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## **Influence of Social Media and AI on Buying Behaviour of Gen Y and Gen Z towards Eco-Friendly Food Products**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the influence of social media and artificial intelligence (AI) on the buying behaviour of Generation Y and Generation Z towards eco-friendly food products. In the digital era, social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have become powerful tools for marketing, while AI technologies enable personalized advertisements, recommendations, and content delivery based on user preferences. These advancements have significantly transformed the way consumers interact with and purchase sustainable food products. The primary objective of this study is to analyse how social media exposure and AI-driven marketing strategies affect the awareness, perception, and purchasing decisions of Gen Y and Gen Z consumers. It also aims to compare the behavioural patterns of these two generations in terms of their responsiveness to influencers, advertisements, and digital recommendations related to eco-friendly food products. The research adopts a descriptive and analytical approach, using both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire from respondents belonging to Gen Y and Gen Z. The study focuses on key factors such as social media usage, influence of digital content, trust in online information, and preference for sustainable consumption. The findings of the study are expected to reveal that Gen Z is more influenced by social media trends and influencer marketing, whereas Gen Y tends to rely more on product information, reviews, and credibility. Additionally, AI-enabled marketing strategies are likely to play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and encouraging the adoption of eco-friendly food products. The study provides valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, and agri-business firms to design effective digital marketing strategies that promote sustainable consumption among different consumer segments.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Social Media, Consumer Behaviour, Sustainable Food Products, Generation Y and Generation Z.

## Introduction

In recent years, the rapid growth of digital technologies has significantly transformed consumer buying behaviour across various sectors, including the food industry. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have emerged as powerful tools for influencing consumer decisions. At the same time, artificial intelligence (AI) has enhanced the effectiveness of digital marketing through personalized advertisements, recommendations, and content delivery based on user preferences.

Eco-friendly food products, including organic and sustainable food items, have gained considerable attention due to increasing health awareness and environmental concerns among consumers. In this context, social media and AI play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and encouraging sustainable consumption.

Generation Y and Generation Z represent two important consumer segments in the digital era. While Gen Z is highly active on social media and easily influenced by digital trends, Gen Y tends to make more informed and practical purchasing decisions. Therefore, it becomes essential to study how these two generations respond to social media and AI-driven marketing strategies in the context of eco-friendly food products.

This study aims to analyse the influence of social media and AI on the buying behaviour of Gen Y and Gen Z consumers and to identify the key factors that drive their purchase decisions towards sustainable food products.

### Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the impact of social media on consumer buying behaviour.
- To study the role of AI-based marketing in influencing purchase decisions.
- To compare the buying behaviour of Gen Y and Gen Z.
- To examine awareness towards eco-friendly food products.

### Review of Literature

**Garg and Mehta (2025)** explored AI-driven marketing and concluded that AI-enabled personalization improves customer satisfaction and strengthens purchase intention towards sustainable products. The study highlighted the importance of integrating AI with digital marketing strategies for promoting eco-friendly consumption.

**Roy, Banerjee, and Das (2025)** examined the impact of social media marketing on Generation Z consumers and found that digital engagement, online reviews, and influencer endorsements significantly affect purchase intention. The study emphasized that Gen Z consumers are highly responsive to social media-based marketing strategies.

**Singh and Pandey (2024)** reported that social media platforms play a vital role in spreading awareness about sustainable products and encouraging green consumption behaviour among younger consumers. The study highlighted that interactive content, reviews, and influencer promotions enhance consumer engagement and trust.

**Nguyen, Tran, and Le (2024)** found that AI-powered recommendation systems significantly influence consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly food products by providing personalized suggestions aligned with consumer preferences and environmental values.

**Verma, Sharma, and Singh (2023)** examined the role of AI-enabled marketing strategies in promoting sustainable consumption. Their study found that personalized recommendations and targeted advertisements significantly enhance consumer engagement and positively influence purchase intention towards eco-friendly products. The authors emphasized that AI improves decision-making by providing relevant and customized information to consumers.

**Kumar and Gupta (2022)** analysed the impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour and reported that digital platforms play a crucial role in shaping purchase decisions through influencer marketing and interactive content. The study concluded that repeated exposure to branded content increases consumer trust and purchase intention.

**Huang and Rust (2021)** explored the role of AI in marketing and highlighted that AI-driven tools such as chatbots, recommendation systems, and predictive analytics enhance customer experience and improve purchase decisions. Their study emphasized that personalization is a key factor in influencing consumer behaviour in the digital era.

### **Social Media**

Social media refers to internet-based interactive platforms that enable users to create, share, and exchange content while communicating and engaging with others in real time. Applications such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook function not only as communication tools but also as dynamic socio-technical systems that integrate technology, users, and digital content. These platforms facilitate two-way or multi-way communication, allowing individuals, communities, and businesses to interact, express opinions, and influence each other's perceptions and decisions. Social media also serves as a major source of information where consumers access product details, reviews, and recommendations, particularly through user-generated content and influencer marketing. Moreover, it acts as a powerful marketing medium that enables organizations to promote products, build brand awareness, and engage directly with target audiences in a cost-effective manner. With the integration of artificial intelligence, social media platforms deliver personalized content, targeted

advertisements, and tailored recommendations based on user preferences, making them highly influential in shaping consumer attitudes, preferences, and buying behaviour, especially among Generation Y and Generation Z.

### Features of Social Media

- **User-Generated Content (UGC)**
  - Users create content (posts, reels, reviews)
  - Example: Product review videos, food reels
- **Interactivity**
  - Like, comment, share options
  - Two-way communication (brand ↔ consumer)
- **Real-Time Communication**
  - Instant updates and fast information sharing
- **Personalization (AI-based)**
  - Content shown based on user interest
  - Example: Recommended reels, ads
- **Virality**
  - Content can spread quickly to millions of users

### Types of Social Media

- **Social Networking Sites**

These platforms help people connect, communicate, and build relationships.

  - Example: Facebook
  - Use: chatting, sharing posts, building communities
- **Media Sharing Platforms**

Used for sharing photos, videos, and visual content.

  - Examples: Instagram, YouTube
  - Use: reels, videos, product promotion
- **Microblogging Platforms**

Allow users to share short messages or updates.

  - Example: Twitter (X)
  - Use: quick news, opinions, trends
- **Professional Networking Platforms**

Used for career growth and professional connections.

  - Example: LinkedIn
  - Use: job search, networking, business promotion

- **Discussion Forums & Communities**  
Platforms where users discuss topics and share opinions.
  - Examples: Reddit, Quora
  - Use: knowledge sharing, problem-solving
- **Bloggng & Publishing Platforms**  
Used to write and publish detailed content or articles.
  - Example: WordPress
  - Use: long-form content, research, opinions
- **Messaging Apps**  
Used for instant communication and sharing media.
  - Examples: WhatsApp, Telegram
  - Use: chatting, group communication
- **Role of Social Media in Marketing**  
Social media has changed traditional marketing into digital and interactive marketing.

**Major Roles:**

- Product promotion
- Brand awareness
- Customer engagement
- Influencer marketing
- Customer feedback

Example:

- Organic food brands promote products through reels
- Influencers recommend eco-friendly products

- **Social Media and Consumer Behaviour**

Social media strongly affects how consumers:

- Search for products
- Evaluate alternatives
- Make purchase decisions

**Key Influences:**

- Reviews and ratings
- Influencer recommendations
- Advertisements
- Peer opinions

Example:

- A person sees an organic food reel → reads comments → buys product.

## Eco-Friendly Food Products

### Meaning of Eco-Friendly Food Products

Eco-friendly food products are food items that are produced, processed, and distributed in a way that causes **minimal harm to the environment** and supports **sustainable agriculture**. These products are free from harmful chemicals, pesticides, and artificial additives, and they promote the health of both consumers and the ecosystem.

### Characteristics

- **Organic and Chemical-Free**

Eco-friendly food products are grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), relying instead on natural farming methods.

- **Environmentally Sustainable Production**

These products are produced using methods that conserve natural resources such as soil and water, and reduce environmental pollution.

- **Eco-Friendly Packaging**

They often use biodegradable, recyclable, or minimal packaging to reduce environmental waste.

- **Ethical and Local Sourcing**

Eco-friendly food products often support local farmers and follow fair trade practices, promoting social and economic sustainability.

- **Examples of Eco-Friendly Food Products**

- Organic fruits and vegetables
- Chemical-free grains and pulses
- Organic dairy products
- Natural honey
- Plant-based and herbal food products

### Importance of Eco-Friendly Food Products

- **Environmental Benefits**

They help reduce pollution, conserve biodiversity, and promote sustainable use of natural resources.

- **Health Benefits**

Being free from harmful chemicals, these products are safer and often more nutritious for consumers.

- **Sustainability**

They contribute to long-term environmental sustainability and protect resources for future generations.

**Role in Consumer Behaviour**

The demand for eco-friendly food products is increasing due to rising health awareness and environmental concerns. Social media platforms and AI-based marketing strategies play a significant role in promoting these products by increasing awareness and influencing consumer preferences, especially among Generation Y and Generation Z.

**Role of Social Media in Eco-Friendly Food Products**

Social media helps in promoting sustainable consumption:

How?

- Awareness about organic food
- Health benefits information
- Environmental impact education
- Influencer promotion of eco-friendly brands

Example:

- Fitness influencer promoting organic honey

**Gen Y vs Gen Z****Gen Z**

- Highly active on social media
- Influenced by reels, influencers
- Quick decision-making

**Gen Y**

- Uses social media but more practical
- Focus on reviews and detailed info
- More rational buying behaviour

**Advantages of Social Media**

- Easy access to information
- Quick communication
- Strong marketing tool
- Influences large audience

### Limitations of Social Media

- Fake reviews / misleading ads
- Over-dependence on influencers
- Privacy concerns
- Information overload

### Conclusion

This chapter highlights the growing importance of social media and artificial intelligence (AI) in shaping modern consumer behaviour, particularly among Generation Y and Generation Z. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have transformed the way consumers access information, interact with brands, and make purchasing decisions. The interactive nature, wide reach, and user-generated content of these platforms make them highly influential in promoting products and services, including eco-friendly food products.

The chapter further explains that AI plays a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of social media by providing personalized content, targeted advertisements, and intelligent recommendations based on consumer preferences. These technologies not only improve customer engagement but also influence attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions.

Additionally, the chapter emphasizes the differences between Gen Y and Gen Z consumers, where Gen Z is more influenced by social media trends and digital content, while Gen Y tends to rely more on product information, reviews, and credibility. Despite these differences, both generations show increasing awareness and preference for sustainable and eco-friendly products.

Overall, it can be concluded that the integration of social media and AI has created a powerful digital ecosystem that significantly impacts consumer buying behaviour. For marketers and businesses, especially in the eco-friendly food sector, it is essential to adopt innovative digital strategies to effectively target and engage these consumer segments and promote sustainable consumption practices.

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