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Effectiveness of below-the-line marketing touchpoints on consumer awareness, engagement and dairy product preferences in Bengaluru, India

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Abstract
Below-the-line (BTL) marketing has emerged as an effective promotional strategy for enhancing consumer awareness, engagement, and purchase behaviour in the premium dairy sector. The study evaluates the socio-economic profile of consumers, assesses their awareness of the company's dairy products, examines the effectiveness of BTL touchpoints and analyses consumer preferences in Bengaluru city. Primary data were collected from 200 consumers using a structured questionnaire through purposive sampling. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Likert scale analysis, and Garrett ranking technique. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents were middle-aged (35-50 years), graduates, and belonged to higher-income households. Overall, consumer awareness regarding the company's products was moderate, with 52.00 per cent of respondents being aware of the brand. Community events (21.00%) and product sampling (19.00%) were identified as the major sources of brand awareness, while product sampling (23.00%) emerged as the most effective BTL activity in enhancing consumer engagement. Milk was the most frequently purchased and preferred dairy product, with A2/Desi cow milk being the most preferred milk variant. Garrett ranking indicated that product quality, freshness, and trust and transparency were the primary factors influencing consumer preference for premium dairy brands, whereas quality testing, freshness and taste, and doorstep delivery were the leading reasons for preferring the company. The study concludes that experiential BTL activities, supported by superior product quality, transparency, and convenient delivery services, play a significant role in strengthening consumer awareness, engagement, preference, and long-term brand loyalty in Bengaluru's premium dairy market.

Keywords: Below-the-line (BTL) marketing, consumer awareness, consumer engagement, dairy products, premium dairy market, Garrett ranking

Introduction
Milk is integral to Indian diets, providing essential protein, calcium, and vitamins (FAO, 2025). India is the world's largest milk producer, contributing 25% of global output through improved productivity and infrastructure (PIB, 2024). The dairy sector is vital to the rural economy, supporting small farmers and national growth. Initiatives like the White Revolution and Operation Flood strengthened cooperative networks and distribution (NDDB, 2023; PIB, 2024). Urbanization and health awareness have shifted preferences toward packaged, branded products, with consumers prioritizing safety, quality, and transparency (Ali & Kapoor, 2010; FSSAI, 2019). Purchasing decisions now hinge on quality, freshness, and brand credibility (Tamilchelvi & Lavanya, 2019). Advances in food processing and quality preservation have further reinforced consumer demand for premium dairy and functional food products, highlighting the importance of maintaining physicochemical quality, bioactive compounds, and nutritional attributes throughout processing and distribution (Sen *et al.*, 2026). Satisfaction depends on product attributes and service factors like timely delivery, which drive brand loyalty (Grunert, 2005; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) models have transformed supply chains by enabling direct producer-consumer interaction, reducing intermediary dependence, and enhancing convenience via digital subscription services (CARE Ratings, 2020; IBEF, 2024) [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 17, 18, 19]. Premium brand success requires effective marketing to build long-term relationships. Below-the-Line (BTL) activities, such as product sampling and community campaigns, are increasingly

important. These strategies allow consumers to experience product quality directly, reducing purchase risk and strengthening trust. Such personalized approaches are highly effective for premium brands where customer experience influences decisions.

Recent agricultural advances show that technological innovation, quality assurance, and consumer confidence are interconnected. Research on hydroinformatics, AI, and climate-resilient systems emphasizes data-driven decision-making and efficient resource management for productivity (Kumar *et al.*, 2026a; Kumar *et al.*, 2026b; Kumar *et al.*, 2026c; Kumar *et al.*, 2026d; Kumar *et al.*, 2026e). Drone technology, remote sensing, and simulation modelling improve agricultural monitoring and operational efficiency (Kumar *et al.*, 2025a; Kumar *et al.*, 2025b; Kumar *et al.*, 2026f). Socio-economic studies confirm that awareness, income, and trust influence technology adoption (Kumari *et al.*, 2026) [8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16]. These factors are fundamental to market competitiveness in premium agri-food sectors. While studies examine dairy consumption, research on the effectiveness of Below-the-Line (BTL) promotional activities in the premium dairy segment is limited. Moreover, integrated studies on socio-economic characteristics, brand preferences, and brand-switching under a Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) model are scarce, particularly in cities like Bengaluru. Despite increasing adoption of experiential marketing by premium dairy brands, empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of BTL touchpoints on consumer awareness, engagement and purchase preference remains limited, particularly in urban D2C dairy markets. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the socio-economic profile of consumers in Bengaluru city and examine their awareness, engagement and preferences towards the company's dairy products. It further evaluates the effectiveness of below-the-line promotional touchpoints in influencing consumer behaviour.

Methodology

Primary data were collected through personal interaction with respondents by using a structured questionnaire from 200 consumers selected through purposive sampling in residential societies and apartment complexes. The responses obtained from the consumers were carefully analysed using appropriate statistical and analytical tools. The study focused on examining the socio-economic profile, consumption patterns, effectiveness of BTL promotional activities, and key factors influencing consumer purchase decisions towards premium dairy products.

Table 1: Research methodology adopted for the study

Type of Research	Descriptive research
Sampling method	Non-Probability Method
Sampling technique	Purposive Sampling
Sample unit	Consumers/residents in selected apartment communities
Sample size	200
Sample area	Central part of Bengaluru city
Timing of survey	90 days
Research instrument	Pre-tested Structured Schedule
Analytical tools	Frequency & Percentage analysis, Cross-tabulation, weighted mean score (Likert scale), Garrett's ranking technique and Graphical methods (bar chart/pie chart)

3. Results and discussion

In line with the objectives of the study, this chapter presents and discusses the findings of the research titled "Evaluation of below-the-line touchpoints and dairy products preference in Bengaluru city." The results are based on primary data collected directly from consumers through personal interviews, providing a clear understanding of their awareness, preferences, and responses to BTL promotional activities in the dairy sector.

3.1 Socio-economic profile of consumers

The socio-economic profile (Table 2) shows a diverse participant base, representative of dairy consumption in Bengaluru. Age distribution was balanced: 35-50 years (34.5%), above 50 (33.0%), and below 35 (32.5%), confirming consumption across all ages. Women (56.0%) participated more than men (44.0%), reflecting their role in household purchasing. The educated base included graduates (27.0%), intermediates (23.0%), and postgraduates (19.0%). Occupations were diverse, led by business/self-employed (21.0%), followed by government (16.5%), homemakers (16.0%), private employees (14.5%), students (13.0%), and others (19.0%). With 55.0% reporting annual incomes above ₹4,00,000, the sample represents higher-income households. Joint families (53.0%) slightly outnumbered nuclear ones (47.0%), with most residing in gated villas (32.0%) or apartments (29.0%). Parents (31.0%) and spouses (25.5%) were primary decision-makers. Retail brands (28.0%) and D2C brands (23.0%) were preferred over the study company (19.0%), signalling a shift toward organized, premium dairy. Overall, these educated, stable, urban consumers are ideal for assessing preferences and BTL promotional effectiveness in the premium dairy sector.

3.2 Level of consumer awareness regarding the Company's products

Table 3 shows moderate consumer awareness. Slightly over half (52.0%) knew the brand, while 48.0% were unaware, suggesting visibility needs improvement. Community-based activities were the most effective, with events and stalls (21.0%) and product sampling (19.0%) outperforming digital channels like Google (8.0%) and posters (11.0%). This highlights the effectiveness of below-the-line (BTL) promotions. Regarding familiarity,

Table 2: Socio-economic profile of the sample consumers (n = 200)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Less than 35 years	65	32.50
	35-50 years	69	34.50
	Above 50 years	66	33.00
Gender	Female	112	56.00
	Male	88	44.00
Education	Illiterate	12	6.00
	Primary school	28	14.00
	High school	22	11.00
	Intermediate	46	23.00
	Graduate	54	27.00
	Postgraduate	38	19.00
Occupation	Business/Self-employed	42	21.00
	Government employee	33	16.50
	Private employee	29	14.50
	Homemaker	32	16.00
	Student	26	13.00
	Others	38	19.00
Annual household income	Below ₹1,00,000	10	5.00
	₹1,00,000-₹2,00,000	15	7.50
	₹2,00,000-₹3,00,000	25	12.50
	₹3,00,001-₹4,00,000	40	20.00
	Above ₹4,00,000	110	55.00
Family type	Joint	106	53.00
	Nuclear	94	47.00
Residence	Gated villa community	64	32.00
	Apartment community	58	29.00
	Individual house	48	24.00
	Hostel/PG	30	15.00
Purchase decision maker	Parents	62	31.00
	Spouse	51	25.50
	Self	46	23.00
	Joint decision	41	20.50
Primary milk purchase source	Retail milk brands	56	28.00
	Other premium D2C brands	46	23.00
	The Company	38	19.00
	Mixed sources	32	16.00
	Local milk vendor	28	14.00

Table 3: Consumer awareness regarding the company's products (n = 200)

Parameter	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Heard about the brand	Yes	104	52.00
	No	96	48.00
Source of awareness	Community event/stall	42	21.00
	Sampling activity	38	19.00
	Friends/Referral	30	15.00
	Social media	28	14.00
	Community posters/ads	22	11.00
	Google/Online search	16	8.00
Level of familiarity	Extremely familiar	33	16.50
	Very familiar	45	22.50
	Moderately familiar	51	25.50
	Slightly familiar	34	17.00
	Not familiar	37	18.50
Awareness of subscription-based delivery	Yes	92	46.00
	No	108	54.00
Awareness of pre-delivery quality testing	Yes	103	51.50
	No	97	48.50
Awareness of transparency in sourcing	Yes	104	52.00
	No	96	48.00
Product awareness	Milk	80	40.00
	Paneer	28	14.00
	Curd	22	11.00
	Ghee	18	9.00
	Buttermilk	17	8.50
	Sweet lassi	15	7.50
	Butter	12	6.00
	Breakfast cereals	8	4.00
Seen the company promotion	Yes	99	49.50
	No	101	50.50
Experience with company products	Yes	101	50.50
	No	99	49.50

25.5% were moderately familiar, 22.5% very familiar, and 18.5% unfamiliar. Awareness of quality initiatives was moderate; while 51.5% knew of pre-delivery testing and 52.0% of sourcing transparency, subscription service awareness was lower (46.0%), suggesting a need for better communication. Milk was the most recognized product (40.0%), followed by paneer (14.0%) and curd (11.0%), while awareness of butter, lassi, and cereals remained low. Promotional visibility and product trials were moderate, with 49.5% reporting exposure to promotions and 50.5% prior product experience. The mean awareness score of 3.06 on a five-point scale indicates moderate consumer awareness, implying that while the company has reasonable visibility, there is scope to enhance awareness through intensive campaigns, community engagement, and improved communication regarding quality, transparency, and subscription services.

3.3 Impact of BTL Activities on Consumer Engagement:
Likert scale analysis shows agree responses dominate across statements, indicating a positive perception of BTL activities. The highest score is for sampling trust (3.61), followed by stall engagement (3.52), highlighting direct interaction-based strategies. Other factors, such as app download motivation, offer trial, and promoter communication, also positively influence consumer behaviour. The lowest score is recorded for future purchase intention (3.18), indicating a lower impact on long-term buying decisions. Overall, BTL activities are effective, especially those involving consumer interaction and experience. Percentage analysis reveals product sampling ranked first, accounting for 23.0 per cent of respondents, indicating it as the most effective BTL activity. Followed by stall promotions (19.0%) and kids' engagement events (17.0%). On-spot milk testing ranked fourth with 15.0 per cent. Referral/word-of-mouth and community posters accounted for 12.0 per cent and 8.0 per cent, respectively, while 6.0 per cent of respondents reported none. Interactive and experience-based BTL activities are more effective in influencing consumers.

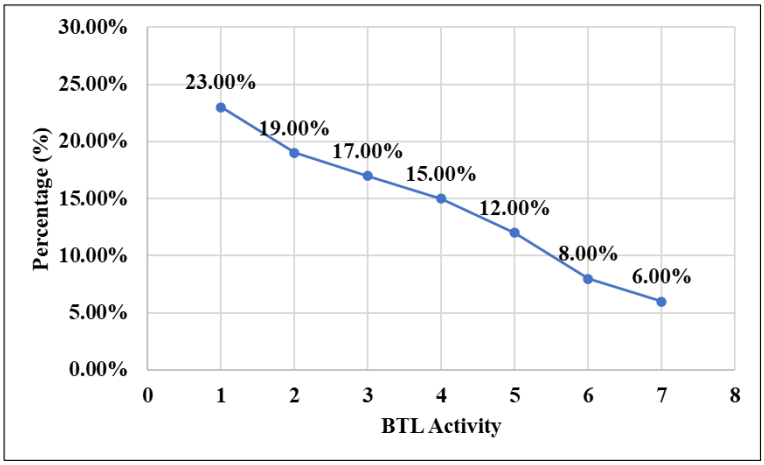

Fig 1: Most Effective BTL Activity

3.4. Consumer Preference Towards Company Products
Figure 2 presents the consumer preference pattern for the company's dairy products. Milk emerged as both the most frequently purchased (48.5%) and the most preferred (72.0%) product, indicating its dominant position in the product portfolio. Traditional dairy products such as curd and paneer also recorded moderate consumer preference. In contrast, value-added products, including butter, sweet lassi, breakfast cereals, and buttermilk, received comparatively lower preference, suggesting greater acceptance of staple dairy products over processed alternatives. With respect to milk preference, A2/Desi cow milk was the most preferred milk type (32.0%), followed by regular cow milk (28.0%) and buffalo milk (21.0%). Similarly, among the company's milk variants, the A2/Desi cow milk variant ranked first (21.0%), followed by cow milk (17.0%) and toned milk (15.5%), reflecting increasing consumer inclination towards premium and health-oriented dairy products. The purchasing pattern showed that daily and occasional purchases each accounted for 28.0%, while 24.5% of respondents purchased products weekly, indicating regular consumer engagement with dairy products. However, 19.5% of respondents had never purchased the company's products, highlighting potential opportunities for customer acquisition.
Among dairy brands, Nandini (22.0%) was the most widely used brand, followed by Akshayakalpa Organic (19.0%), while the company ranked third (18.0%), demonstrating strong competition in Bengaluru's organized dairy market. Consumers primarily selected dairy brands based on quality and freshness (21.0%), followed by price/value (19.0%), doorstep delivery (17.0%), and trust and transparency (16.0%), indicating that product quality and convenience were the major determinants of purchase decisions. Furthermore, 56.0% of respondents reported having switched dairy brands, suggesting that consumers are willing to change brands when they perceive better quality, freshness, value for money, convenience, or trust. Overall, the findings reveal that consumer preference in the premium dairy segment is primarily driven by product quality, health benefits, convenience, and brand reliability, while premium milk variants, particularly A2/Desi cow milk, are gaining increasing acceptance among urban consumers.

3.5 Factors influencing consumer preference for premium dairy brands and the company
The Garrett ranking analysis presented in Table 4 highlights the key factors influencing consumers' preference for premium dairy brands and the specific reasons for preferring the company. For premium dairy brands in general, quality of the product emerged as the most influential factor with the highest mean Garrett score (57.26), followed by freshness (53.21) and trust/transparency (52.33).

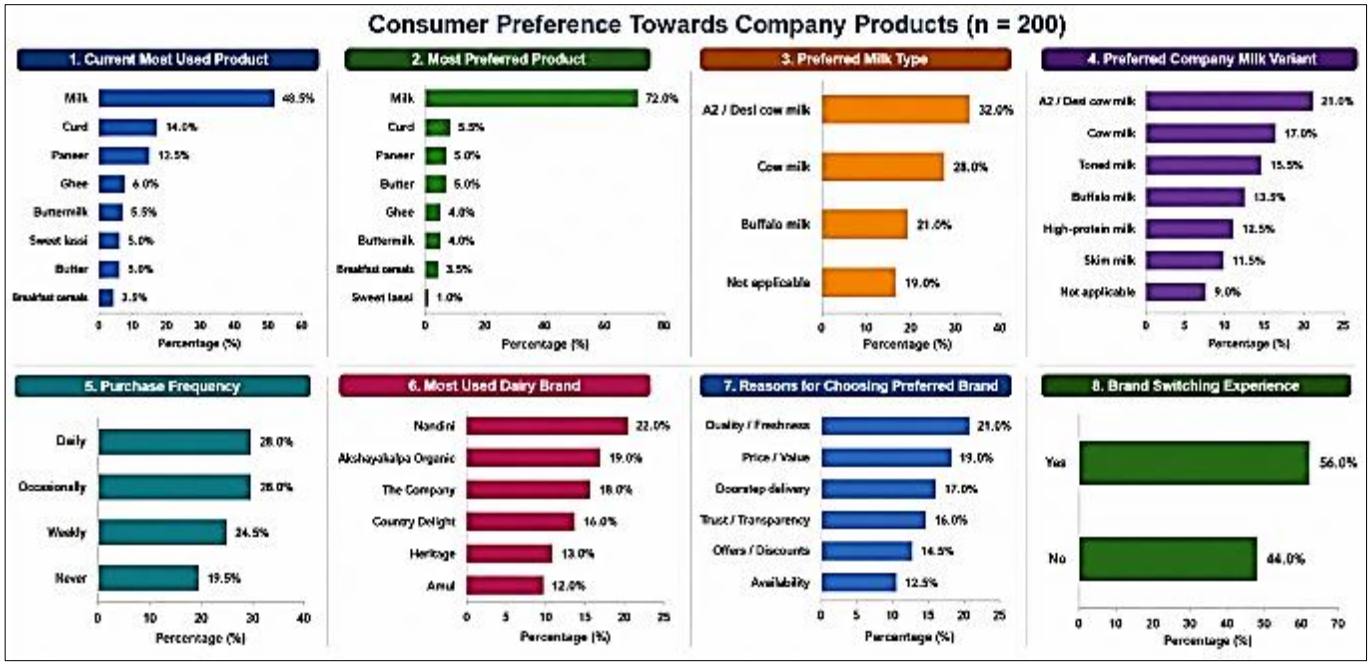

Fig 2: Consumer Preferences Towards Company Dairy Products in Bengaluru (n = 200)

These findings indicate that consumers primarily value product quality, freshness, and confidence in the brand over price or promotional incentives. Doorstep delivery (51.28) and price (48.32) exerted moderate influence, whereas brand image (47.05) and offers/discounts (42.57) were comparatively less important in determining consumer preference. Similarly, when evaluating the reasons for preferring the company, quality testing received the highest Garrett score (61.74), followed by freshness and taste (56.35) and doorstep delivery (54.33). Transparency and trust (50.84) also played an important role in strengthening consumer preference, while price/value (46.36), customer service (44.25), and offers (39.13) were ranked lower. The similarity in rankings across both analyses demonstrates that consumers consistently prioritize quality assurance, product freshness, trust, and convenience over promotional benefits. Overall, the findings suggest that maintaining superior product quality, ensuring rigorous quality testing, enhancing transparency, and providing reliable doorstep delivery are the most effective strategies for strengthening consumer preference and brand loyalty in the premium dairy market.

Table 4: Garrett's ranking of factors influencing premium dairy brand preference and preference for the company

Factors influencing premium dairy brand preference	Mean Garrett Score	Rank	Reasons for preferring the company	Mean Garrett Score	Rank
Quality of product	57.26	I	Quality testing	61.74	I
Freshness	53.21	II	Freshness and taste	56.35	II
Trust/Transparency	52.33	III	Doorstep delivery	54.33	III
Doorstep delivery	51.28	IV	Transparency/Trust	50.84	IV
Price	48.32	V	Price/Value	46.36	V
Brand image	47.05	VI	Customer service	44.25	VI
Offers/Discounts	42.57	VII	Offers	39.13	VII

4. Conclusion

The study revealed that the majority of consumers were middle-aged, well-educated, and belonged to moderate to high-income groups, reflecting typical urban household characteristics. Consumers showed moderate awareness and familiarity with dairy brands, indicating scope for improvement in deeper brand understanding. The findings highlight that consumers generally prefer fresh and high-quality dairy products, with milk, curd, and paneer being the most commonly consumed items. However, despite the growing preference for premium dairy products, consumer decisions are influenced by multiple factors such as price, quality, convenience, and trust. The study also identified that while awareness exists, gaps remain in effective communication and understanding of certain product practices. These findings suggest that although the market potential is strong, improvements are required in awareness-building and consumer engagement strategies. Dairy companies can enhance their market performance by increasing consumer awareness through regular sampling activities, community engagement programmes, and interactive promotional events. These initiatives can help improve brand familiarity and build stronger connections with consumers. Efforts should also be made to communicate product benefits, quality standards, and practices more clearly to enhance consumer understanding and trust.

Limitations

The study is limited to Bengaluru city and purposively selected respondents. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to all consumer groups. Future studies may employ probability sampling across multiple metropolitan cities.

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