficiency, according to the World Corporate Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2000), is a way to link business and environmental goals by "generating more value with less impact", thus making it more attractive to customers. The (Evergreen packaging report, 2020) suggests that demand for recyclable or compostable packaging made of renewable materials, packaging processes that regenerate or protect natural resources, and regenerative and sustainable production practises will be led by millennials. Millennials prefer doing business with organisations that share their objectives and assist them in making decisions that are consistent with those priorities. According to their study, 64% of millennials believe "paying extra for eco-friendly items is worth it to them," compared to only 38% of Gen X.

TABLE 7: Cross Tabulation of age and likeliness to try a new product based on its eco-friendly packaging

Age * Likeliness to try a new product based on its eco-friendly packaging Crosstabulation							
		highly unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	highly likely	Total
Age	18-24	1	2	4	11	9	27
	25-34	0	0	1	13	4	18
	35-44	0	0	0	5	5	10
	45+	0	0	1	10	8	19
Total		1	2	6	39	26	74

While older millennial and GenX are more motivated to make purchases based on labelling highlighting sustainability on packaging they are also likely to go ahead and try a new food products based on its eco-friendly packaging, proving that they are

increasingly turning towards sustainable packaging today. However, when we look at younger millennial they are extremely open and have a very high likelihood of trying new products based on their eco-friendly packaging. This aligns with the millennial characteristics of wanting to try and experiment new things and concepts. A study by (Evergreen packaging report, 2020) found that younger customers were 23% more likely than older generations to pay for sustainable packaging, with no significant differences in income brackets or between Millennial, Gen Z and Generation X.

TABLE 8: Cross tabulation of level of encouragement to buy products with labelling specifying 'sustainable', 'organic' etc. written on the package and packaging impact on brand positioning

Encouraged to buy products that have the words 'sustainable', 'healthy', 'organic' etc. written on its package * packaging of products helping in brand positioning (Crosstabulation)				
		yes	no	Total
encouraged to buy products that have the words 'sustainable', 'healthy', 'organic' etc. written on its package	yes	58	0	58
	no	3	1	4
	maybe	11	1	12
Total		72	2	74

As proved earlier that millennials and GenX are encouraged to purchase and try products based on their eco-friendly packaging, majority of the respondents also feel that their awareness and feelings towards eco-friendly packaging eventually also does lead to better brand positioning in their minds, thus showing that in order for brands to build their positioning in an extremely clutter market space today, turning towards sustainable packaging will help them differentiate themselves from the competitions while also positively building to their brand positioning in the minds of customers across generations. (Steenis N et al. 2017) stated that having sustainability signals on packaging was a crucial element in determining how packages varied as judged by consumer responses to packaging design. A study by (Trivium Packaging, 2020) highlight that some materials are associated with the term "premium," providing chances for food and beverage brands to position their products in that category. Consumers saw glass and metal as more valuable than other materials.

TABLE 9: Cross tabulation of willingness to pay extra for sustainable packaging and the Impact of sustainable packaging on customer loyalty

Willingness to pay extra for sustainable packaging * Impact of sustainable packaging on customer loyalty (Crosstabulation)						
		Impact of sustainable packaging on customer loyalty				
		No impact	Neutral	Positive impact	brand loyalist	Total
Willingness to pay extra for sustainable packaging	0-10%	1	7	9	5	22
	11-20%	0	2	26	11	39
	21-30%	0	0	10	2	12
	31%+	0	0	1	0	1
Total		1	9	46	18	74

Price is a crucial factor that is to be taken into consideration. With sustainable packaging being adopted by brands will also lead to an increase in the price of products due to the premium in its packaging. Willingness to pay is a crucial factor to be considered, which will have a direct and indirect impact on brand loyalty. A price hike of an extra up to 20% will help create a positive impact on brand loyalty as customers 'always want more for less' as seen by the majority of the respondents. A price hike over 30% will not lead to increased brand loyalty and hence should be avoided by brands in the initial days as the concept of sustainable packaging is still growing in India. Price and product quality are determined to be the key driving forces of customer purchase intent (Martinho et al., 2015). Millennials are willing to pay for a compelling narrative and will reward you with brand loyalty. They seek for food and beverage brands that reflect their beliefs and base their purchasing decisions on them. As a result, values like accountability and sustainability are crucial criteria for them (Scanlux Packaging, 2021).

TABLE 10: Cross tabulation of level of awareness and impact of sustainable packaging on customer loyalty

Awareness * Impact of sustainable packaging on customer loyalty (Crosstabulation)						
		Impact of sustainable packaging on customer loyalty				
		No impact	Neutral	Positive impact	brand loyalist	Total
Awareness	yes	0	8	42	18	68
	no	1	1	4	0	6
Total		1	9	46	18	74

Thus, once sustainable packaging has reached the stage of a growing or mature market then price hikes can be thought about by the brands, as by then both-awareness and adoption of sustainable packaging will be high amongst the customers, and as awareness goes on increasing amongst the customers so will the brand loyalty thus helping sustainable packaging drive a positive impact on brand loyalty.

TABLE 11: Factor Analysis of motivators driving respondents to opt for sustainable packaging over conventional packaging

Factor Analysis- Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>		
	Component	
	Brand benefits	Functional Benefits
Greater product protection	0.267	0.769
Enhanced usability	0.453	0.690
Increased shelf life of products	0.199	0.866
Attractiveness and appeal	0.806	0.234
Brand adopting it	0.790	0.360
Price	0.399	0.679
Environment friendly	0.777	0.241
Product reusability	0.649	0.375

On conducting a factor analysis, it can be concluded that there are two main factors responsible for driving customers to shift from purchasing products normal packaging to purchasing products that adopt sustainable packaging. These factors are broadly the brand benefits that include brand name, product reusability, aesthetics and environment friendly as the main motivators. Many key quality indicators, particularly for customers, have been given by (Williams et al.2007), that are protection and preservation of the product, declaration of contents, recyclable material, conveys a specific brand and fitting in storage areas are just a few of them.

The second factor is the functional benefits that include better product packaging, improved shelf life, price and enhanced usability. (Klooster R, 2002) emphasises the need of taking into account all functional requirements for packaging systems throughout the design phase. (Ols mats C, 2002) emphasises the strategic importance of packaging for brands, as well as the need to establish a balance between its many purposes.

TABLE 12: Regression coefficients identifying most important motivating factors that drive respondents to shift from conventional packaging to sustainable packaging

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	4.000	0.090		0.000
	Brand Benefits	0.502	0.090	0.528	0.000
	Functional Benefits	0.275	0.090	0.289	0.003

a. Dependent Variable: I will choose products with sustainable packaging in the future

Furthermore, the significance value of brand

benefits is 0.000, thus concluding that brand benefits are the most important variable that plays the primary role of a motivator for customers shifting towards sustainable packaging. Functional benefits then comes in as a motivating factor with significance value being 0.003. This helps show that brands must lay more emphasis on first heavily spreading awareness and marketing the brand benefits of sustainable packaging and then focus on the functional related benefits that include product protection, usability and longer shelf life. (Oloyede & Lignou, 2021) Food and beverage companies packaging may be tailored to each company's unique needs and goals, depending on aspects such as consumer input on environmental concerns and brand expectations, followed by the functional requirements of the product-packaging system, such as shelf-life or product protection.

TABLE 13: Correlation between the willingness to purchase products with sustainable packaging in the future and motivators

Correlations										
		I will choose products with sustainable packaging in the future	Greater product protection	Enhanced usability	Increased shelf life of products	Attractiveness and appeal	Brand adopting it	Price	Environment friendly	Product reusability
I will choose products with sustainable packaging in the future	Pearson Correlation	1	.257*	.464**	.313**	.438**	.388**	.577**	.557**	.522**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.027	0.000	0.007	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74

The motivating factors driving customers to choose a food product with a sustainable packaging over normal packaging in the future are mainly the product reusability and price. Sustainable packaging is also extremely eco-friendly creating less waste and pollution, thus also making it a very important motivator. Environmental and resource efficiency are considered as significant aspects of packaging solutions. (Svanes E. et al, 2010) For the industry and customers, environmental sustainability has become a priority. Most corporations have concentrated on one or two factors, such as reduced package weight per unit product or the avoidance of ecologically damaging materials such as PVC. However, more systematic and holistic consideration of a product's environmental standpoint is required than has been realised in recent years. Thus, these 3 variables (product reusability, environmentally friendly and price) have a strong positive correlation with the ability to motivate customers to choose sustainable packaging in the future. This is followed by a moderate positive correlation between attractiveness and enhanced usability and the name of the brand adopting it with willingness to purchase. According to a study by (Oloyede & Lignou, 2021) customers are creatures of habit, thus they would usually stick to well-known brands and only consider the package after they had purchased it or arrived at their location. Customers stated that convenience and price take precedence over all other considerations. They claimed that ecologically friendly packaging must stand out from other packaging on the shelf if it is to attract consumers, and that the design of the products was not eye-catching or appealing enough. The least correlation that isn't significant is between greater product protection and increased shelf life. Thus, showing that customers want product packaging that helps in product preservation and usability while being reasonably priced and having a good aesthetic design.

Thus, the outcomes of this study add to the body of information about consumer attitudes and reactions to environmentally friendly packaging materials. The concept of 'sustainable consumption,' which states that customers have a duty to reduce the environmental effect of their purchases via thoughtful product selection and proper disposal. Manufacturers

may help in this process by giving consumers guidance. At its most basic level, this is the concept that all products should provide actual social benefit to users while also generating economic profit for the brand (Papanek, 1971). Customers want sustainable packages to have all of a package's usefulness while also being environmentally friendly. The findings are similar to those of (Ertz et al. 2017), who found that customers were hesitant to pay more for ecologically friendly "green" drinks packaging, and (Barber N. 2010) who found that just 28% of consumers were prepared to pay more for environmentally friendly "green" drink packaging. Thus, ecologically beneficial aspects on packages and expressed a strong need for knowledge regarding the packaging's long-term viability (Banterle A et al., 2012) and by successfully enclosing and safeguarding items as they move through the supply chain and by promoting informed and responsible consumption, the sustainable packaging system contributes significant value to society. (Svanes E, et al. 2010)

#### **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS-**

Based on the findings, brands need to undertake extensive marketing to first spread awareness and build curiosity around sustainable packaging and then in the next phase be more focused towards promoting products that have adopted sustainable packaging with emphasis given it the design and usability. Brands should focus on using extensive social media marketing to reach the millennial target audience while leveraging print mediums and news articles to cater to GenX. Efforts must be taken to not cause major incremental shifts in the price of the products with sustainable packaging, as while millennials would be more willing to spend extra, Gen X wouldn't be as willing to shell out extra for sustainable packaging. Brands should first focus on building the brand and functional benefits of their sustainable packaging as that is a major motivator for customers. The packaging should not only focus solely on aesthetics but must integrate reusability and increased shelf life of products with clear labelling for sustainability.

#### **FUTURE SCOPE**

The future scope of this study would lay in diving deeper and understanding the packaging preferences

of customers - what materials and types are they more attracted towards and evaluation of different prototype sustainable packaging designs. It will also be interesting to find out the customer motivators with respect to sustainable packaging at different stages of the product life cycle. Finally, a staged study on how food and beverage brands have been incorporating sustainable packaging elements and adopting to trends will be helpful in understanding the timely progression made by brands as the awareness around sustainable packaging keeps growing in India.

## CONCLUSION

Sustainable packaging is a relatively new concept in India and is slowly gaining greater awareness amongst the masses. As the awareness increases people are able to identify and differentiate conventional packaging from sustainable packaging easily. It was seen that heightened awareness leads to greater product identification thus, in order to drive this, due knowledge must be spread via various awareness campaigns. GenX is more influenced by content seen in print media and news articles while millennials are more influenced by the content they consume on social media. Friends and family remain a very crucial source of information for both millennials and GenX, as their opinions and recommendations matter a lot when it comes to trying new products with sustainable packaging for the first time. Labelling that explicitly implies sustainable packaging also plays a very important role in encouraging customers to try products. While older millennials and GenX actively buy more products with sustainable packaging, younger millennials are extremely open and have a high likelihood of trying new products based on their eco-friendly packaging. However, customers aren't extremely willing to spend a lot more on products with sustainable packaging when it comes to spending. Thus, efforts must be taken to not cause major incremental shifts in the price of the products with sustainable packaging and designing of packaging should be kept minimal. The findings clearly highlight that sustainable packaging appeals across generations, and that the majority of younger customers are prepared to pay only upto 15-20% more for environmentally friendly packaging.

Brand benefits and functional benefits are the main

motivators with enhanced usability, environmental friendliness and price having a strong positive correlation with the ability to motivate customers to choose sustainable packaging in the future. Thus, right now the main focus for brands should be on building awareness and capitalising on the functional benefits of sustainable packaging to drive their marketing campaigns around it as this will help improve their brand positioning and lead to increased customer loyalty. Marketing campaigns should first start with informational and educational content then followed by promotional and topical content around sustainable packaging. Different customer archetypes should be derived and specific strategies must be devised to meet the customers where there are to lead to great adoption - helping brands stand out in the market.

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