

New findings regarding Indian food sustainability

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Researchers in India have expanded the well-known theory of planned behavior to obtain useful marketing and policy insights concerning the sustainability choices of consumers when it comes to food. The study,

[published](#) in the *International Journal of Sustainable Society*, analyzed data from 440 Indian households via self-administered questionnaires, which were then analyzed using structural equation modeling.

The addition of three variables—environmental knowledge, personal norms, and product attributes—not commonly used in traditional TPB model allowed the researchers to extract implications for various stakeholders, including producers, marketers, [government agencies](#), and policymakers.

Priyanka Garg and Ashish Kumar of the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University in New Delhi, and Raj Kumar Mittal of the Chaudhary Bansi Lal University in Haryana, India, demonstrated that their extended model could account for much of the variance in behavioral intentions. It showed that product attributes are the strongest predictor of sustainable food consumption behavior.

By contrast, and perhaps surprisingly, [social norms](#) had far less influence on the choices made by consumers. This, the team suggests, implies that factors such as food labeling, quality, and price must play a significant role in shaping choice rather than societal and peer pressure.

This research sits in the middle of growing global food and environmental crises. We are seeing continued [population growth](#), [environmental degradation](#) and [habitat loss](#), as well as the detrimental effects of climate change. As such, there are increasing pressures on agriculture and food resources. This is all despite, and perhaps in some ways, because of technological advances.

There is a pressing need to shift our approach to food security towards more sustainable options. Sustainable dietary practices, including the consumption of local and plant-based foods rather than intensively produced meat products, could play a role in this. The side effects might

even be a boost to our overall health, as well as a reduction in the environmental impact of food production. However, making such changes requires commitment and our ability to overcome many deeply ingrained cultural and social practices.

There is potential to change attitudes through clear, informative food labeling as well as educational campaigns to emphasize the benefits of sustainable food products. If marketing strategies can be aligned with addressing the ongoing crises, then consumer preferences might change and we could see the more widespread adoption of sustainable food choices.

However, the [market share](#) for sustainable food products remains low. This suggests the need for a concerted effort from all stakeholders—producers, marketers, governments, and campaigners—to persuade consumers to make the sustainable choice.

More information: Priyanka Garg et al, Sustainable food consumption behaviour: what really matters!, *International Journal of Sustainable Society* (2024). [DOI: 10.1504/IJSSOC.2024.139496](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSSOC.2024.139496)

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