HEALTHY SNACKING REPORT 2026

A Wholesome Consumer Insights Study

Presented by Farmley®
Unveiled at IHSS 2026

Index

Foreword

Remember when snacking was spontaneous? A handful of chips during a cricket match, a sweet treat after dinner, a namkeen pack tossed into the basket on a whim. It was unplanned, casual and mostly about feeding an urge.

But snacking isn't what it used to be. It has become an expression of who we are and what we value. Today, our snack choices reflect our lifestyles, our health priorities, even our cultural roots. Snacking has evolved from background noise into a statement.

Over the past year, Farmley immersed itself in this shift. Beyond the data, we visited homes and markets, listened to stories over chai, and watched what people actually reached for. One truth stood out: Indians want snacks that taste good and do good. No more trade-offs between pleasure and health.

This report captures that transformation. It is not just about what we eat. It is about how snacking has become woven into the rhythms of our daily lives. Let's explore this new world, one bite at a time.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

86% of Indian snackers say **protein** is important in their snack choices

61% would definitely choose a snack made with **jaggery or dates** over refined sugar

62% say **ingredient transparency** is the #1 thing that builds trust in a snack brand

52% of women say they would definitely buy snacks formulated for period nutrition

74% would definitely try regional Indian flavours in healthy snacks

59% of parents are willing to pay more for **healthier snack** options for their child

1 in 3 **Indian snackers flag refined sugar as their #1 ingredient concern**

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

WHY THIS REPORT MATTERS

6,000 Voices. One Clear Picture

India's snacking market is growing fast - but the conversations shaping it are often built on assumptions. Which flavours are winning? Who is actually buying healthy? What does 'better for you' mean to a 45-year-old in Tier 2 city versus a 25-year-old in a metro? The India Healthy Snacking Survey 2026 was designed to answer these questions with rigour, scale, and honesty.

4

4 GENERATIONS CAPTURED

PAN-INDIA

PAN-INDIA REACH ACROSS METRO, TIER 1, TIER 2, & TIER 3+ CITIES

ONLINE + OFFLINE
METHODOLOGY

6,000
TOTAL RESPONDENTS

60+
QUESTIONS

No single city. No single age group. No single platform. This report draws from one of the largest independent snacking surveys conducted in India — giving brands, retailers, and category builders a ground-level view of where Indian snacking is headed and why.

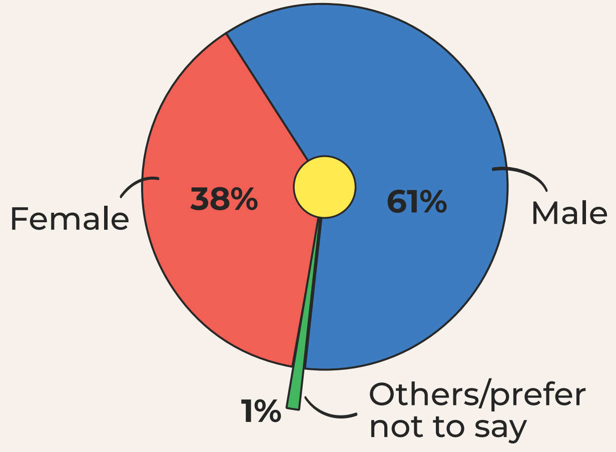
Healthy Snacking Report 2026

WHO RESPONDED?

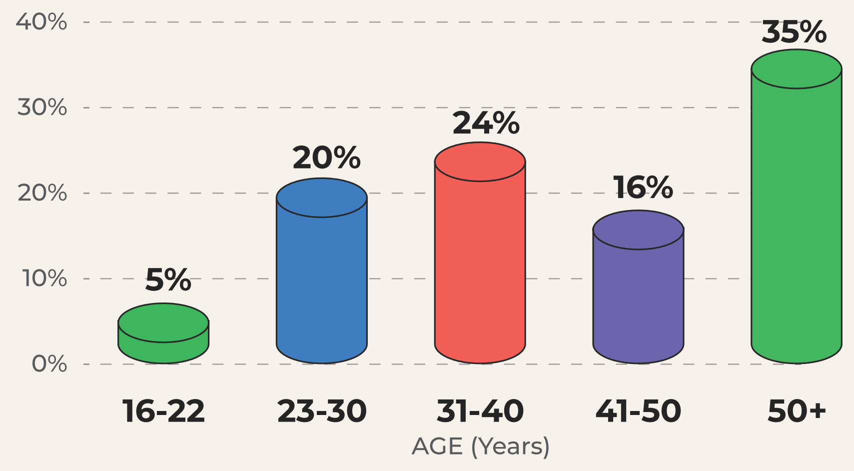
Respondent Profile

This year's survey reached 6,000 respondents across city tiers, age groups, and occupations — from professionals and homemakers to students, retirees, and entrepreneurs. While the sample skews urban and male, reflecting India's most active online snackers, its broad demographic spread ensures the findings represent the wider Indian snacking population, not just a single segment.

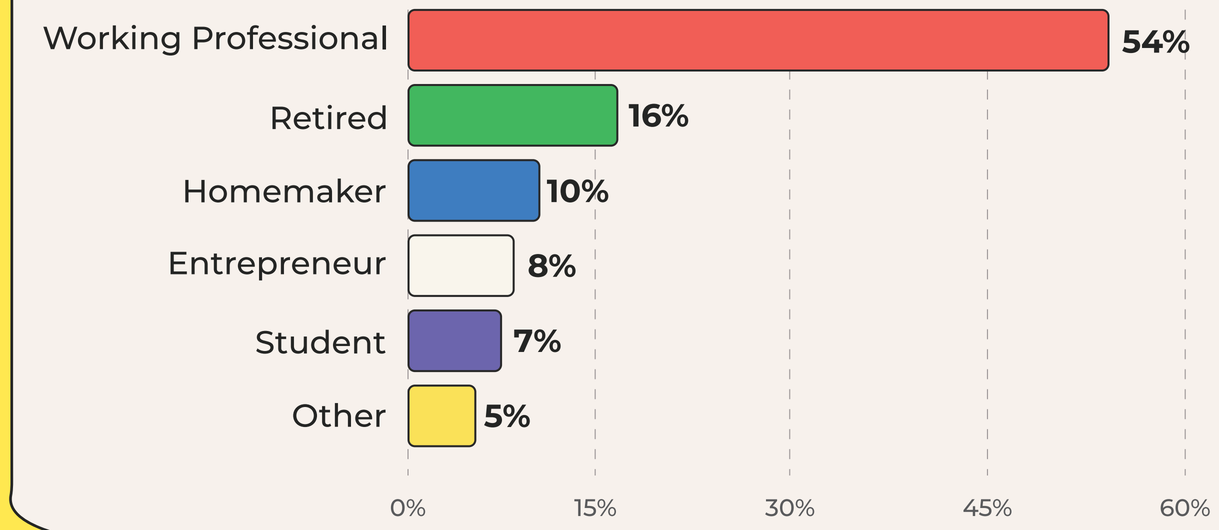
GENDER SPLIT



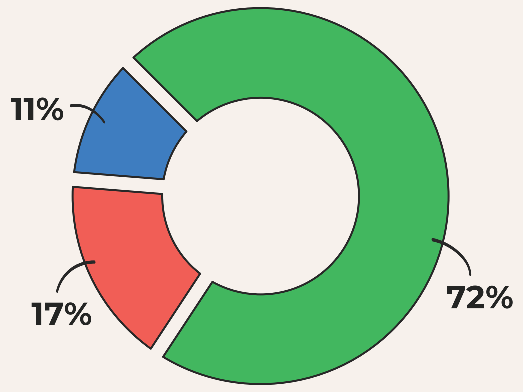
AGE SPLIT



OCCUPATION SPLIT



CITY TIER SPLIT



Metro includes Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata. Tier 1 includes cities like Pune, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Lucknow.

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

WHEN DO THEY SNACK?

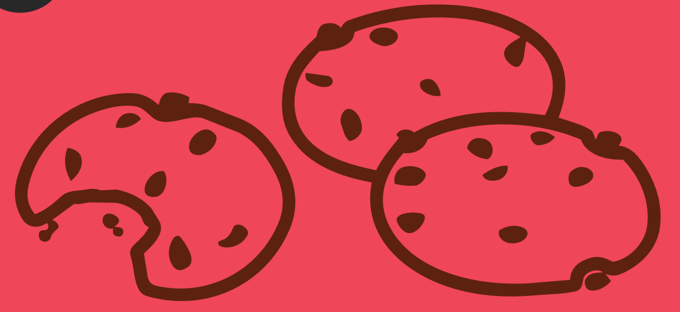
The Ritual of the Evening Bite

Snacking in India is not random — it is rhythmic. And the rhythm of the Indian snacker beats loudest at one moment above all others: the evening tea hour. It is the snacking occasion that no other time of day comes close to matching, and it has remained undefeated across age groups, city tiers, and lifestyles.

Mid-morning comes in as a distant second, followed by snacking during work or study. These are functional moments — snacks that fuel focus and bridge the gap between meals. Late night snacking exists but is a minority habit, driven largely by younger snackers.

EVENING TEA TIME

IS **INDIA'S #1** SNACKING OCCASION - BY A MILE



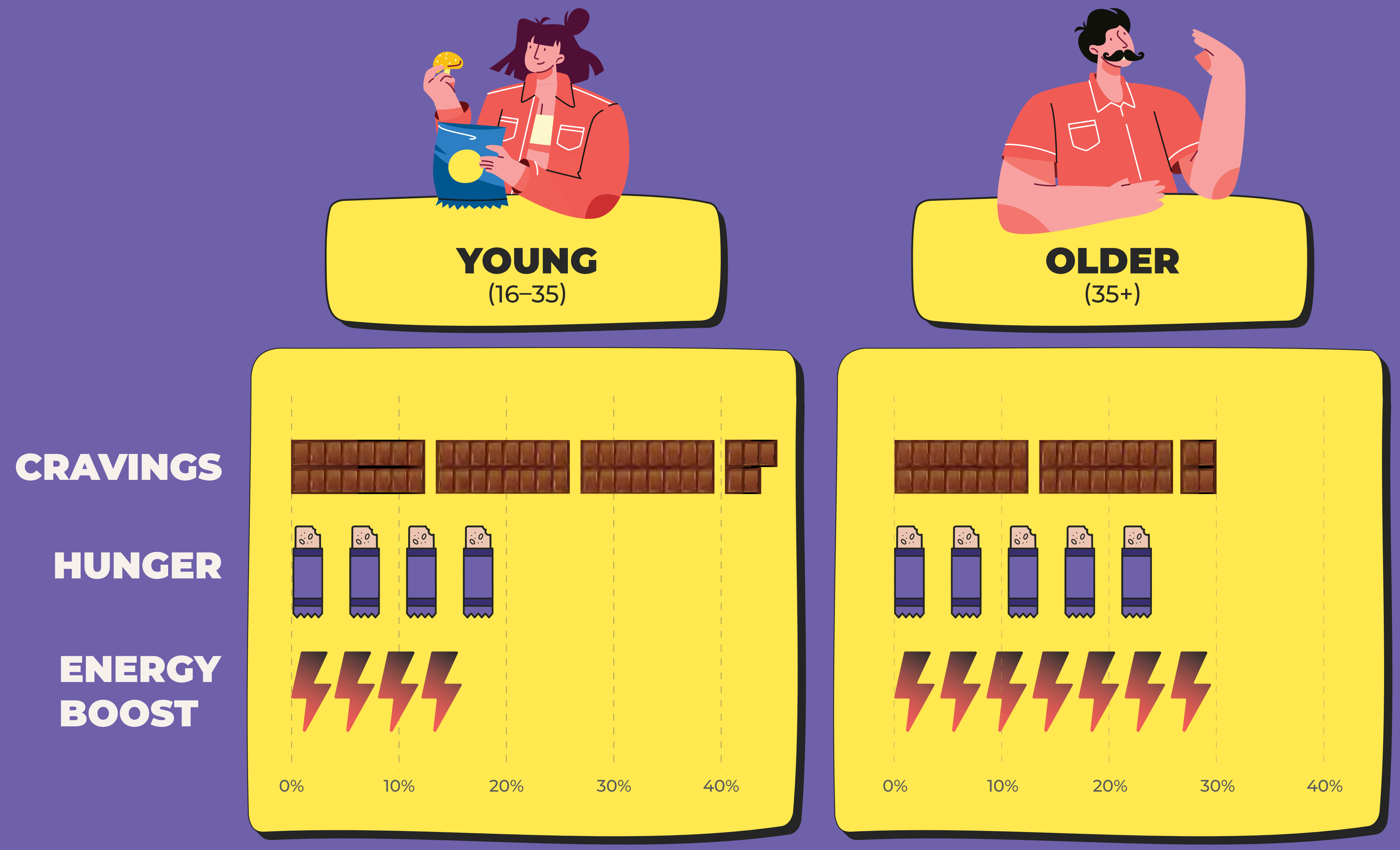
Healthy Snacking Report 2026

WHAT DRIVES THE SNACK?

Young vs Older — Two Very Different Hunger Stories

Ask a 25-year-old why they reached for a snack and ask a 50-year-old the same question — and you will get very different answers. Age shapes the snacking triggers in ways that are both predictable and surprising, and the data tells a story that every brand targeting Indian snackers needs to understand.

For younger snackers, it is visceral and immediate — a craving hits, boredom sets in, and the hand moves toward the snack. For older snackers, the motivation is more considered — energy levels, sustained focus, and the rhythm of social occasions drive the reach. Same snack aisle, very different reasons for being there.



Factors that motivate them to snack

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

PROTEIN PLEASE!

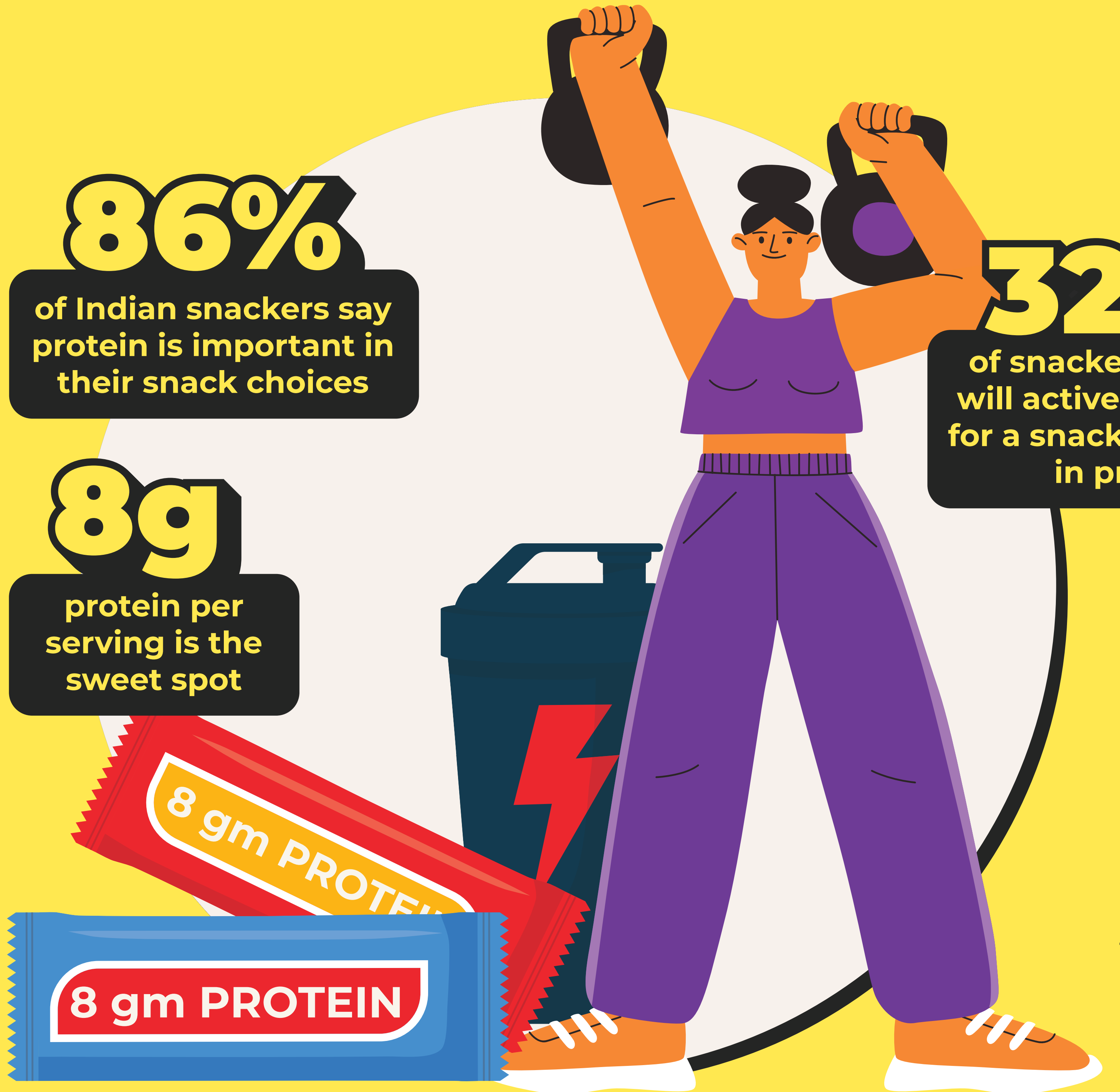
The Era of the Intentional Snacker

Protein has arrived in the Indian snack aisle — and it is not leaving. What was once the language of gym-goers and fitness influencers is now the expectation of the everyday snacker, cutting across age groups, city tiers, and lifestyles.

For 86% of Indian snackers, protein is no longer optional. It is the lens through which a snack is evaluated before anything else — India has quietly become a protein-first snacking nation.

86%
of Indian snackers say protein is important in their snack choices

8g
protein per serving is the sweet spot



32%
of snackers say they will actively pay more for a snack that is high in protein

This has moved from awareness to action. 32% of snackers say they will actively pay more for a snack that is high in protein, with 8 grams per serving as the sweet spot they look for on the label.

The ask is simple: give me something that tastes good and actually works. Brands that deliver real protein, clean ingredients, and a label that holds up to scrutiny are not just selling a snack — they are selling a reason to come back every single day.

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

INGREDIENTS & SWEETENERS

India Is Breaking Up With Refined Sugar

The clean label movement in India is no longer aspirational — it is active. Indians know exactly what they want to avoid, and refined sugar is firmly in the crosshairs, with 33% citing it as their single biggest ingredient concern.

The sweetener shift is equally decisive. Dates and date paste are the preferred sweetener for 29% of respondents, followed by jaggery at 22% — deeply familiar, culturally trusted ingredients that consumers want their snacks to be built on.

Most telling of all: 61% say they would definitely choose a snack made with jaggery or dates instead of refined sugar. The consumer has already decided — the question is whether the product has caught up.

And despite the global buzz around stevia and monk fruit, only 13% of Indian snackers are gravitating toward zero-calorie sweeteners. The majority are looking for real, whole food ingredients they recognise.

61%

of Indian snackers would definitely choose a snack made with jaggery or dates over refined sugar

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

FLAVOUR PROFILES: CRAVINGS RULE

SAVOURY SNACKS

Flavour is what starts the craving — and in savoury snacking, India craves bold. Regional Indian masala leads the preference charts, followed closely by spicy-tangy and peri peri. Timeless classics like salted and cheesy are present, but the punchy, heat-forward profiles are truly winning hearts.

These combinations go beyond taste — they're rooted in memory. The tang of aamchur, the heat of chilli, the earthiness of masala are flavours Indians grew up with, turning every tangy crunch into a moment of comfort.

"I'm not giving up on flavour. But if it's **clean, natural,** and still **tastes good** - that's a win."

- PERI PERI
- INDIAN MASALA
- SPICY TANGY

SWEET SNACKS

In sweet snacking, chocolate reigns supreme — a timeless indulgence that delivers pure satisfaction regardless of age or occasion. Nutty flavours like peanut butter and hazelnut follow closely, while traditional Indian flavours hold strong in third.

But the most exciting finding isn't what Indians prefer today — it's what they're ready to explore. 74% say they would definitely try regional Indian flavours in healthy snacks. The invitation to innovate has never been more open.

- CHOCOLATE
- NUTTY FLAVOUR
- TRADITIONAL INDIAN

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

WHERE DO THEY BUY SNACKS?

The Quick Commerce Takeover

The snack aisle has moved to a phone screen. Quick commerce has become the go-to snack channel for urban India, with Blinkit commanding 31% of quick commerce snack purchases, Zepto at 16%, and Instamart at 15%.

The reason is simple. Indians aren't choosing quick commerce for the deals — they're choosing it because it removes every barrier between a craving and its satisfaction. The moment someone wants a snack, they want it now.

QUICK
COMMERCE HAS BECOME THE GO-TO SNACK CHANNEL FOR URBAN INDIA

But offline is far from finished. When Indians walk into a store, what catches their eye first is visibility — 35% say shelf presence is what matters most when buying offline. A brand that isn't visible on the shelf simply doesn't exist for that shopper.

The snacking market of 2026 rewards brands that show up everywhere — on quick commerce at midnight and on the supermarket shelf at 6pm. Presence is the new competitive advantage.

35%
shelf presence is what matters most to Indians shopping offline

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

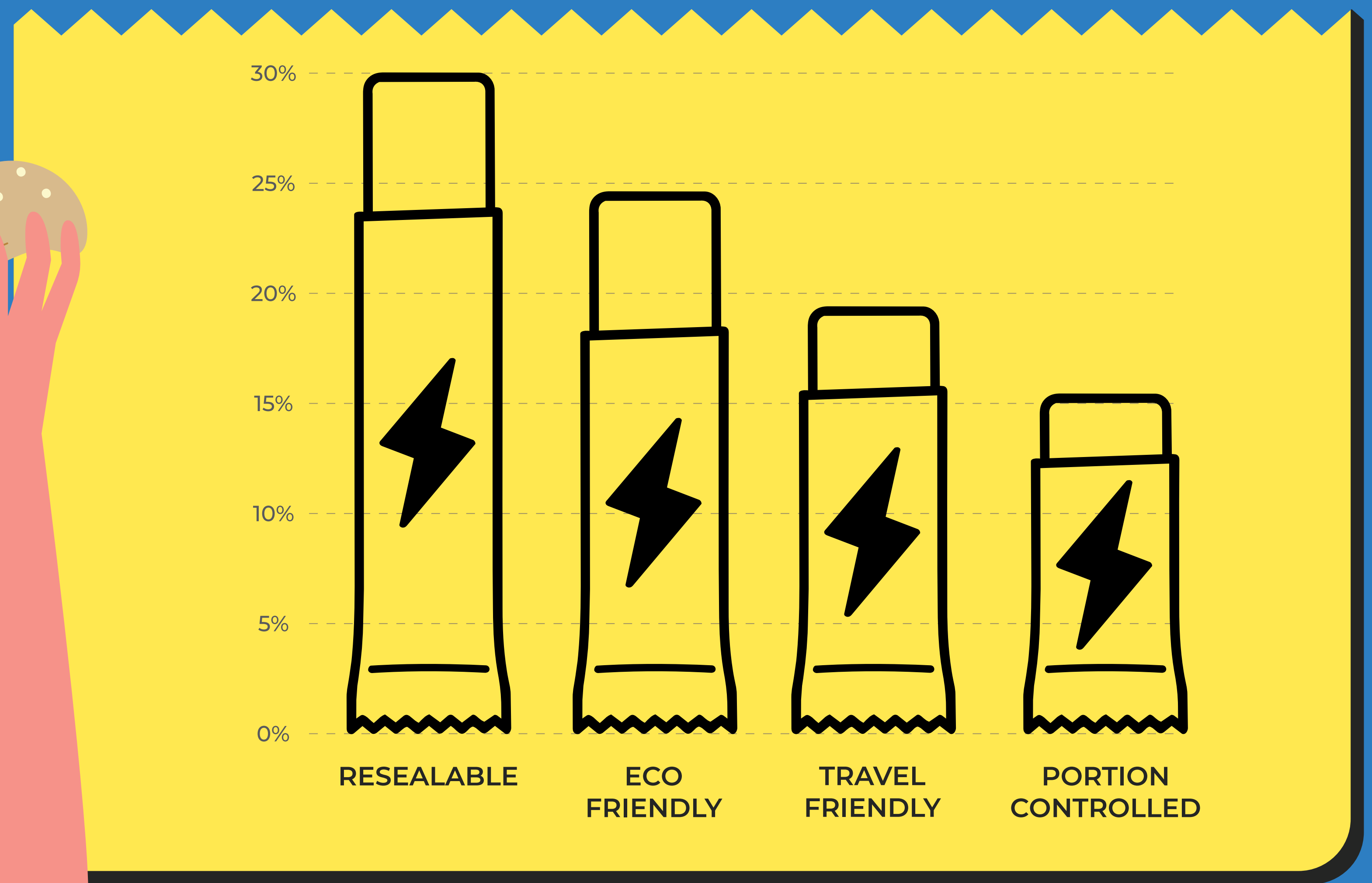
PACKAGING

More Than Just Looks

Packaging has earned its seat at the strategy table. For the modern Indian snacker, the pack is not just a container — it is a signal of quality, values, and whether a brand has genuinely thought about the person on the other side of the purchase.

Functionality leads the conversation. Resealable packaging is the most wanted feature at 30%, followed closely by eco-friendly packaging at 25% — no longer a nice-to-have but a firm expectation. Travel-friendly design and portion-controlled formats round out the list.

These aren't just design preferences — they're practical and ethical demands that directly affect whether a product gets bought again. The packaging brief writes itself: reseal it, make it eco-friendly, and make it travel-ready.



For the INDIAN SNACKER, how you SEAL IT matters as much as what's inside it

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

WHY DO SNACKERS TRUST A BRAND?

Earned, Not Bought

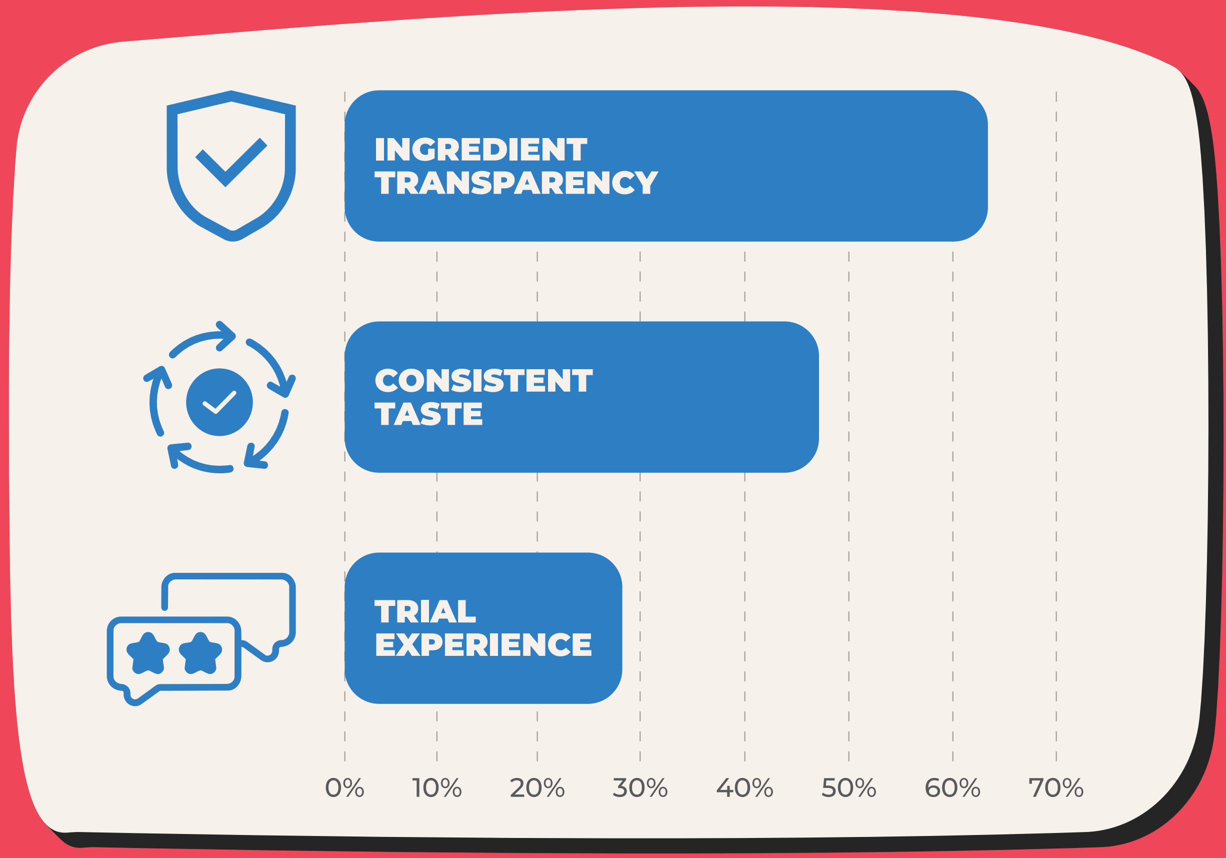
Nearly half of all Indian snackers have already made up their mind, sticking to their one or two trusted brands. That loyalty isn't won at the point of purchase — it's won long before, through a series of small promises kept.

So what builds that trust? Ingredient transparency leads at 62%, followed by consistent taste at 47% and trial experience at 29%. Influencer reviews and celebrity endorsements together account for just 10% — the consumer isn't looking for a famous face, they're looking for a brand that delivers on its word every single time.

INGREDIENT TRANSPARENCY

is the #1 trust-builder - ahead of taste, influencers, and celebrities

For new brands, the path is clear: get into someone's hands, deliver on every promise the label makes, and taste exactly the same in every pack. Do that consistently, and today's experimenters become tomorrow's loyalists.



Healthy Snacking Report 2026

WHAT'S MISSING?

The Gap Between What Exists and What India Wants

The healthy snacking market in India is growing — but faster than it is improving. Consumers are clear about what's lacking: cleaner ingredients, better taste, more transparency, and more protein options. They want the full package — health, honesty, taste, and value — all at once.

When asked what healthy indulgence means to them, the answer was striking: natural ingredients, low sugar, guilt-free sweets, high protein treats. Not a compromise between health and pleasure — both, at the same time, without apology.

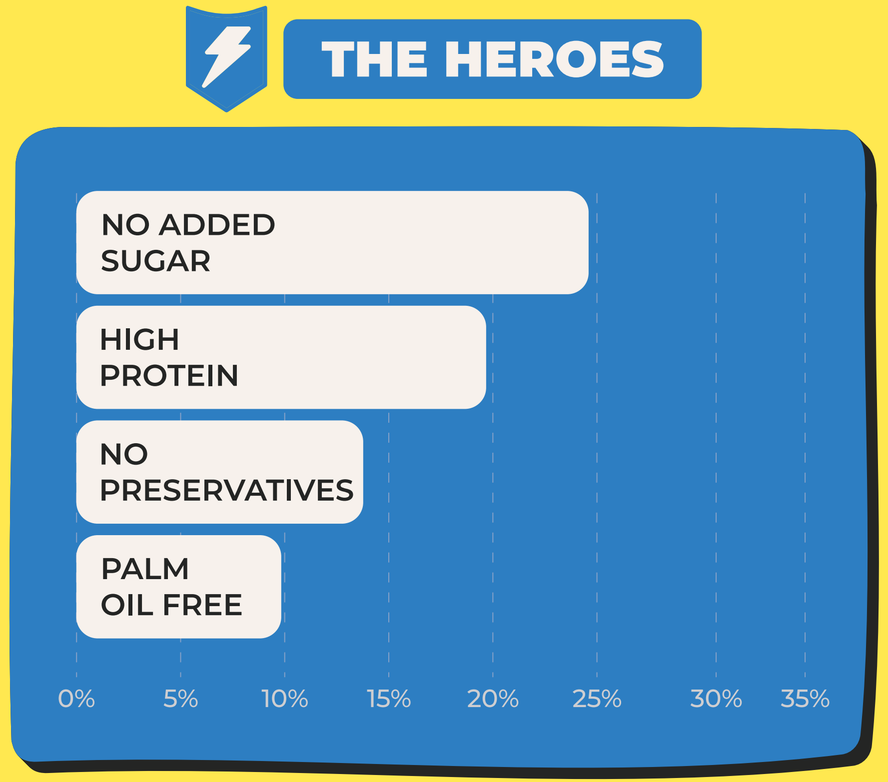
The brief for the next generation of Indian snacking is written right here. Make it clean. Make it honest. Make it taste good. Make it accessible. And make it feel like an indulgence — because that's exactly what it should be.

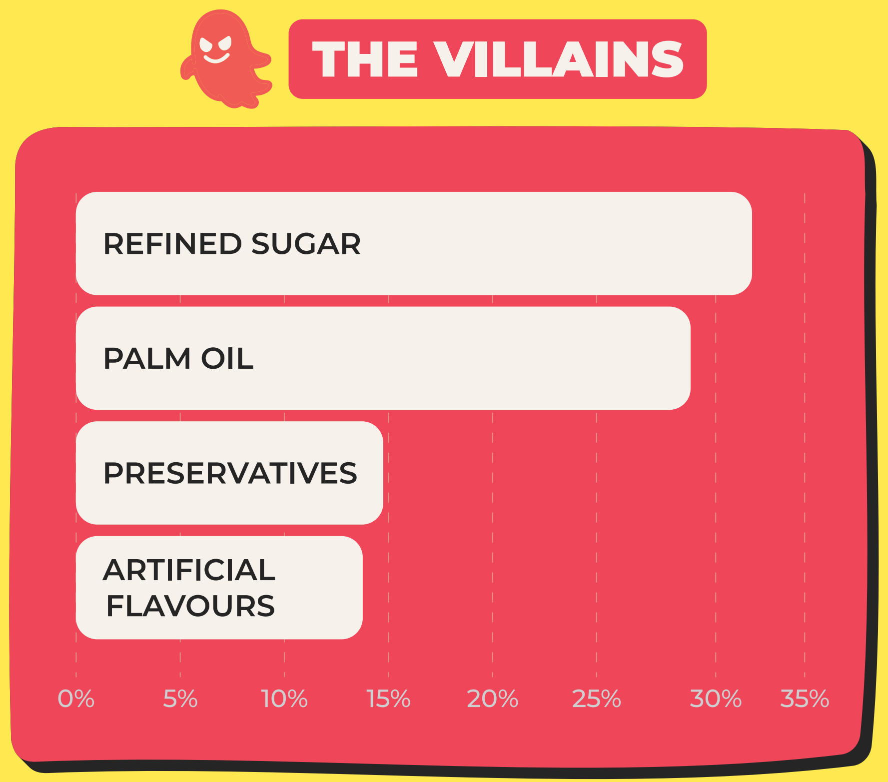
- ☑ CLEANER INGREDIENTS
- ☑ LESS SUGAR
- ☑ MORE PROTEIN
- ☑ TASTE

This is what India's snackers are asking for

HEROES & VILLAINS

What India Wants — and What It Wants Gone





The list speaks for itself. What consumers are actively seeking in their snacks is a direct mirror of what they most want to avoid. The snacker of 2026 is not confused — they know exactly what a better snack looks like.

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

HER SNACK, HER RULES

The Women's Wellness Gap Nobody Is Talking About

India's snacking market has largely spoken to everyone — and in doing so, has often spoken to no one in particular. The 2026 survey introduces a dedicated lens on women's snacking, revealing a large, underserved segment with real, unmet needs.

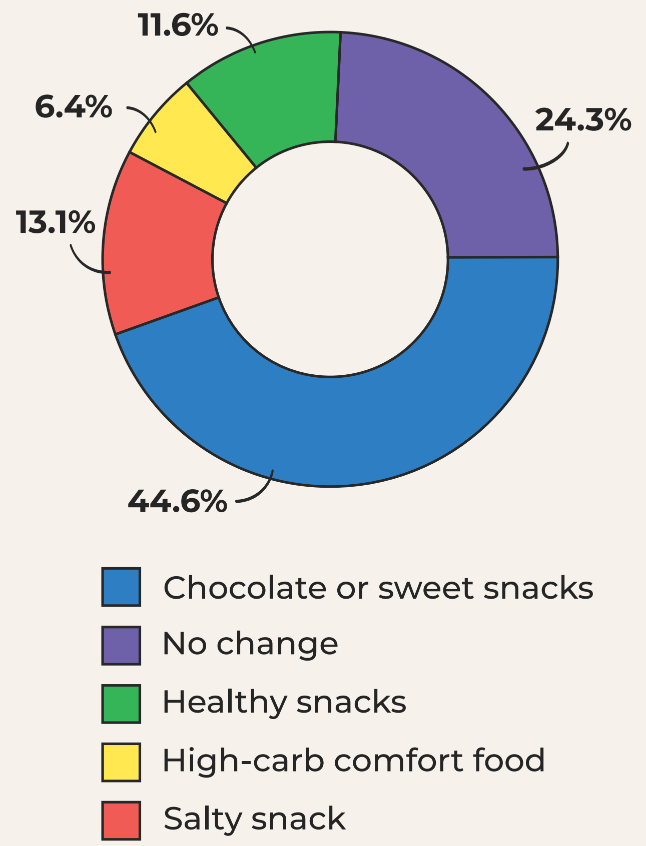
40% of women say their snacking cravings change significantly during their period, with 45% craving chocolate or sweet snacks. This isn't a guilty pleasure — it's a physiological response the snacking market has almost entirely ignored.

The demand signal is unambiguous: 52% of women would definitely buy snacks formulated for period nutrition — iron-rich, magnesium-rich, hormone-supportive. Not maybe. Definitely.

52%

of women would definitely buy snacks formulated for period nutrition

This is a mainstream opportunity sitting in plain sight. The brand that moves first — with the right formulation, honest communication, and the right price — won't just win a new category. It will earn the loyalty that comes from finally seeing a consumer who's long been overlooked.



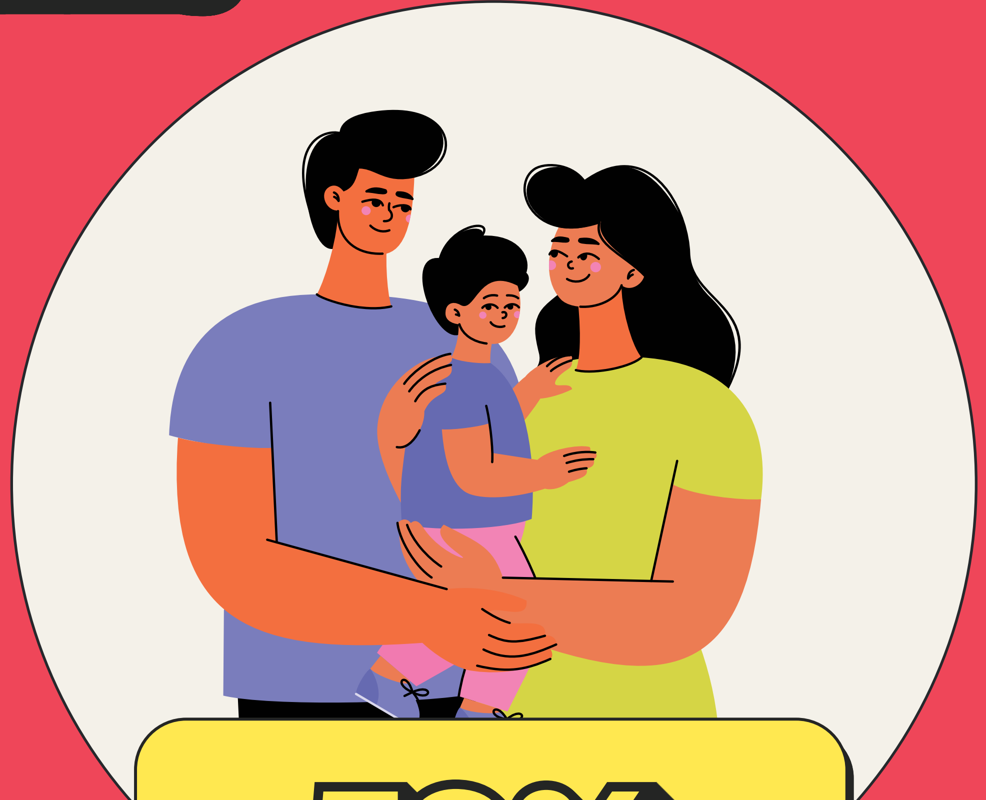
THE LITTLE SNACKERS

Parents Are the Real Consumer

When it comes to kids' snacking, the purchase decision almost never belongs to the child. Parents are the gatekeepers — for 69% of them, health and nutrition is the single most important factor when buying for their kids, with taste a distant second.

The anxiety behind that decision is real. Over half of parents cite too much sugar as their biggest concern. In a market where most kid-facing snacks lead with flavour and fun, this is a significant disconnect — the packaging may speak to the child, but the ingredient list is speaking to the parent.

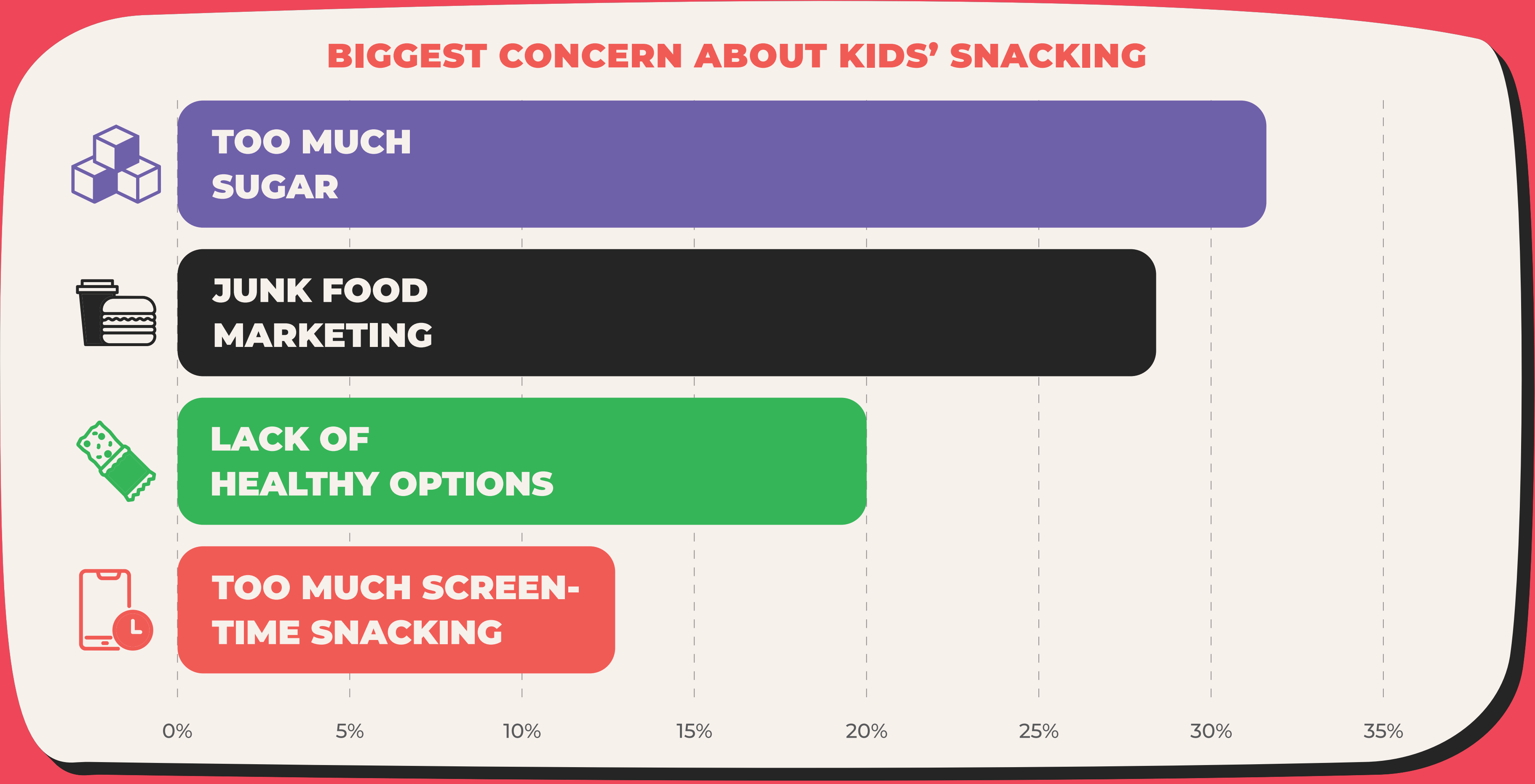
That concern translates into spend. 59% of parents say yes outright to paying more for healthier kids snacks, with a further 36% saying maybe — only 4% say no. It's one of the strongest value signals in this entire report.



59%

of parents are open to paying more for healthier snack options for their child

The opportunity here isn't cartoon packaging or clever marketing — it's clean ingredients, real nutrition, low sugar, and a taste kids will actually eat. Get those right, and the parent comes back every single week.



Healthy Snacking Report 2026

THE FINAL BITE

THE FUTURE OF SNACKING IN INDIA

India's snacking scene is at an exciting crossroads — where tradition meets innovation, and taste meets health. The Indian snacker has evolved: informed, intentional, and uncompromising. They want snacks that taste extraordinary and do something meaningful for their bodies.

The signals point in one clear direction. Protein is no longer a premium feature — it's a baseline expectation. Refined sugar is on notice. Makhana has cemented its place as India's superfood of choice. Quick commerce has redrawn the retail map. And two new conversations — women's wellness and kids' nutrition — have opened categories the market has barely begun to address.

The brands that define the next decade won't be the ones with the biggest budgets or the most famous faces. They'll be the ones with the clearest ingredient lists, the most honest communication, and the deepest understanding of what the Indian snacker is asking for.

That snacker has spoken — in 6,000 voices. The only question left is who is listening.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To capture a well-rounded picture of India's evolving snacking habits, the India Healthy Snacking Survey 2026 employed a mixed-method approach combining digital reach with on-ground engagement.

The online survey reached a geographically diverse audience spanning metros, Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3+ cities, across multiple age groups and occupations. This was complemented by pop-up interactions at corporate offices and college campuses, allowing the team to capture behavioural nuances that online surveys alone often miss.

This year's survey expanded significantly in scope, introducing two new modules — one on women's wellness and snacking through the menstrual cycle, and one on parents and kids' snacking behaviour. These additions make 2026 the most comprehensive edition yet.

LIMITATIONS

As with any large-scale consumer survey, the findings in this report should be read with the following context in mind.

The sample gender skew, and the generational breakdown across Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers was not equally distributed — Millennials and Gen X represent a larger share, which may influence category-level findings.

The survey was conducted primarily in English, which may limit representation from smaller towns and regional-language respondents. The population mix does not necessarily reflect India's snacking population at large — findings are indicative of the health-aware, digitally-engaged consumer, and should be used as directional intelligence rather than absolute market statistics.

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

About Farmley

Farmley is centered around the idea of making snacking more wholesome, healthy and indulgent. In today's world, customers are caught in having to choose between boring healthy snacks and guilt ridden unhealthy indulgences. We aim to evolve the consumers' relationship with snacking, allowing them to indulge freely in delicious snacking options, minus the guilt. We have something for everyone - be it our range of Roasted Makhanas seasoned in olive oil, or our signature Date Bites for those sweet cravings, or our latest roasted offering for GenZ snacking - Makha Shaka - every range we launch is a proof that indulgence and nutrition can share the same plate. With our own sourcing networks, in-house production, and an R&D team that's as passionate as it is particular, we make sure every bite delivers on both flavour and purpose. And as a brand built on trust, we're proud to have the endorsement of cricket legend Rahul Dravid - because consistency, reliability, and quiet excellence aren't just values we admire, they're values we live by.

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

IH SS Indian® Healthy Snacking Summit
2026

About IHSS

Better-For-You Brands. One Ecosystem. One Place.

The India Healthy Snacking Summit serves as a premier stage for industry dialogue - the nation's singular gathering dedicated entirely to the burgeoning world of mindful munching. Over the past two years, it has united a vibrant collective of visionaries, capital partners, retail enablers, product innovators, health influencers, nutritionists and regulatory voices to define the roadmap for the next generation of Indian snacks.

This third edition builds on that legacy, positioning this deep-dive study at the heart of the event. It is the forum where the most critical industry dialogues unfold, strategic partnerships are cemented, and the vision for a more intentional food culture is brought to life - one bite at a time.

Healthy Snacking Report 2026

HEALTHY SNACKING REPORT 2026

A Wholesome Consumer Insights Study

presented by

Farmley®

unveiled at

IHSS Indian® Healthy Snacking Summit 2026

in association with

Wonderful™ PISTACHIOS

farmleyin

www.farmley.com

ihss_official

www.healthysnacking.co.in