

SHRI RAM COLLEGE OF COMMERCE

A Century of Excellence: 1926-2026



STRIDES

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The Startup Bubble in India: Craze, Culture or Capital Misallocation?

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Anvi Mansharamani, Diksha Debnath, and Pratham Grover

Attention Capital and Market Valuation in Modern Commerce

Rishabh Madan

The Invisible Economics of Shrinkflation and Skimflation: Product Downsizing and Service Deterioration

Savy Satija and Shaili Gupta

Bridging the Gap: An Analysis of the Literature on Gender Diversity in Economics

Prarthana Drolia

Demystifying the Indian Investor: Age, Income, and the Move to Stocks

Taranpreet Singh, Kumar Aryan, and Dev Kumar

The Managed Mind

Gargi Tripathi

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Principal's Message



"Strides - A Students' Journal of Shri Ram College of Commerce, Volume 1, Issue 1, 2016-17" on the occasion of 91st Annual Day of the College held on 13th April, 2017. The Journal was released by **Shri Prakash Javadekar, the then Hon'ble Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India.**

This year the college has taken the initiative to extend the call for research papers invitation to the students and faculty of all the constituent colleges of University of Delhi and published its current issue i.e. Volume 10, Issue 1, July 2025 - December 2025.

The mission statement of the college signifying its existence and road map to the achievement of its vision, reads as:

"To achieve and sustain excellence in teaching and research, enrich local, national and international communities through our research, improve skills of alumni, and to publish academic and educational resources"

To achieve and promote excellence in applied research and publication, the college had taken the initiative in 2017 to launch a journal exclusively to publish students' research papers and articles. It is an add-on to the enriched catalogue of college's publications and academic literature. The college had successfully released the foundation issue of the Journal

The college encourages students and faculty to focus on collaborative research, and publish their joint research work in co-authorship in Strides. In order to encourage and to create healthy competition among researchers, the college awards best three papers from each issue as a mark of acknowledgement of the research contribution of best three research paper awardees.

I would like to congratulate the Students and Faculty whose papers are published in this issue of the Journal and simultaneously encourage all the researchers to contribute their research papers for the successive issues of the Journal.

Best wishes for their future endeavors.

Prof. Simrit Kaur
Principal

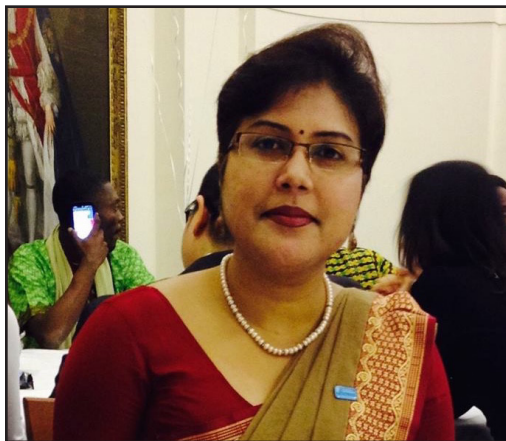


Editor's Message

Shri Ram College of Commerce is well known for its academic excellence and dedicated approach towards dissemination of knowledge in the academic world. The college appreciates the role of research in education and is committed to developing an inclination towards research in both faculty and students. In this pursuit, the college has taken the initiative to launch a Journal named 'Strides - A Students' Journal of Shri Ram College of Commerce' to encourage students to pursue research. The foundation issue of the Journal "Strides - A Students' Journal of Shri Ram College of Commerce, Volume 1, Issue 1, 2016-17" was released on 91st Annual Day of SRCC held on 13th April, 2017 by Shri Prakash Javadekar, the then Hon'ble Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Strides is a peer-reviewed bi-annual journal of Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi, India [ISSN: 2581-4931] to publish research papers on contemporary topics and issues in the area of commerce, economics, management, governance, policies etc.

This year, the journal took another stride by extending the call for research papers invitation to the students and faculty of all the constituent colleges of University of Delhi and published its current issue i.e. Volume 10, Issue 1, July 2025-December 2025.



Under the New Education Policy, in the light of the course-curriculum of the research track of the fourth year of undergraduate programs like B.Com.(Honors), B.A. Economics (Honours) etc., the journal provides a platform to publish collaborative research of students and faculty.

A Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) has been constituted to oversee the high standards of ethics in publication. The COPE is the apex authority to take all the decisions related to the publication of research papers in Strides. The decision of the COPE is final and binding.

I express my sincere thanks to all the students and faculty for their research contribution to the journal.

Best wishes and regards.

Prof. Santosh Kumari
Editor



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STRIDES – A STUDENTS’ JOURNAL OF SHRI RAM COLLEGE OF COMMERCE

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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Strides is a peer-reviewed bi-annual academic journal of Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi, India. The journal provides an opportunity to the students and faculty of all the constituent colleges of University of Delhi to publish their academic research work in Strides. The journal bi-annually publishes academic research papers of students and faculty in co-authorship on contemporary topics and issues in the area of commerce, economics, management, governance, policy etc.

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Shri Ram College of Commerce is committed to upholding the high academic standards. Therefore, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) follows a 3-Stage Selection Process while approving a paper for publication in this Journal. The policy is as follows:

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RESEARCH PAPERS

The Startup Bubble in India: Craze, Culture or Capital Misallocation? Preyosee Das	1–17
UIP and Capital Flow Dynamics: Bilateral Analysis of India and Singapore Utkarsh Gupta.....	19–35
Economic Resilience and Crisis in Latin America: Comparative Analysis of Chile, Brazil and Argentina Anvi Mansharamani, Diksha Debnath, and Pratham Grover	37–55
Attention Capital and Market Valuation in Modern Commerce Rishabh Madan.....	57–76
The Invisible Economics of Shrinkflation and Skimflation: Product Downsizing and Service Deterioration Savy Satija and Shaili Gupta.....	77–96
Bridging the Gap: An Analysis of the Literature on Gender Diversity in Economics Prarthana Drolia	97–112
Demystifying the Indian Investor: Age, Income, and the Move to Stocks Taranpreet Singh, Kumar Aryan, and Dev Kumar.....	113–131
The Managed Mind Gargi Tripathi	133–154



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The Invisible Economics of Shrinkflation and Skimpflation: Product Downsizing and Service Deterioration

ABSTRACT

Have you ever noticed your favorite bag of chips getting smaller or airlines reducing legroom, yet the price remains the same? This phenomenon, known as shrinkflation and skimpflation, allows businesses to offset rising costs without visibly increasing prices. While these changes often go unnoticed in short term, they impact consumer behavior. This paper explores effects of these tactics on consumer perception. Using research and online survey, we examined historical trends in product sizing and consumer reactions. The findings reveal a sharp rise in shrinkflation within the snacks and household products, whereas skimpflation is more prevalent in hospitality and transportation. Many consumers don't immediately notice these changes, but when they do, frustration grows. Businesses use such strategies to stay profitable, but fairness concerns remain. These hidden cost-cutting measures make consumers pay more for less value. This study emphasizes that true market fairness requires transparency, enabling consumers to make informed choices and hold businesses accountable. Overall, the study concludes that long-term consumer trust and sustainable market relationships depend on greater transparency, ethical pricing practices, and balanced regulatory oversight.

Keywords: *Shrinkflation, Skimpflation, Hidden Inflation, Pricing Strategies, Market Transparency.*

1. Introduction

In recent years, consumers across the globe have noticed subtle yet significant changes in the products and services they daily rely on. Food packages have shrunk, household goods contain fewer units, and service quality in various industries has declined, while prices have remained steady or even increased. These unnoticed but impactful shifts reflect an evolving marketplace where businesses strive to balance rising production costs and

inflation without openly increasing prices. While some consumers initially overlook these adjustments, over time, they realize they are paying the same amount or more for diminished value. This growing phenomenon, which includes shrinkflation and skimpflation, raises concerns about corporate transparency, consumer rights, and overall economic fairness.

Shrinkflation is a pricing strategy in which companies reduce product size, weight, or quantity while keeping the price unchanged. This approach is commonly used in industries such as food, beverages, personal care, and household goods. For instance, a bottle of juice may now contain 900 millilitres instead of 1 litre, or a snack pack may have fewer chips than before. These changes are rarely advertised, making it difficult for consumers to notice the difference until they compare past and present product sizes. While this allows companies to mitigate rising production expenses, it often leads to consumer dissatisfaction when the realization sets in.

Skimpflation, on the other hand, does not involve changes in product size but instead focuses on reducing quality or service standards. Many businesses adopt this strategy by using cheaper ingredients, lowering customer service levels, or eliminating previously included benefits. For example, fast-food chains may reduce the amount of cheese or meat in a sandwich, hotels may discontinue daily room cleaning services, or streaming platforms may remove features while keeping subscription prices the same. This approach enables companies to cut costs without openly raising prices, but it often leads to consumer frustration, particularly when the reduced quality becomes noticeable.

The rise of shrinkflation and skimpflation is largely driven by economic pressures such as inflation, supply chain disruptions, and increased labour costs. Businesses must find ways to sustain profitability, and these strategies offer a means to do so without immediately alienating customers. However, these practices raise ethical concerns, as consumers are often unaware of these hidden cost-cutting measures. A lack of transparency in such adjustments can erode trust in brands, influencing long-term purchasing decisions and overall market competition.

Beyond individual purchasing decisions, these pricing strategies contribute to a broader issue known as hidden inflation, a phenomenon where the true cost of living rises without being fully reflected in official inflation metrics. As a result, consumers may feel financially strained even if inflation rates appear stable. This creates challenges for policymakers and economists in accurately assessing economic conditions and making informed decisions. Additionally, as more businesses adopt these tactics, the lack of clear consumer protections or regulations becomes increasingly evident.

Shrinkflation and skimpflation are not merely economic concepts; they have a profound psychological impact on consumer behaviour. When customers discover they are receiving less for the same price, or that the quality of a once-reliable product or service has diminished, they often feel deceived. This perceived deception can damage brand

loyalty, prompting consumers to seek alternative products or services. However, in some cases, consumers may have limited choices, especially when multiple companies in the same industry adopt these practices simultaneously. This scenario creates a market trap, where consumers are left with no better alternatives, forcing them to accept suboptimal purchases despite their dissatisfaction.

Moreover, these practices disproportionately affect lower-income consumers, who are more sensitive to price changes and product downsizing. For households operating on tight budgets, even small reductions in product size or quality can have a noticeable impact over time. The cumulative effect of shrinkflation and skimpflation means that consumers must spend more money to maintain the same standard of living, exacerbating financial strain. This is particularly concerning essential goods such as groceries, hygiene products, and public services, where affordability and accessibility are crucial.

From a business perspective, shrinkflation and skimpflation may offer short-term financial relief, but they carry long-term risks. Once consumers become aware of these tactics, companies may face backlash, including negative publicity, declining sales, and damaged reputations. Social media and online review platforms amplify consumer dissatisfaction, making it easier for people to share their experiences and warn others. Additionally, regulatory bodies in various countries are beginning to scrutinize these practices more closely, with some governments considering policies that mandate clearer labelling and disclosure of product changes.

Shrinkflation and skimpflation extend beyond pricing strategies; they reshape consumer trust, perceived fairness, and long-term market relationships. While these practices help firms manage rising costs, they raise ethical concerns about transparency and informed choice. When consumers realize they are receiving less value without clear disclosure, brand loyalty weakens and dissatisfaction grows.

This study examines how these hidden adjustments influence consumer awareness, purchasing behaviour, and attitudes toward corporate transparency and regulation. By analysing survey evidence and market trends, the research seeks to clarify the broader economic and behavioural implications of shrinkflation and skimpflation and contribute to ongoing discussions about fairness, accountability, and consumer protection in modern markets.

2. Literature Review

Existing research on shrinkflation and skimpflation highlights their growing importance in understanding hidden inflation and consumer behaviour. Scholars have examined these practices from economic, behavioural, and ethical perspectives, emphasizing their impact on trust, pricing transparency, and market fairness.

Conceptual Foundations of Shrinkflation

Shrinkflation refers to the practice of reducing product size or quantity while maintaining the same nominal price. Early empirical evidence by **Imai and Watanabe (2014)** during Japan's deflationary period demonstrated how firms used product downsizing as a hidden price adjustment mechanism to manage cost pressures without explicitly raising prices. Their findings show that such strategies are particularly common during periods of economic instability when firms aim to avoid consumer backlash associated with direct price hikes.

More recently, **Rojas, Jaenicke, and Page (2024)** quantified the inflationary impact of package-size reductions in food markets, arguing that shrinkflation contributes to understated inflation measurements. Their research indicates that conventional inflation indices may fail to fully capture the real increase in cost per unit faced by consumers.

Similarly, **Melmiès (2024)** approaches shrinkflation from a macroeconomic perspective, linking hidden price increases to broader structural adjustments in corporate pricing behavior. He argues that shrinkflation represents a strategic response within post-Keynesian frameworks, where firms prioritize margin stability under demand constraints.

Consumer Preference and Behavioral Reactions

From a behavioral standpoint, consumer response to shrinkflation has been widely studied. **Kim (2023)** finds that many consumers prefer downsizing over explicit price increases, particularly when the reduction is subtle. This suggests that consumers may perceive smaller packages as less psychologically painful than visible price hikes.

However, research by **Evangelidis (2023)** introduces the concept of "shrinkflation aversion," demonstrating that once consumers recognize downsizing, their negative reaction can exceed that of a transparent price increase. In a subsequent study, **Evangelidis (2024)** shows that reductions in quality (skimpflation) generate even stronger perceptions of unfairness than size reductions, highlighting the emotional dimension of perceived value loss.

Further extending this discussion, **Janssen and Kasinger (2025)** analyze the demand-side implications of shrinkflation and find that while short-term demand may remain stable, long-term brand loyalty can decline once consumers detect hidden adjustments.

Microeconomic and Firm-Level Responses

At the firm level, pricing strategies under economic shocks have been examined by **Antoniades, Clerides, and Xu (2018)**, who identify product modification, promotions, and strategic adjustments as common micro-responses to cost pressures. Although not exclusively focused on shrinkflation, their findings provide theoretical grounding for understanding why firms opt for indirect price adjustments.

Milan and Singh (2024) specifically analyze shrinkflation within the FMCG sector, particularly in food packaging industries. Their findings show that companies frequently redesign packaging and adjust net weights while retaining key price points (e.g., ₹5 or ₹10 products), especially in highly price-sensitive markets.

Additionally, **Budianto (2024)** conceptualizes shrinkflation as a hidden inflationary tool embedded within broader corporate pricing strategies, emphasizing the role of consumer inattention and bounded rationality.

Skimpflation and Perceived Unfairness

While shrinkflation focuses on quantity reduction, skimpflation refers to quality deterioration without price changes. **Evangelidis (2024)** empirically demonstrates that quality reductions are perceived as significantly more unfair than equivalent size reductions or price increases. This aligns with fairness theory, which suggests that consumers evaluate not only price but also perceived value and effort.

Survase, Chormunge, and Pandey (2025) further explore consumer perceptions and conclude that transparency significantly moderates negative reactions. When consumers feel informed and respected, dissatisfaction decreases even if prices rise.

Research Gap

Although substantial international research exists on shrinkflation's pricing dynamics and consumer psychology, limited empirical evidence focuses on direct consumer perceptions in emerging urban markets, particularly in the Indian FMCG and service sectors. Most prior studies rely on secondary price data or experimental designs rather than primary survey evidence capturing real-world experiences.

This study addresses this gap by integrating primary survey data with documented case evidence (such as Parle-G) to examine awareness levels, behavioral adjustments, and attitudes toward regulation among urban consumers. By doing so, it contributes context-specific insights to the expanding literature on hidden inflation and corporate transparency.

3. Objectives of the Study

To guide the study in a structured manner, the research is organized around the following objectives:

1. How aware are consumers of shrinkflation and skimpflation in everyday products and services?
2. How do these practices affect consumer purchasing behaviour and brand trust?
3. What are consumer views on corporate transparency and government regulation regarding hidden inflation strategies?

4. Data and Research Methodology

The study employs a descriptive research design to analyze consumer awareness and perceptions regarding shrinkflation and skimpflation. Descriptive research is used to systematically describe characteristics of a phenomenon, helping to understand how product quantity reduction and quality degradation influence consumer behaviour. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is applied to collect and analyze data. Responses are gathered from participants across different age groups through structured questionnaires distributed online via Google Forms.

4.1 Research Design

The research integrates descriptive and analytical approaches, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data is collected through survey, enabling a comprehensive understanding of consumer experiences. Additionally, secondary data sources such as industry reports and market analysis are utilized to examine pricing trends and company strategies.

4.2 Population

The target population consists of consumers aged 18-60 who actively purchase packaged goods, household items, and food products. The study focuses on urban consumers who frequently engage with retail markets and are likely to notice changes in product size, quality, and pricing. Respondents are selected based on their purchasing habits and exposure to brands that have implemented shrinkflation or skimpflation strategies.

4.3 Instruments

Data is collected using structured questionnaires distributed through Google Forms, featuring questions to assess consumer awareness and attitudes toward shrinkflation and skimpflation. The questionnaire includes multiple-choice and open-ended questions to capture consumer perceptions of product size reductions and quality changes. Respondents provide information on their purchasing habits, brand preferences, and the extent to which they notice subtle alterations in product packaging or composition. Secondary data sources, such as consumer surveys and market trend reports, supplement the analysis for broader validation.

4.4 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire is designed to assess consumer awareness, experiences, and perceptions of shrinkflation and skimpflation. It begins by collecting demographic information, specifically the respondent's age group. Following this, it examines awareness levels by asking whether participants have heard of these concepts before. The next section explores consumer experiences, including whether they have noticed a reduction in

product size or service quality without a corresponding price change and which industries they have observed this phenomenon in. Additionally, the questionnaire investigates consumer reactions, such as switching brands, complaining, or continuing purchases as usual. Finally, it gathers opinions on corporate transparency, government regulation, and alternative solutions companies could adopt instead of reducing product size or quality.

4.5 Data Collection

The data collection for this study is conducted primarily through an online survey using Google Forms, allowing for a wide and diverse reach. Industry reports and case studies are also analysed to compare consumer perceptions with market trends. This mixed- method approach ensures a well-rounded evaluation of shrinkflation and skimpflation's impact on consumer behaviour.

4.6 Sampling Technique

The study uses a non-probability convenience sampling technique, where respondents were selected based on accessibility through online platforms. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms and shared through student networks and social media, allowing for quick and cost-effective data collection. While convenience sampling is appropriate for exploratory consumer perception research, it does not guarantee that every member of the broader population has an equal chance of being selected. Therefore, the findings primarily reflect the experiences of digitally active urban consumers rather than the entire population.

4.7 Questionnaire Reliability

To improve reliability, the questionnaire was designed using clear, simple, and non-leading questions. A pilot review was conducted with a small group of peers before final distribution to identify ambiguous wording and ensure consistency in interpretation. Most questions used structured response options, reducing subjective variation and improving comparability across responses. However, as the study relies on self-reported perceptions, responses may be influenced by recall bias or personal interpretation of shrinkflation and skimpflation.

4.8 Limitations of the Sample

A key limitation of the study is the age skew toward young adults, with the majority belonging to the 18–24 age group. This reflects higher online participation among students but limits the generalizability of results to older age groups. Younger consumers may be more price-sensitive, more active on social media, and more aware of trending economic discussions, potentially exaggerating awareness levels compared to the broader population.

Additionally, the urban and digitally connected sample may not represent rural or offline consumers who experience shrinkflation differently. As a result, the findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than universally representative. Future research should include a larger and more demographically diverse sample to strengthen external validity.

5. Case Study: Shrinkflation and Skimpflation in Parle-G

Introduction

Parle-G, a household name in India, has been a staple biscuit for decades. Known for its affordability and wide reach, Parle-G has adapted to economic shifts over time. However, the brand has also witnessed shrinkflation and skimpflation, where product quantity and quality have been subtly altered while maintaining the price. This case study explores how these strategies have impacted consumer perception and the broader biscuit market in India.

Historical and Market Trends

Parle-G has been available at an affordable price point for decades, often with ₹5 and ₹10 price tags. However, due to rising production costs driven by increasing wheat, sugar, and packaging material prices the company has opted to reduce the weight of its biscuit packs instead of raising prices. This phenomenon, known as shrinkflation, ensures that the product remains accessible to price-sensitive consumers.

Table 1: Shrinkflation Trends Over the Years

Year	Pack Size (₹5)	Pack Size (₹10)	Market Influence
2000	100g	200g	Stable raw material costs
2010	92.5g	185g	Rising wheat and sugar prices
2016	83.5g	170g	Inflation affecting FMCG sector
2020	55g	100g	COVID-19 impact on supply chain
2022	50g	92g	Increased packaging and logistics costs

The shrinkflation trend is clearly illustrated in the provided table, showing a steep decline in biscuit weight over the years.

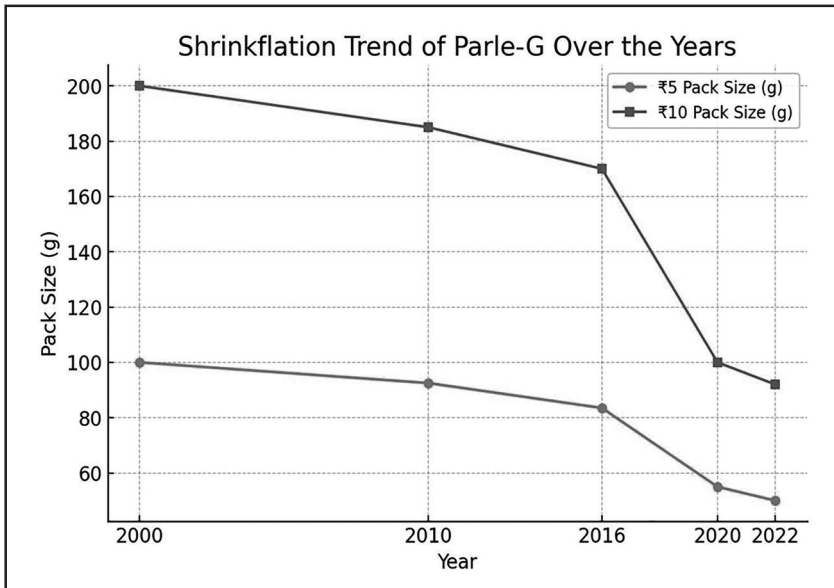


Fig. 1

Skimpflation: Quality Adjustments

Beyond size reduction, Parle-G has also been subject to skimpflation, where slight modifications to ingredients or production processes affect the overall product quality. The biscuit formulation has reportedly been altered to use more cost-effective ingredients. Some consumers have noticed a change in texture and crispiness, indicating a shift in the recipe. The packaging material has become thinner, reducing production costs while maintaining outward appearance.

Table 2

Year	Changes in Ingredients and Quality	Market Influence
2000	High-quality wheat flour, real milk solids, and balanced sweetness	Stable raw material costs
2010	Reduced milk solids, slight increase in artificial flavouring	Rising dairy prices
2016	Lower-quality wheat, increased use of emulsifiers and preservatives	Inflation affecting FMCG sector
2020	Reduced thickness of biscuits, more air pockets in texture	COVID-19 impact on supply chain
2022	Lighter biscuit weight per piece, changes in oil composition	Increased costs for palm oil and packaging

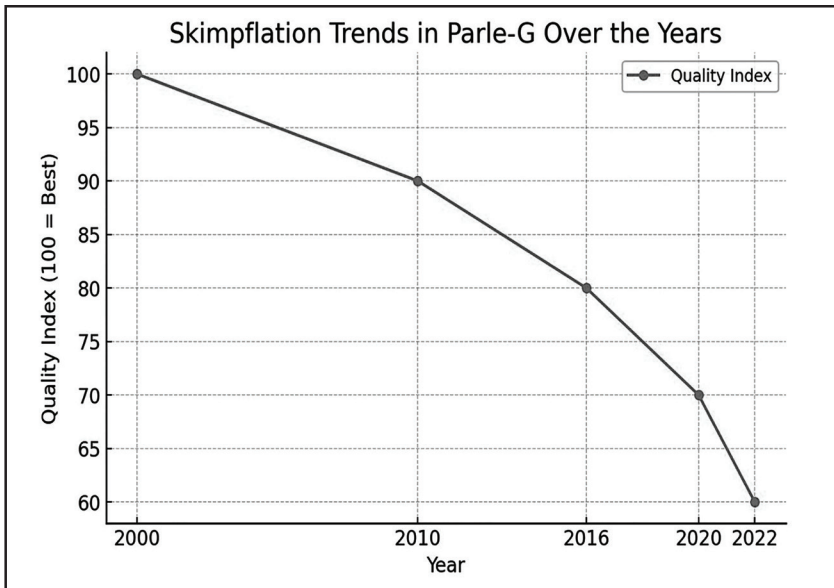


Fig. 2

Consumer Reaction and Market Impact

While Parle-G remains a dominant player in the biscuit market, shrinkflation and skimpflation have led to mixed reactions: Loyal customers express dissatisfaction upon noticing reduced quantity. Price-sensitive consumers continue to purchase as the brand remains affordable compared to competitors. Alternative brands, such as Britannia and ITC's Sunfeast, have gained traction, offering competitive options with more transparent pricing.

Conclusion

Parle-G's adoption of shrinkflation and skimpflation highlights how brands navigate economic pressures while maintaining mass-market appeal. While this strategy helps retain price-sensitive customers, long-term brand loyalty may be affected. As consumer awareness grows, companies must balance cost-cutting measures with maintaining product trust and transparency.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section integrates primary survey findings with secondary evidence from industry reports and documented case studies to provide contextual interpretation. While the survey forms the core dataset, secondary sources are used to triangulate consumer

perceptions with observable market trends, particularly in relation to shrinkflation and skimpflation practices. We conducted a survey using Google Forms, gathering 217 responses to analyze consumer awareness and perceptions of shrinkflation and skimpflation. The questionnaire included various aspects such as purchasing habits, brand loyalty, and consumer reactions to changes in product quantity and quality. Below is the detailed interpretation and analysis of each question based on the collected responses along with the google form shared among different age groups.

Consumer Perception of Shrinkflation and Skimpflation

Hey! We are Savy Satija and Shaali Gupta, students of Deshbandhu College, conducting a research on shrinkflation and skimpflation—the subtle ways companies reduce product sizes or lower service quality while keeping prices the same (or even increasing them!).

Have you ever noticed your favorite snacks getting smaller or customer service getting worse without a price hike? We want to hear your thoughts! Your input will help us understand how consumers perceive these changes and what actions they take in response.

This survey will take just 2-3 minutes, and your responses will remain completely anonymous. We truly appreciate your time and valuable insights!

Thank you for participating!

* Indicates required question

Email *

Cannot pre-fill email

What is your age group? *

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45 above

Have you ever heard of Shrinkflation or Skimpflation before? *

- Yes, from a friend
- Yes, have studied
- No, I haven't
- Can't recall

Have you ever noticed a product you regularly buy becoming smaller in size but price staying the same? *

- Yes, I have noticed it often
- Yes, but only sometimes
- No, I haven't noticed

Have you ever experienced a decline in the quality of a service (examples: slower customer service, fewer benefits, etc.) without a price increase? *

- Yes, frequently
- Yes, but only sometimes
- No, I haven't noticed

Fig. 3

Which industry have you noticed shrinkflation or skimpflation the most? (Select all that apply) *

- Food & Beverages (e.g., smaller snack packs, thinner chocolate bars)
- Personal Care & Household Goods (e.g., less detergent, thinner tissues)
- Airlines & Hotels (e.g., fewer amenities, reduced legroom)
- Streaming & Digital Services (e.g., lower video quality, fewer features)
- Other: _____

How do you usually react when you notice shrinkflation or skimpflation? *

- Stop buying the product/service
- Switch to another brand, if available
- Complain to the company or on social media
- Accept the change and keep purchasing as usual

Do you think companies should be required to inform consumers when they reduce product size or quality? *

- Yes, absolutely
- Maybe, only for essential goods
- No, it's a normal business practice

Would you support government regulations to prevent misleading shrinkflation and skimpflation? *

- Yes, stricter rules are needed
- Maybe, only for necessary products/services
- No, companies should have the freedom to adjust prices and sizes

What is one product or service where you have personally noticed shrinkflation or skimpflation? *

Your answer _____

Any suggestions on how companies should handle rising costs instead of shrinking products or lowering quality?

Your answer _____

Fig. 4

Response Analysis

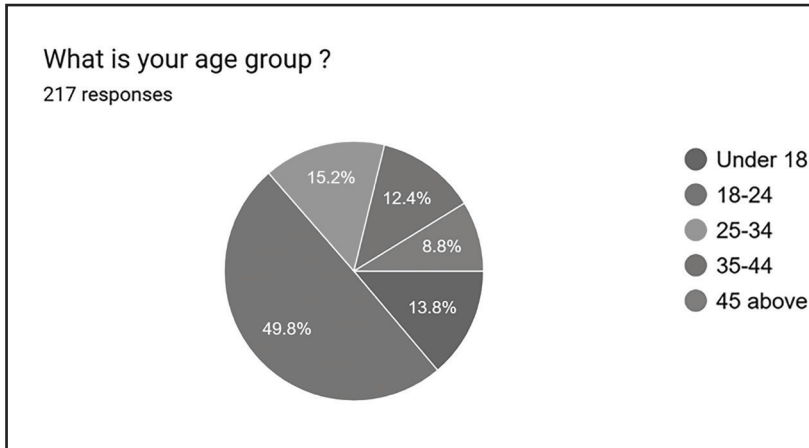


Fig. 5

The survey results show that nearly half of the respondents (49.8%) fall within the 18-24 age group, making young adults the dominant segment of participants. This suggests that this age group is the most actively engaged with the topic and more responsive to online survey participation. The remaining responses are fairly distributed across other age categories: 15.2% are aged 25-34, 13.8% are under 18, 12.4% belong to the 35-44 group, and 8.8% are aged 45 and above. While participation decreases gradually with age, the presence of respondents across all groups indicates that awareness of the issue is not limited to a single generation. However, the stronger representation of younger individuals may reflect higher digital accessibility, greater online activity, and a stronger interest in contemporary consumer and economic trends among youth.

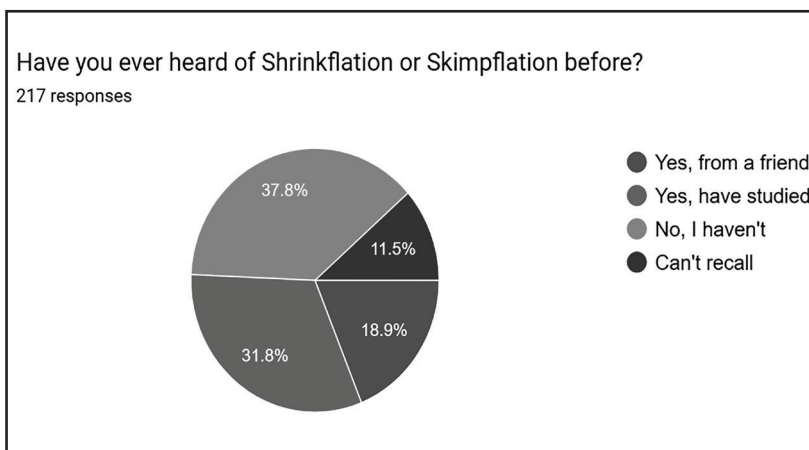


Fig. 6

The survey results suggest that awareness of shrinkflation and skimpflation is mixed among respondents. A combined 50.7% report some familiarity with the terms, with 31.8% saying they have studied them and 18.9% having heard about them from friends. This indicates that about half of the participants have at least some exposure to these economic concepts, either through formal learning or informal discussions.

However, a slightly larger share of respondents (37.8%) state that they have not heard of these terms, while 11.5% cannot recall whether they have encountered them before. This shows that a substantial portion of the population remains unfamiliar with the terminology, even if they may have experienced the phenomena in practice. Overall, the findings highlight a gap in awareness, suggesting the need for clearer communication and consumer education about such pricing and product strategies.

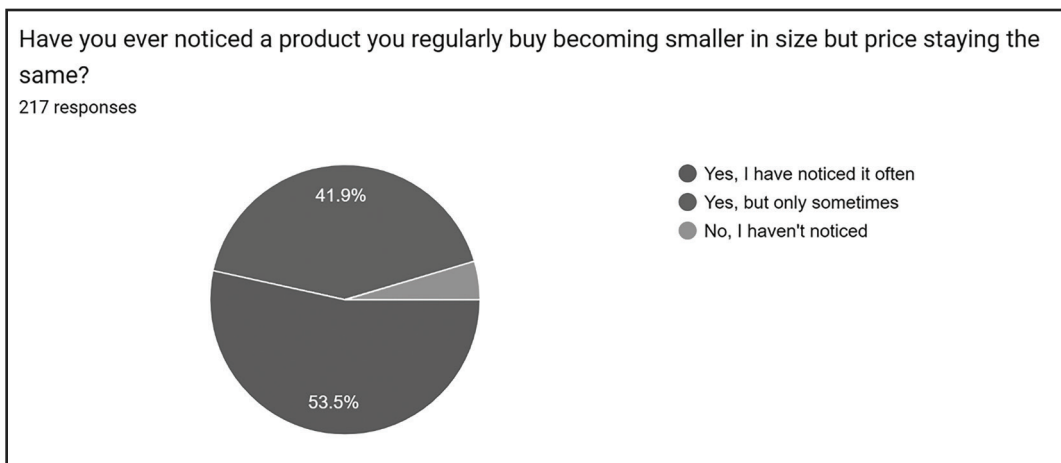


Fig. 7

The survey results indicate that a strong majority of respondents have observed shrinkflation in their daily purchases. Over half of the participants (53.5%) report noticing it often, while an additional 41.9% say they have noticed it sometimes. Together, this means that 95.4% of respondents have at least occasionally observed products becoming smaller in size while prices remain unchanged, suggesting that the experience is widespread and highly visible to consumers.

Only a small fraction of respondents report not noticing this change, indicating that shrinkflation is no longer a subtle or hidden practice for most buyers. The findings imply a high level of consumer awareness based on personal experience, even among those who may not be familiar with the formal term. This widespread recognition highlights how common such pricing strategies have become in everyday markets.

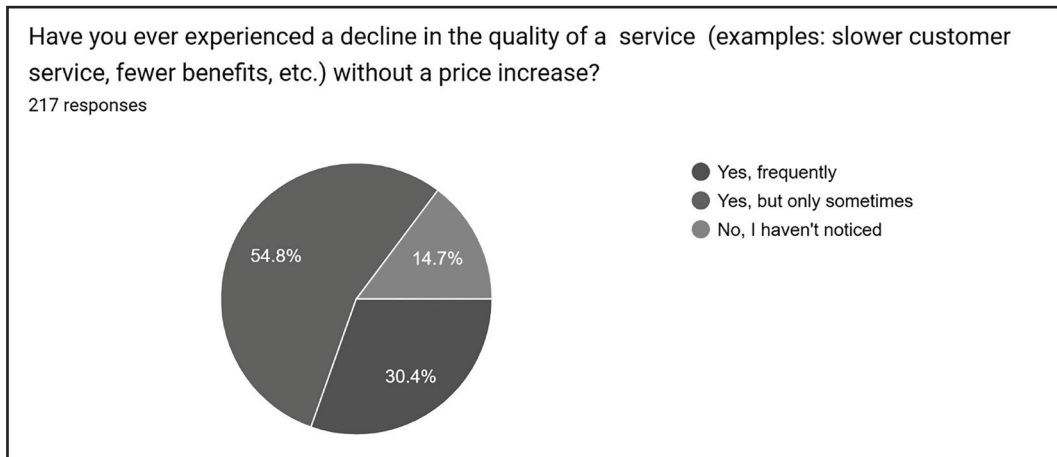


Fig. 8

The survey findings show that most respondents have experienced a decline in service quality without a corresponding price reduction. A combined 85.2% report noticing this issue, with 30.4% saying they experience it frequently and 54.8% encountering it sometimes. This suggests that perceived service skimping is a common consumer experience and not limited to isolated cases. Only 14.7% of respondents state that they have not noticed such a decline, indicating that the majority are aware of changes in service standards. These results point to widespread consumer sensitivity to quality reductions, highlighting that skimpflation is not only associated with physical products but is also strongly felt in service sectors. Overall, the pattern suggests growing consumer awareness of value erosion even when prices remain stable.

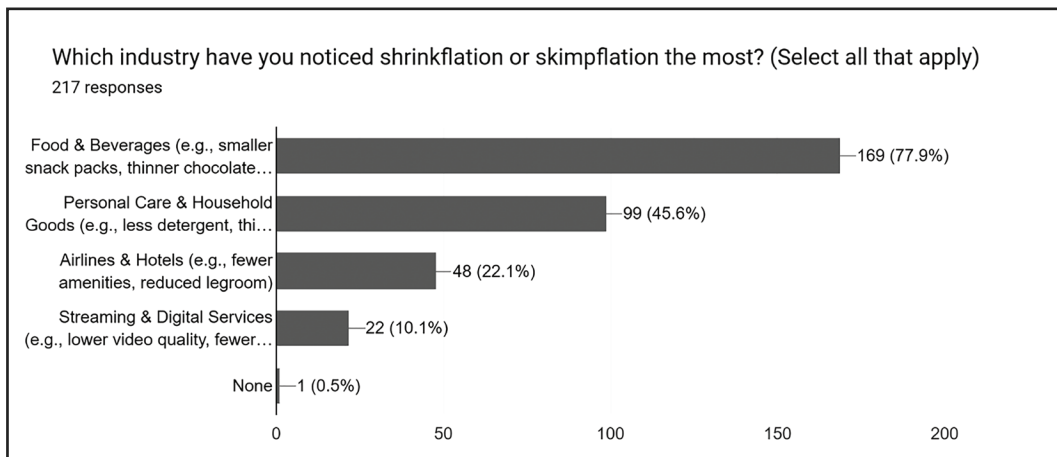


Fig. 9

The survey results indicate that shrinkflation and skimpflation are most strongly noticed in the Food & Beverages industry, with 77.9% of respondents identifying this sector. This dominant share suggests that consumers are particularly sensitive to changes in everyday consumable goods, where reductions in quantity or quality are more visible and directly affect routine spending habits.

Personal Care & Household Goods rank second, with 45.6% of respondents reporting noticeable changes. This indicates that awareness extends beyond food products into essential household items, reinforcing the perception that shrinkflation is affecting multiple areas of daily consumption. Airlines & Hotels are identified by 22.1% of participants, suggesting that service-based industries are also perceived to be reducing value through fewer amenities or lower service standards.

Streaming & Digital Services are mentioned by 10.1% of respondents, showing that even digital sectors are not immune to perceptions of declining value. Notably, only 0.5% of respondents selected "None," indicating that almost all participants have observed shrinkflation or skimpflation in at least one industry. Overall, the findings highlight that while the phenomenon is widespread, it is most acutely felt in sectors tied to everyday consumer essentials.

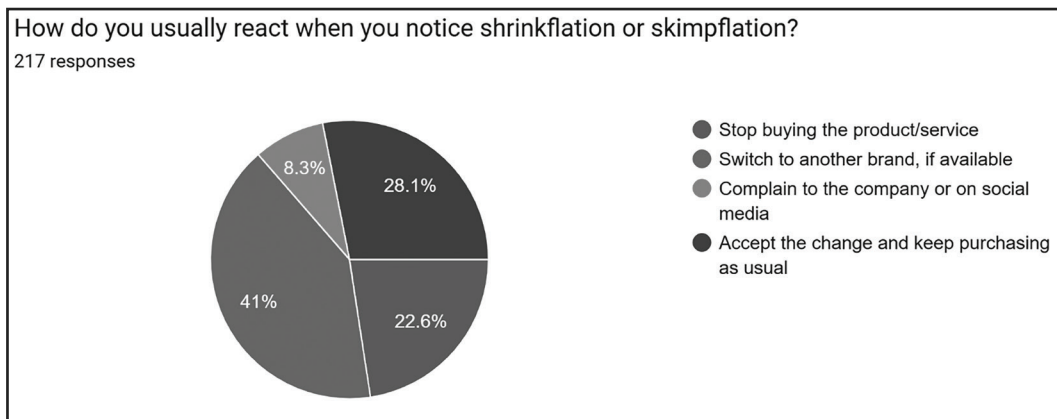


Fig. 10

The survey results indicate that most consumers react to shrinkflation and skimpflation by adjusting their purchasing behaviour. 41% of respondents choose to switch to another brand if available, demonstrating that brand loyalty is heavily influenced by perceived value. Meanwhile, 28.1% accept the change and continue purchasing the product or service, suggesting that some consumers prioritize convenience over price-to-value concerns. Only a small percentage of respondents actively complain to companies or on social media, indicating that while dissatisfaction exists, it rarely translates into direct action against brands. These insights highlight the importance for companies to balance cost-cutting strategies with maintaining customer trust and satisfaction.

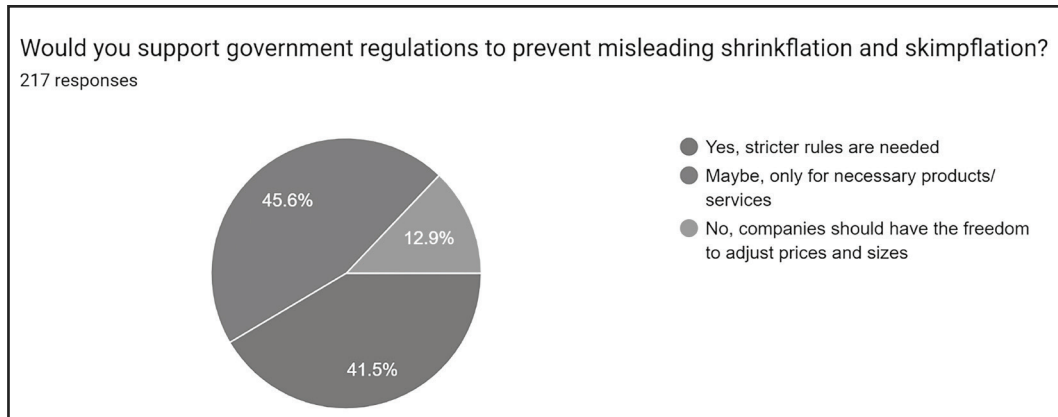


Fig. 11

The survey reveals that a majority (52.5%) of respondents believe companies should be required to inform consumers when reducing product size or quality, emphasizing the demand for transparency in business practices. 37.8% think disclosure should be mandatory only for essential goods, indicating that some consumers see shrinkflation and skimpflation as more concerning when it affects necessities. Meanwhile, 9.7% consider it a normal business practice, suggesting that a small segment accepts these changes as part of market dynamics. The results highlight a strong consumer preference for honesty and openness, which businesses should consider maintaining trust and brand loyalty.

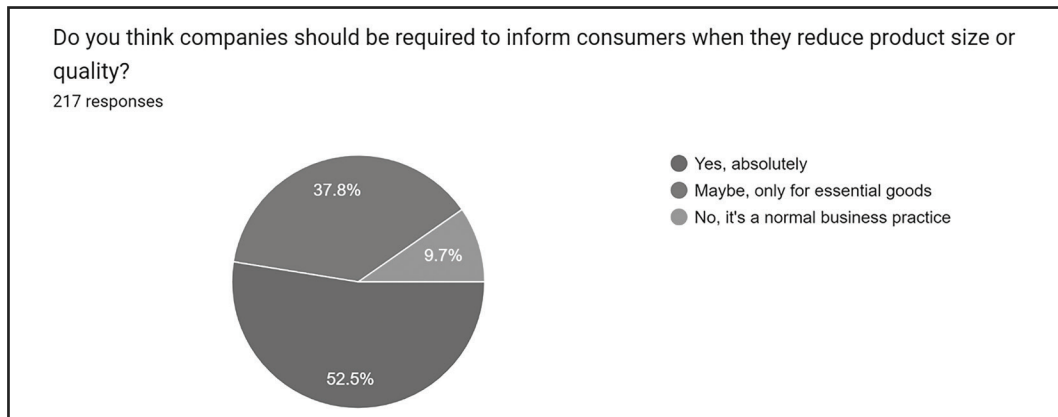


Fig. 12

The responses indicate strong overall support for government intervention to address misleading shrinkflation and skimpflation practices. A clear majority of participants favored stricter regulations, reflecting widespread concern about transparency and fairness in pricing and product quality. A substantial portion of respondents adopted a

conditional stance, supporting regulation mainly for essential goods and services such as food, healthcare, and transportation. This suggests that while consumers value market freedom, they believe basic necessities should be protected from hidden cost-cutting practices. A smaller group opposed regulation altogether, arguing that companies should retain the flexibility to adjust prices, sizes, or quality in response to economic pressures. Overall, the findings highlight a strong demand for regulatory oversight, particularly where consumer welfare and essential needs are concerned, underscoring the importance of balancing business flexibility with consumer protection.

What is One Product or Service Where You Have Personally Noticed Shrinkflation or Skimpflation?

Table 3

Category	Products / Services Reported by Respondents
Snack Foods	Lays, Kurkure, Bingo Mad Angles, Doritos, Haldiram Bhujia, Potato chips, Namkeen
Biscuits & Bakery	Parle-G, Marie Gold, Oreo, Milk Bikies, Little Hearts, Cakes
Chocolates & Confectionery	Dairy Milk, KitKat, Perk, Munch, 5 Star, Gems, Toblerone, Pulse candy
Instant & Packaged Foods	Maggi, Yippee, Buldak noodles, Oats, Kellogg's Muesli, Protein bars
Beverages	Soft drinks, Thumbs Up, Frooti, Real Juice, Coffee, Tea, Gatorade
Dairy Products	Milk, Amul Cheese, Cheese slices, Yogurt, Ice cream, Milkmaid
Personal Care Products	Shampoo, Soap, Toothpaste (Colgate, Pepsodent), Creams (Nivea, Vaseline), Razors
Household Essentials	Detergent, Handwash, Tissues, Oil, Aluminium foil, Phenyl
Health & Hygiene	Sanitary pads, Medicines, Acne creams
Stationery & Utility Items	Pencils, Erasers (Apsara), Crayons, Fevicol
Services (Skimpflation)	Airlines (reduced legroom), OTT platforms (Amazon Prime, streaming quality), Hotel services, Blinkit
Others / Miscellaneous	Perfume, Makeup products, Skincare items, Milton tiffin

The table summarizes the wide range of products and services where respondents have perceived shrinkflation or skimpflation, showing that the phenomenon spans everyday consumer essentials as well as discretionary items. Most reports are concentrated in food-related categories such as snacks, biscuits, chocolates, beverages, and dairy, suggesting

that consumers are particularly sensitive to changes in frequently purchased grocery items. At the same time, the presence of personal care, household essentials, health products, and stationery indicates that perceived value reduction is not limited to food markets but extends into routine living expenses. The inclusion of services such as airlines, OTT platforms, and delivery services highlights that skimpflation is also strongly felt in service sectors, where consumers notice reduced quality or benefits. Overall, the diversity of categories reflects that shrinkflation and skimpflation are widespread consumer concerns affecting multiple aspects of daily life rather than isolated industries.

Any Suggestions on How Companies should Handle Rising Costs Instead of Shrinking Products or Lowering Quality?

The suggestions provided by respondents reflect a strong preference for transparency and fairness in how companies manage rising costs. Many participants expressed that businesses should openly increase prices rather than secretly reducing product quantity or lowering service quality. Respondents emphasized that hidden strategies such as shrinkflation and skimpflation damage consumer trust and create frustration once noticed. Maintaining consistent quality was repeatedly highlighted as a priority, with several respondents noting that declining standards often lead consumers to switch to competing brands. Value-based pricing emerged as a common recommendation, where prices reflect actual product value instead of concealed compromises. Overall, consumers indicated that honesty, clear communication, and quality preservation are essential for sustaining long-term customer loyalty.

7. Research Findings

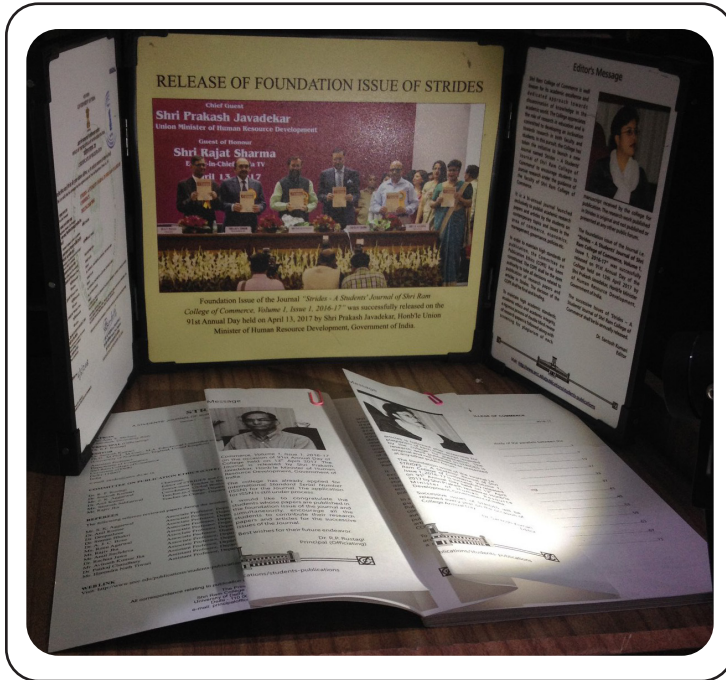
- A large majority of respondents are aware of shrinkflation and skimpflation, with most participants reporting frequent observation of reduced product quantity and declining service quality without corresponding price changes.
- Shrinkflation is most visible in food and beverage products, while skimpflation is more noticeable in services such as digital platforms, airlines, and hospitality, indicating that hidden inflation spans both goods and services sectors.
- Consumer behaviour is significantly affected: most respondents prefer switching brands rather than accepting hidden reductions, suggesting that perceived value strongly influences brand loyalty.
- Consumers show a strong preference for transparency, with a majority supporting mandatory disclosure and government regulation to prevent misleading size or quality reductions.
- Hidden price adjustments are widely perceived as unfair, and repeated exposure to such practices risks weakening long-term trust between firms and consumers.

Conclusion

This study shows that shrinkflation and skipflation are increasingly recognized by consumers and have meaningful effects on purchasing behaviour and brand trust. While firms use these strategies to manage rising costs, hidden reductions in value are widely perceived as unfair and create a strong demand for transparency. The findings suggest that sustainable market relationships depend not only on pricing efficiency but also on ethical communication. Strengthening disclosure practices and consumer awareness will be essential for maintaining trust and fairness in modern markets.

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ISSN 2581- 4931 (Print)

HISTORY OF THE JOURNAL

The idea to launch this Journal was discussed in December 2016 by the former Officiating Principal, **Dr. R. P. Rustagi** with **Dr. Santosh Kumari**, the Editor of the Journal. Since the idea appealed to **Dr. Santosh Kumari**, she took the initiative to contribute to SRCC by creating this new academic research Journal and took the responsibility for its Creation, Registration, License and ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) etc. along with *Editorship*. Therefore, **Dr. Santosh Kumari, Assistant Professor in the Department of Commerce, Shri Ram College of Commerce** was appointed as the Editor of the Journal vide. Office Order – SRCC/AD-158/2017 dated March 14, 2017. She meticulously worked hard in creating the concept and developing the structure of the Journal. She introduced the concept of COPE (Committee On Publication Ethics) to maintain the high academic standards of publication.

On behalf of SRCC, **Dr. Santosh Kumari** made every effort in seeking License from Deputy Commissioner of Police (Licensing), Delhi to register the Journal at “The Registrar of Newspapers for India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India”. The paper work for seeking license started under the former Officiating Principal, **Dr. R.P. Rustagi** on March 27, 2017. The foundation Issue of the Journal “**Strides – A Students’ Journal of Shri Ram College of Commerce, Volume 1, Issue 1, 2016-17**” was successfully released on the 91st Annual Day of SRCC held on April 13, 2017 by **Shri Prakash Javadekar, Honb’le Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India**. The title of the Journal got verified and approved by the Registrar of Newspapers for India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India on April 21, 2017. On September 1, 2017, **Prof. Simrit Kaur** joined SRCC as Principal and signed each and every legal document required for further processing and supported **Dr. Santosh Kumari**.

On December 18, 2017, the College got the license “**License No. - DCP / LIC No. F. 2 (S / 37) Press / 2017**” to publish ‘Strides – A Students’ Journal of Shri Ram College of Commerce’. Due to change of Printing Press, the License got updated on March 09, 2018. On April 26, 2018, the SRCC Staff Council unanimously appointed **Dr. Santosh Kumari as the ‘Editor of Strides’** for the next two academic years.

On April 27, 2018 (The Foundation Day of the College), **Dr. Santosh Kumari** submitted the application for the registration of the Journal. On May 04, 2018, the SRCC received the ‘**Certificate of Registration**’ for “*Strides – A Students’ Journal of Shri Ram College of Commerce*” and got the **Registration No. DELENG/2018/75093** dated May 04, 2018. *On behalf of Shri Ram College of Commerce, it was a moment of pride for Dr. Santosh Kumari to receive the ‘Certificate of Registration’ on May 04, 2018 at the Office of Registrar of Newspapers for India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (website - www.rni.nic.in).*

On May 07, 2018, **Dr. Santosh Kumari** submitted the application for seeking ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) at “ISSN National Centre – India, National Science Library, NISCAIR (National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources). Weblink - <http://nsl.niscair.res.in/ISSNPROCESS/issn.jsp>”. Finally, the College received the International Standard Serial Number “**ISSN 2581-4931 (Print)**” on **June 01, 2018**.

We are proud that this journal is an add-on to the enriched catalogue of SRCC’s publications and academic literature.



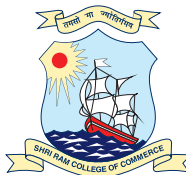
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