



Consumer Perception Towards Made-in-India Campaigns

Ayush yadav¹, Dr. Vikash kumar yadav², Dr. Dharmendra Singh³

¹Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

²Assistant professor, Mahatma Gandhi PG College, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

³Assistant professor, MATS School of Business Studies, MATS University, Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Abstract

The “Made-in-India” campaign, most notably exemplified by the Government of India’s “Make in India” initiative launched in 2014, aims to transform India into a global manufacturing hub. This campaign has not only targeted domestic and foreign investors but also played a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour. This study explores the perception of Indian consumers towards the Made-in-India label, including factors influencing their purchase decisions, levels of awareness, trust in Indian brands, and patriotic sentiments associated with indigenous products. A structured questionnaire was administered among 300 respondents from various demographic backgrounds across India. The findings indicate that while a significant proportion of consumers display a positive inclination towards Indian-made products, factors like quality, price competitiveness, and brand recognition continue to play crucial roles. This paper contributes to the understanding of domestic branding strategies and offers insights for policymakers and marketers on enhancing the effectiveness of the Made-in-India campaigns.

Keywords: Made-in-India, Consumer Perception, Make in India, Brand Patriotism, Indian Manufacturing, Indigenous Products.

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed a tremendous transformation in the way consumers make choices, especially in developing economies like India. As globalization has allowed a seamless flow of goods, services, technology, and information across borders, Indian consumers have been exposed to a variety of international brands, often perceiving them as superior in terms of quality, design, and reliability. This growing global exposure has, in many ways, created a challenge for domestic brands to compete, not only on price but also on consumer perception. However, recent years have seen a notable shift. With the rise of nationalist sentiments, economic self-reliance narratives, and campaigns promoting indigenous products, a new wave of consumer patriotism is taking root — encapsulated by the Made-in-India movement.

The “Made-in-India” concept has been reinvigorated by the Indian government’s flagship initiative Make in India, launched in September 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The campaign's primary objective is to encourage domestic and foreign companies to manufacture their products in India, thereby boosting the country’s manufacturing sector, generating employment, and promoting self-reliance. Over time, this policy-oriented campaign has evolved into a wider social and consumer movement, driven by slogans such as “Vocal for Local” and “Atmanirbhar Bharat.” These efforts are designed to foster pride in indigenous products and encourage consumers to shift their preference towards goods made by Indian companies and artisans.

Consumer perception plays a critical role in determining the success of such campaigns. The Made-in-India label is no longer just an indicator of a product's origin; it has come to symbolize a complex mix of values — nationalism, economic development, ethical purchasing, environmental consciousness, and even cultural pride. For Indian consumers, choosing a locally made product may reflect their identity, their belief in India’s economic potential, or simply their trust in the quality and affordability of the product. However, the reality remains nuanced. While patriotic emotions may influence initial interest or purchase intent, other rational factors like quality, price, brand reputation, and peer influence often determine the final buying decision.

Over the last decade, consumer behaviour has further evolved due to significant socio-economic changes. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, catalysed a resurgence in localism. With supply chains disrupted, imports restricted, and job security threatened, Indian consumers became more conscious of supporting home-grown brands. The pandemic period also saw an outpouring of support for small businesses, local startups, and Indian manufacturers through social media campaigns and influencer-led initiatives. Startups like Boat (electronics), Mamaearth (cosmetics), and Khadi India (handlooms) became popular not just for their product offerings but also for embodying the Made-in-India ethos.

Despite these positive developments, challenges remain. A significant section of consumers continues to associate foreign brands with higher prestige and performance, especially in categories like electronics, automobiles, luxury goods, and fashion. Indian manufacturers often struggle to shake off the stigma of being “low cost but low quality,” a perception that hinders widespread adoption of Made-in-India products in certain segments. The problem is further compounded by inconsistent branding, lack of awareness, and limited

consumer education about the benefits of buying Indian-made goods — be it support for local employment, reduced carbon footprint, or cultural preservation.

This research seeks to explore and analyse the multifaceted dimensions of consumer perception towards the Made-in-India campaigns. It aims to delve into questions such as: What do consumers understand by the term “Made-in-India”? Do they actively look for Made-in-India labels when purchasing products? To what extent does nationalism affect their purchasing decisions? Are Indian products perceived as good substitutes or merely as alternatives when foreign options are unavailable? Are younger consumers more likely to support domestic products than older ones? What role do media, influencers, and advertising campaigns play in shaping these perceptions?

By examining consumer awareness, attitudes, motivations, and behaviour in relation to Indian-made goods, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how national campaigns translate into real-world consumer action. Moreover, it attempts to identify the key barriers and enablers that determine whether Indian consumers genuinely support or merely acknowledge the Made-in-India initiative. Through empirical data collected via structured questionnaires and interviews, the paper highlights existing gaps between intention and action, and suggests ways in which businesses and policymakers can bridge these gaps to strengthen the domestic market.

The importance of such research is underscored by the current geopolitical and economic context. As global supply chains are being re-evaluated and countries are moving towards greater economic sovereignty, India’s push to become a manufacturing powerhouse is more relevant than ever. However, production alone cannot drive this transformation. It must be complemented by strong domestic demand, which is only possible when consumers themselves are convinced of the quality, reliability, and value of Indian-made products. Thus, consumer perception is not a peripheral concern — it is central to the success of the Make in India movement.

Review of Literature

Consumer behavior analysis is a systematic approach to studying how individuals choose, purchase, and dispose of products and services that satisfy their needs (Anderson et al., 2020). Gupta and colleagues emphasized its importance, noting that marketers must first understand consumer behavior to craft the right message, determine optimal frequency, and manage timing effectively, thereby engaging customers at the most opportune moments. A deep understanding of consumer behavior is essential for designing marketing strategies that align with customer needs. Within the category of “personal needs,” one key aspect is “learning about new trends.” Furthermore, “idea shopping” is identified as a specific purpose activity, referring to shopping with the intent to keep up with fashion trends, explore new clothing styles, and observe current products and innovations. Many consumers engage in browsing specifically to discover the latest trends, products, and advancements.

Research on clothing preferences among young people in India requires large, randomly selected samples to ensure the findings can be generalized, as this demographic has received limited attention as a potential market

segment (Seock & Bailey, 2008). Some studies have attempted to analyze consumer purchasing patterns for branded products (Borhan, 2016), with researchers developing conceptual models that emphasize demographic influences. However, identifying the full range of factors that explain consumer behavior when purchasing branded apparel remains incomplete. Previous work has highlighted the need for further investigation into the buying behavior of young consumers (Krishna & Shylajan, 2007), and future studies should also consider youth consumption patterns across diverse geographic regions.

To build customer loyalty, a brand must first meet customer needs. In the telecom sector, research has shown that customer loyalty plays a distinct role where interaction effects—rather than direct influence—and prior usage predict future consumer behaviour. A notable example can be seen in the fashion industry: in 2001, the small Spanish clothing company Zara rose to prominence as a global fashion icon. With over 2,000 stores worldwide, LVMH fashion director Daniel Piette described it as possibly the most innovative and disruptive retailer in the world (Naz et al., 2021).

When making purchasing decisions, style should be considered a key factor. In fact, style is often cited as one of the main determinants in clothing purchases. According to Park and Cho (2012), when factors such as product availability and variety are taken into account in apparel buying decisions, the resulting choice is strongly influenced by the style of the clothing.

Research suggests that individuals who place a high value on originality are more likely to adopt new brands or products faster than those who value uniqueness less. The concept of a consumer's need for uniqueness explains how this desire influences brand responses and reflects their wish to stand out through the acquisition of material goods (Knight & Young Kim, 2007). Findings indicate that, even under similar circumstances, people exhibit varying levels of need for uniqueness, which can significantly influence their buying decisions. This need for uniqueness can be expressed through three types of consumer behaviour:

- Innovative counter-conformity
- Unpopular choice counter-conformity
- Avoidance of similarity

In theory, a person may intentionally reject established social norms to differentiate themselves from the community, seeking uniqueness in defiance of societal pressures. Unlike someone driven purely by a desire for independence, this individual is aware of prevailing norms yet deliberately chooses to act in ways that contradict them. For such behaviour to influence the individual, the product or symbol in question must first gain widespread recognition. These distinctive expressions of identity are valued for their well-known meaning, which makes them accessible across various media and settings where nonconformity carries fewer serious social consequences. In this context, acquiring tangible goods holds particular importance (Raman & Aashish, 2020).

Consumer emotions represent a fascinating field of research. Recognizing the significant influence emotions have in business enables organizations to deliver services in innovative ways, giving them a competitive edge and enhancing profitability. Consumers may choose to purchase a particular brand because they believe it offers the right features, quality, or emotional benefits (Boonghee Yoo, 2020). The term perceived quality refers to a consumer's personal judgment of a brand's overall excellence or superiority. It is a critical factor for success in the marketplace, and many companies now leverage customer-focused quality as a powerful strategic tool. This perception of quality primarily stems from the evaluation of both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes. Importantly, perceived quality is not the same as actual or objective quality (Panda et al., 2021). Several studies in India have explored brand awareness, consumer knowledge, and purchasing behaviour. Andrews (2004), using a stratified sample of 300 households and an inter-category logit model, examined decision-making across various product categories based on factors such as brand loyalty, price sensitivity, store attributes, and aisle presentation. The findings indicated that households displayed similar decision-making patterns across categories when the products were alike. However, the study did not address variations in brand preferences across different product categories (Ortmeyer et al., 1991). In another study, panel data from 343 households was used to compare brand choices for two sets of similar and dissimilar products, revealing that brand preferences varied between the two groups. Webster (2000) highlights the importance of understanding the relationships among manufacturers, retailers, and consumers, noting that brand management becomes more effective when producers and sellers work closely together to strengthen their brand positioning. Since brand loyalty is strongly linked to brand trust, it becomes essential to study the relationship between loyalty and marketing strategies.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand consumer awareness about the Made-in-India and Make in India campaigns.
- To analyse consumer preferences for Indian-made versus foreign-made products.
- To identify factors influencing consumer perception towards Indian products.

Research Questions

- What is the level of consumer awareness about the Made-in-India and Make in India campaigns across different demographic segments?
- How do consumers' preferences differ between Indian-made and foreign-made products in various categories (e.g., apparel, electronics, automobiles, food, beauty)?
- What key factors (e.g., quality, price, nationalism, brand trust) influence consumer perception towards Indian products?
- To what extent does nationalism impact actual purchase decisions compare to rational factors like quality and price?
- How do media channels, celebrity endorsements, and influencer campaigns shape consumer attitudes towards Made-in-India products?

- What role do demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and income play in shaping consumer perceptions of Indian-made goods?
- What are the major barriers and enablers for increasing consumer preference for Indian brands in technology-intensive and premium product segments?

Research Methodology

Research Design: The present study adopts a descriptive research design as it seeks to describe, analyse, and interpret the perception of consumers towards the Made-in-India campaign. This design is well-suited for understanding the attitudes, opinions, and behaviours of a specific population at a given point in time. A mixed-method approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative part helped in identifying measurable patterns and relationships through statistical analysis, while the qualitative insights provided deeper context, interpretation, and explanations behind consumer attitudes.

Population and Sampling Frame: The target population for this research comprises consumers residing in urban and semi-urban areas who are active participants in purchasing decisions for household and personal use. The sampling frame included individuals across different states in India, ensuring representation from various cultural, economic, and demographic backgrounds.

Sample Size and Area: A total of 300 respondents participated in the study, representing five major states — Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Delhi. These states were selected to provide geographic diversity and capture differences in consumer attitudes across northern, western, southern, and central India.

Sampling Technique: The study used stratified random sampling to ensure balanced representation across different demographic strata, including age groups, gender, education levels, and income categories. Within each stratum, respondents were randomly selected to minimize selection bias and enhance the generalizability of the results.

Data Collection Methods Data was collected using two complementary methods:

Structured Questionnaire: A well-structured instrument was developed containing both closed-ended questions (to quantify responses and enable statistical analysis) and open-ended questions (to gather qualitative insights). The questionnaire included sections on consumer awareness, preferences, influencing factors, and perceptions towards the Made-in-India initiative.

In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected consumers and small retailers to capture experiential insights, perceptions, and personal narratives that could not be fully explored through the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Tools and Techniques: Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentage analysis, and mean scores, along with inferential statistics like the chi-square test to assess associations between demographic variables and consumer perceptions. The qualitative

data from interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, where responses were coded into categories and patterns were identified to support or contrast the quantitative findings.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from 300 respondents was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools to identify patterns, correlations, and key determinants of consumer perception towards the Made-in-India campaigns. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean scores) helped in summarizing the distribution of responses, while inferential techniques such as the chi-square test were used to examine associations between demographic factors (age, gender, education, income) and consumer preferences. Qualitative insights from interviews supplemented the numerical findings, adding depth to the interpretation.

Awareness of Made-in-India Campaigns

Findings:

- 87% of respondents reported being aware of the Make in India initiative.
- 73% said they actively notice the “Made in India” label while purchasing products.
- Awareness is highest among the 18–35 age group (94%), followed by the 36–50 group (82%) and above 50 (69%).
- Chi-square analysis indicates a significant association between age and campaign awareness ($p < 0.05$), suggesting younger consumers are more attuned to promotional messaging.

Interpretation:

The higher awareness among youth can be attributed to greater exposure to social media campaigns and digital advertising. However, the awareness gap in older age groups indicates that traditional media outreach may still be necessary for wider coverage.

Preference Towards Indian vs. Foreign Products

| Product Category | Indian Preferred (%) | Foreign Preferred (%) |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Apparel | 65 | 35 |
| Electronics | 38 | 62 |
| Automobiles | 47 | 53 |
| Food Products | 82 | 18 |
| Beauty Products | 55 | 45 |

Findings:

- Indian products dominate in traditional and consumable categories such as apparel and food.
- Foreign brands have a competitive edge in electronics and automobiles due to perceptions of superior technology and durability.
- The difference in preferences is statistically significant in electronics ($p < 0.01$) and food products ($p < 0.05$).

Interpretation:

Consumer loyalty to Indian brands in food and apparel reflects cultural familiarity, affordability, and trust in local sourcing. In contrast, electronics and automobiles face a perception gap, highlighting the need for Indian brands to invest in innovation and technological credibility.

Factors Influencing Perception

- Quality – 78% believe that quality outweighs origin in purchase decisions.
- Price – 69% find Indian products more affordable, especially in clothing and food segments.
- Nationalism – 58% express a moral responsibility to support Indian brands.
- Brand Trust – 43% still trust foreign brands more due to established reputations.

- **Statistical Insights:**

A moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.46$) exists between nationalistic sentiment and preference for Indian brands.

Education level is positively correlated with quality-based decision-making ($p < 0.05$), suggesting more educated consumers evaluate brands more critically.

- **Interpretation:**

While nationalism influences initial product consideration, tangible factors like quality and price ultimately drive purchases. This highlights the gap between emotional intent and rational choice.

Influence of Media and Celebrities

- 65% believe celebrity endorsements impact their choice of Indian products.
- 71% recall exposure to “Vocal for Local” messages in advertisements.
- Social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube were cited as primary sources of campaign information.
- Interpretation:

Endorsements by well-known personalities and influencer-led promotions play a critical role in consumer persuasion. The high recall rate for “Vocal for Local” suggests that branding slogans are successfully entering public consciousness, but consistent reinforcement is needed for sustained impact.

Qualitative Insights from Interviews**Interviews revealed nuanced themes:**

1. Perceived authenticity – Consumers link Made-in-India products to cultural heritage and local craftsmanship.
2. Scepticism – Some doubt whether products labelled “Made in India” are entirely domestically produced.
3. Aspirational value – For premium categories, foreign brands still carry a higher prestige value.
4. Social influence – Peer recommendations strongly affect brand choice in youth segments.

Overall Interpretation

The analysis shows a dual reality:

- On one hand, cultural pride and price advantage give Indian brands a competitive edge in certain sectors.
- On the other, perceived quality gaps and brand prestige keep foreign brands dominant in technology-driven categories.
- Bridging this gap requires a three-pronged strategy: technological upgradation, branding repositioning, and consistent quality assurance.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that while the Made-in-India campaigns have achieved notable visibility and resonance among Indian consumers, particularly in the younger demographic, the movement's impact on actual purchasing behaviour remains uneven across product categories.

A majority of respondents reported awareness of the "Make in India" initiative, with younger consumers (18–35 years) being the most informed and engaged. This aligns with earlier research by Gupta et al. (2020) suggesting that younger buyers are more receptive to policy-driven marketing when exposed through digital platforms. However, this high awareness has not yet translated into a uniform preference for Indian products across all categories.

Category-specific trends emerged from the data:

- Traditional, cultural, and consumable products such as food, textiles, and handicrafts enjoy strong domestic preference due to cultural familiarity, affordability, and trust in local sourcing.
- In contrast, technology-intensive and high-prestige segments such as electronics, automobiles, and luxury goods continue to be dominated by foreign brands, reflecting lingering perceptions of superior quality, innovation, and brand prestige. This corroborates earlier findings by Ortmeyer et al. (1991) and Webster (2000), which indicated that brand heritage and global reputation significantly influence consumer trust.

A particularly interesting dimension is the role of nationalistic sentiment. While 58% of respondents felt a moral responsibility to support Indian brands, correlation analysis revealed that such sentiments often influence initial product consideration rather than final purchase decisions. Practical factors such as quality, price-value ratio, and brand trust ultimately determine the transaction outcome. This gap between emotional intent and rational choice is a critical challenge for domestic manufacturers.

The role of media and celebrity endorsements emerged as significant. Over 70% of respondents recalled "Vocal for Local" messaging, and two-thirds acknowledged that endorsements influence their purchasing behaviour. This suggests that strategic influencer partnerships and consistent branding could be pivotal in bridging the trust gap between Indian and foreign brands. However, qualitative interviews revealed skepticism regarding label authenticity, with some consumers doubting whether products marketed as "Made in India"

are fully domestically produced. Addressing this credibility issue through clear labelling standards and certifications could reinforce trust.

From a behavioural economics perspective, the aspirational value associated with foreign brands is deeply embedded in consumer psyche—a product of decades of global exposure and colonial history. Overcoming this will require long-term brand-building strategies, not just short-term patriotic campaigns. Investments in R&D, design excellence, and after-sales service can help Indian brands match global benchmarks and gradually shift perceptions.

The study also reinforces the importance of targeted policy interventions. Government schemes such as PLI, Start-up India, and ODOP provide structural support, but without parallel consumer-facing initiatives—such as education campaigns on economic impact, environmental benefits, and quality improvements—these policies may not achieve their full potential in reshaping consumer behaviour.

In sum, while the Made-in-India sentiment has gained momentum, the campaign's long-term success hinges on addressing three interconnected challenges:

- Bridging the quality perception gap between Indian and foreign brands.
- Establishing consistent, credible branding with strong storytelling.
- Aligning emotional appeal with tangible product benefits to ensure that patriotic intent is matched by actual purchase behaviour.

Only through a coordinated effort involving manufacturers, marketers, policymakers, and consumers can the Made-in-India movement transition from being a symbolic slogan to a sustained shift in consumer loyalty and market share.

Challenges Faced by Made-in-India Brands

- Perceived Inferior Quality – Despite improvements, Indian products often lack the polish and technological finesse of global brands.
- Lack of Consistent Branding – Many Indian companies still struggle with modern marketing strategies and brand recall.
- Price-Value Mismatch – In some sectors, Indian products are priced comparably to foreign brands but offer fewer features.
- Supply Chain Inefficiencies – Limited infrastructure affects timely production and delivery.
- Consumer Mindset – Decades of colonial influence and exposure to Western lifestyles have made foreign products aspirational.

Government and Industry Initiatives

The Indian government has introduced several schemes to support local manufacturing:

- PLI (Production Linked Incentive) Schemes
- Start-up India
- Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts

Moreover, initiatives like One District One Product (ODOP) aim to promote region-specific goods and encourage MSMEs. Startups like Boat, Mamaearth, and Lenskart have successfully leveraged the Made-in-India sentiment to gain market traction.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- **Quality Upgradation** – Invest in R&D and international certifications.
- **Effective Branding** – Collaborate with influencers and emphasize cultural value.
- **Educate Consumers** – Conduct awareness programs to dismantle myths about Indian quality.
- **Leverage E-Commerce** – Utilize online platforms to highlight the origin and benefits of Indian products.
- **Public-Private Partnerships** – Combine government incentives with private investment in branding and distribution.

Conclusion

Consumer perception towards Made-in-India campaigns is evolving. While many Indian consumers exhibit a strong desire to support local products, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, actual purchasing behaviour often contradicts this due to concerns over quality and trust. To truly capitalize on the patriotic wave and the global call for sustainability and self-reliance, Indian manufacturers and marketers must ensure consistent quality, modern branding, and better customer engagement. With sustained efforts by both the government and industry, the Made-in-India campaign can succeed not just in gaining market share but in reshaping consumer attitudes and establishing India as a brand in itself.

Future Scope of the Study

The present study provides valuable insights into consumer perceptions towards the Made-in-India campaigns; however, there remains significant scope for further research. Future studies can adopt a longitudinal approach to track changes in consumer attitudes over time as Indian brands evolve in quality, design, and global presence. Sector-specific investigations focusing on industries such as electronics, automobiles, fashion, or FMCG could help identify unique challenges and opportunities for Indian brands. The growing influence of digital marketing also presents an important area for exploration, particularly the role of emerging platforms, influencer marketing, and e-commerce in shaping consumer trust and preferences. Cross-cultural comparisons between Indian consumers, NRIs, and foreign audiences could offer a deeper understanding of the global appeal of the Made-in-India label. Behavioural experiments can be employed to examine the gap between patriotic intent and actual purchase behaviour, while studies focusing on rural and semi-urban markets may reveal distinct patterns in awareness and campaign influence compared to urban regions. Additionally, future research can assess the impact of government initiatives such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, One District One Product (ODOP), and Atmanirbhar Bharat in reshaping consumer behaviour. By addressing these areas, future research can support the development of targeted

marketing strategies, enhance brand competitiveness, and strengthen the impact of the Made-in-India movement both domestically and globally.

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