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TRACEABILITY & AUTHENTICATION TIMES

The official magazine of the Authentication
Solution Providers' Association (ASPA)



THE COUNTERFEIT THREAT TO INDIA'S FMCG BASKET

BE AWARE. BE RESPONSIBLE. BE PROTECTED

Choose AUTHENTIC
SAFELY
TRUST

PROTECTING WHAT CONSUMERS REACH FOR, EVERY DAY

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TRACEABILITY & AUTHENTICATION TIMES

The official magazine of the Authentication Solution Providers' Association (ASPA)

EDITOR'S CORNER

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 61st edition of Traceability & Authentication Times, the official magazine of the Authentication Solution Providers' Association (ASPA).

This edition places the spotlight on a challenge that touches every household — **counterfeiting in India's FMCG sector**. From milk, ghee, mustard oil and tea to toothpaste, soap, shampoo and detergents, counterfeit products are no longer limited to high-value or niche categories. They have entered the everyday consumer basket, making counterfeiting not merely a challenge for brands, but a growing concern for consumer safety, trust and confidence.

Our cover story draws on findings from the **ASPA-CRISIL State of Counterfeiting in India 2025** report to examine the scale and changing nature of the FMCG counterfeit threat. The findings are particularly revealing: **27% of consumers reported encountering a counterfeit FMCG product in the past 12 months, while 80% believe the problem has increased**. At the same time, 41% of consumers reported receiving counterfeit FMCG products through online aggregators, highlighting how the digital shelf is becoming an important part of the counterfeiting challenge.

Perhaps the most important message from this edition is that **consumers are willing to look for authenticity, but visual appearance alone is no longer enough**. While 70% of FMCG consumers believe they can identify a counterfeit product, many continue to rely on packaging, product appearance and branding cues — precisely the elements counterfeiters can replicate. Consumers are also willing to pay a premium for guaranteed genuine products, demonstrating that **authenticity has tangible value**.

The way forward therefore requires a collective approach. Manufacturers, distributors, retailers, e-commerce platforms, regulators and consumers each have a role to play. Authentication, serialization, secure packaging, QR-based verification and track-and-trace technologies can help transform authenticity from a promise into something that can be **verified, trusted and traced**.

This edition also highlights encouraging developments across the wider ecosystem — from stronger food-safety enforcement and mobile food-testing capabilities to the expansion of digital traceability frameworks internationally. These developments reinforce an important principle: **trust must increasingly be supported by technology, visibility and collaboration**.

As ASPA continues to advance its four pillars of Awareness, Advocacy, Research and Innovation, our focus remains firmly on building a safer and more authentic marketplace. Our recent Fake Free India initiative in Hyderabad further reflects this commitment to taking the consumer-awareness message beyond industry forums and into the wider community.

Ultimately, the fight against counterfeiting is a fight for **trust**. And in FMCG, where products become part of our everyday lives, authenticity is not simply a brand promise — **it is a consumer promise**.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition and find its insights valuable.

Happy reading!!

Yours Sincerely,

Puneet Maithani
Editor,

Traceability & Authentication Times

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About the Traceability & Authentication Times

Traceability & Authentication Times is the official magazine published by Authentication Solution Providers' Association (ASPA). The publication offers in-depth analysis, news, research, article, and expert opinion on the latest developments on Anti-counterfeiting, Brand Protection, Serialization and Traceability in and out of India. The editorial team welcomes news, contributions, and comments.

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If there's a will, there's a way': FSSAI CEO praises Maharashtra FDA's Tukaram Mundhe

FSSAI CEO Rajit Punhani said having a dedicated food safety commissioner in every state should now be considered a necessity.

Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioner, Tukaram Mundhe, the man behind massive crackdown on food irregularities across the state, has been among the newsmakers for the past few weeks. Mundhe's efforts to fix the quality of what the public consumes have now been acknowledged and appreciated by FSSAI CEO Rajit Punhani.

Punhani in an interview said that Mundhe's actions showed "if there's a will, there's a way", while he dismissed the perception that a posting with the food safety department is a "punishment posting". He said that food safety departments had historically not been given the importance they deserved.

'Food safety not a punishment posting'

Punhani, while speaking to India Today, noted that a posting with the food regulatory departments was often seen as a 'punishment posting'. "Many officers didn't want to become food safety commissioners. Because no one paid any attention. We would rather be in health. You know, in health you have your doctors, your primary health centre. You have a system, an old system. It's about maybe a hundred-year-old system," he was quoted as saying.

According to Punhani, having a dedicated food safety commissioner in every state should now be considered a necessity. "Which is must now," he said when asked whether every state should have a separate food safety commissioner.

'Enforcement drive helped raise public awareness'

The remarks from Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) chief come at a time when the FDA under Mundhe has launched a massive crackdown on food businesses, hotels, restaurants and warehouses across Maharashtra. The food regulatory body has already conducted over 3,000 spot checks since May, according to Bloomberg.

Mundhe has suspended food permits of four Pizza Hut outlets and has also targeted cricket clubs, hotels and well-known restaurants.

As he appreciated Mundhe's crackdown, Punhani noted that the enforcement drive had been carried out without an increase in manpower.

"You know, he has done it with the same team. It's not that more food safety officers have been recruited. So, if there's a will, one can do it with the same food safety officer, same number," Punhani was quoted as saying.

He said that the crackdown has increased public awareness about the importance of food safety departments and the importance of food safety commissioners in the states.

Why Tukaram Mundhe has been in news

While Mundhe launched a massive crackdown on food businesses across Maharashtra, he also sent notices to Bollywood actors Shah Rukh Khan, Ajay Devgn and Tiger Shroff for participating as brand endorsers for Vimal, allegedly a tobacco product. In response to criticism of his action against celebrities, which said the notices were aimed at gaining publicity, he said that the notices



were issued under an existing rule and not on his personal discretion.

In an earlier interview with news agency PTI, Mundhe had noted that regulations apply to everyone involved in creating, publishing or sponsoring advertisements and claims, noting that “everybody across the chain is responsible”.

However, the Bombay High Court warned FDA officials of contempt action and even jail after

rebuking them for taking a “pedantic instead of pragmatic view” while suspending the licences of five restaurants operating on the Mumbai Cricket Association premises.

“Do you feel you are a lord and you can do anything,” the division bench of Acting Chief Justice Ravindra Ghuge and Justice Gautam Ankhad questioned the FDA, HT reported earlier.

Source : Hindustan Times

Kazakhstan extends digital traceability rules to beer in glass bottles

Kazakhstan is moving into the next phase of a nationwide digital product-marking programme for beer, with mandatory Data Matrix codes set to apply to beer and beer-based beverages sold in glass bottles from 1 September 2026. The requirement covers products manufactured in Kazakhstan as well as imported beer entering the country from that date. The State Revenue Committee of Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Finance announced the measure on 14 August, positioning it as part of a wider effort to strengthen control over the production, import, distribution and retailing of alcoholic beverages.

The development is significant for the packaging and beverage supply chain because the regulation increasingly links physical packaging with a digital record of each product. For breweries, importers and downstream distributors, compliance will therefore involve more than adding a code to the label or bottle. Production, packaging, inventory, logistics and retail systems will need to work together to ensure that product identities are generated, recorded and transmitted through the national traceability infrastructure.

Beer marking moves across packaging formats

Kazakhstan has adopted a phased approach to bring the country’s beer market under the digital marking system. The first phase came into effect on 1 February 2026, covering beer supplied in kegs. Glass bottles are the next packaging format to enter the system, followed by cans from 1 January 2027.

The sequencing effectively brings the three principal beer packaging formats under a common identification framework. While the individual compliance dates differ, the underlying requirement

remains the same: products entering the market must be associated with a digital identifier that can be tracked through the supply chain.

For the packaging industry, this progression also illustrates how traceability requirements are evolving from product-specific regulations into broader packaging and supply-chain infrastructure. The code becomes part of the product’s commercial identity, connecting the physical pack with digital information held within the national system.

NABL launches accreditation scheme for mobile food testing labs

Multilateral MoU exchange strengthens regulatory convergence and integrated quality infrastructure

The National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), a constituent board of the Quality Council of India (QCI), launched India's first-of-its-kind Accreditation Scheme for Mobile Food Testing Laboratories under the Integrated

with the Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF), attended the event.

The Accreditation Scheme, developed by NABL, establishes a framework for mobile food testing laboratories to provide reliable, quality-assured and internationally benchmarked testing services closer to communities. By extending accredited

food testing beyond conventional laboratory settings, the initiative is expected to strengthen food safety surveillance, improve access to quality testing, support faster regulatory interventions and enhance consumer confidence.

The Multilateral MoU Exchange brought participating organisations together to reaffirm their commitment towards coordinated assessments, regulatory harmonisation and strengthening the Integrated Assessment Framework. The initiative seeks to reduce duplication in assessment

processes, promote mutual recognition, improve regulatory efficiency and facilitate ease of doing business while maintaining high standards of quality and compliance.

Addressing the gathering, Secretary, DPIIT, Shri Amardeep Singh Bhatia, underscored the importance of embedding quality across the entire value chain. He stated that initiatives such as 'Gunvatta Samanvaya' would contribute to India's growth journey towards 2047 by promoting quality-led practices.

Chairperson, NABL, Dr Sandip Shah, highlighted the significance of the accreditation scheme and the Integrated Assessment Framework, emphasising the role of collaborative assessment processes and credible institutions in supporting India's development.



Assessment Programme at the 'Gunvatta Samanvaya – A Multilateral MoU Exchange Ceremony' held at Hotel Ashoka, New Delhi.

The initiative aims to expand access to reliable, quality-assured and internationally benchmarked food testing services closer to communities. The event also witnessed a Multilateral MoU Exchange among participating organisations, reinforcing efforts towards greater regulatory convergence, coordinated assessments and a more integrated and efficient quality infrastructure.

Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Shri Amardeep Singh Bhatia, along with senior officials from QCI, NABL, regulatory authorities and commodity boards associated

Secretary General, Quality Council of India (QCI), Shri Chakravarthy T. Kannan, emphasised the importance of collaboration, convergence and mutual trust in building a strong quality ecosystem. He noted that the 'Gunvatta Samanvaya' initiative, along with the accreditation scheme for Mobile Food Testing Laboratories, would contribute to strengthening India's quality infrastructure and

taking quality-assured testing services closer to communities.

The successful organisation of 'Gunvatta Samanvaya' reinforces the commitment of QCI and NABL towards advancing collaborative quality initiatives, promoting regulatory excellence, enhancing stakeholder confidence and strengthening India's quality infrastructure.

Source : FoodTech Biz

More than 16,000 supply-chain participants registered

The scale of the programme is already considerable. According to Kazakhstan's State Revenue Committee, more than 16,392 commercial participants have registered with the national marking and traceability system.

The figure encompasses different types of businesses involved in bringing products to market, including manufacturers, importers, wholesalers and retailers. It does not represent the number of breweries operating in Kazakhstan, but rather the wider network of businesses interacting with the marking system.

That distinction is important because the new requirement extends well beyond the production line. Manufacturers and importers will be responsible for ensuring that products covered by the regulation carry the prescribed Data Matrix codes. Wholesalers and retailers, meanwhile, will need to accommodate the associated electronic documentation and product-record requirements.

The result is a compliance chain that follows the beer from packaging through distribution and ultimately to the point of sale.

From physical pack to digital identity

Data Matrix technology provides the link between the physical product and its digital record. The two-dimensional code can be used to identify individual products and facilitate their movement through different stages of the supply chain.

For regulators, such systems provide greater visibility over products entering and circulating within the market. For businesses, they introduce a new layer of operational requirements, particularly around data management, inventory control and electronic document exchange.

Kazakhstan's approach reflects a broader regulatory direction in which product traceability is increasingly being built into packaging. Digital marking systems are being used in several markets to improve visibility of legitimate goods, support tax and regulatory enforcement, and make it harder for products to move through informal channels without being recorded.

The beer programme therefore has implications beyond labelling. It effectively turns packaging into a data carrier within the country's market-control infrastructure.

Transition period eases inventory pressure

Kazakhstan has also provided businesses with a transition mechanism for existing inventory. Beer manufactured before the relevant marking requirement takes effect may continue to be sold for one calendar year without the new marking, allowing businesses to work through stocks already in the market rather than being forced to withdraw them immediately.

This provision should reduce disruption for manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers holding pre-compliance inventory. At the same time,

the staggered implementation gives companies an opportunity to align packaging operations, software systems, inventory processes and documentation with the requirements applicable to each format.

The August announcement does not specify the expected cost of implementation or quantify the volume of beer that will fall under the glass-bottle requirement. It also does not provide a breakdown of the market between domestic production and imports. These factors will determine the practical financial impact on individual businesses.

Strategic implications for packaging suppliers

The progression from kegs to glass bottles and, eventually, cans signals that digital traceability is becoming a structural requirement for Kazakhstan's beer industry rather than a limited compliance exercise.

For packaging manufacturers and converters, this could increase demand for packaging formats and labelling solutions capable of accommodating machine-readable codes without compromising print quality, readability or production efficiency. For breweries and importers, the greater challenge may lie in integrating coding and verification with existing production and enterprise systems.

The move also reinforces a wider shift in packaging regulation: compliance is increasingly extending beyond material composition, recyclability and physical labelling to the digital information embedded in the pack.

With glass bottles coming under the system from 1 September and cans following at the beginning of 2027, Kazakhstan is effectively creating a unified digital trail across the major beer packaging formats. For companies operating in the market, the ability to manage that digital trail will become as important to regulatory compliance as the physical packaging itself.

Source : The Packman

The counterfeit threat to India's FMCG basket

When the product on the shelf looks genuine, how sure are we about what is inside?

India's fast-moving consumer goods industry is built on trust. But counterfeiters are increasingly targeting the very products that consumers buy every day — from milk, ghee and mustard oil to toothpaste, soap, shampoo, tea and detergents. As physical and digital channels converge, the challenge is no longer simply about spotting a fake pack. It is about securing the entire journey of a product from manufacturer to consumer.

The everyday counterfeit

Counterfeiting is often associated with luxury products, branded apparel or expensive electronics. But the reality is very different.

Counterfeiting has spread far and wide, and counterfeit products range from luxury items to automobile and healthcare products to daily use household items. Counterfeits have penetrated across product segments, where demand is high, but supply is constrained, or where the market is price sensitive but demanding.

For India's FMCG industry, this presents a particularly serious challenge because these are products consumers buy frequently and often with limited time or ability to verify authenticity.

The State of Counterfeiting in India 2025, prepared by Crisil on behalf of ASPA, examines counterfeiting across six sectors. The study involved 1,639 consumers across nine cities, covering Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Indore. The research

combined qualitative interactions with brand owners, retailers and authentication solution providers with a quantitative consumer survey.

- 27% of consumers reported encountering a counterfeit FMCG product at least once in the last 12 months.
- 25% is the share of FMCG products consumers perceive may be counterfeit.
- 80% of consumers indicated that counterfeiting in FMCG had increased over the past 12 months.



- 1,022 FMCG counterfeiting cases were recorded by ASPA's counterfeit news repository between 2018 and 2025.

- And in 2025 alone, the repository recorded 187 instances.

The numbers tell only part of the story. The more important question is: what exactly is being counterfeited?

What is counterfeiting in FMCG?

From lookalikes to duplicates — the fake can look remarkably familiar

In the FMCG industry, counterfeit products fall into two broad categories:

Lookalikes

A lookalike product is a counterfeit product whose packaging is almost identical to that of a popular brand but bears a name that is slightly different from that of the popular brand. The overall appearance resembles that of a branded product, while the product carries a different name.

One code. Printed at birth. Impossible to fake.

27%

of Indian consumers encountered a counterfeit FMCG product in the last 12 months

Source: ASPA-CRISIL State of Counterfeiting in India 2025

1

On the line

Laser-marked permanently at production speed — nothing a counterfeiter can lift, peel, or replicate.

2

In the cloud

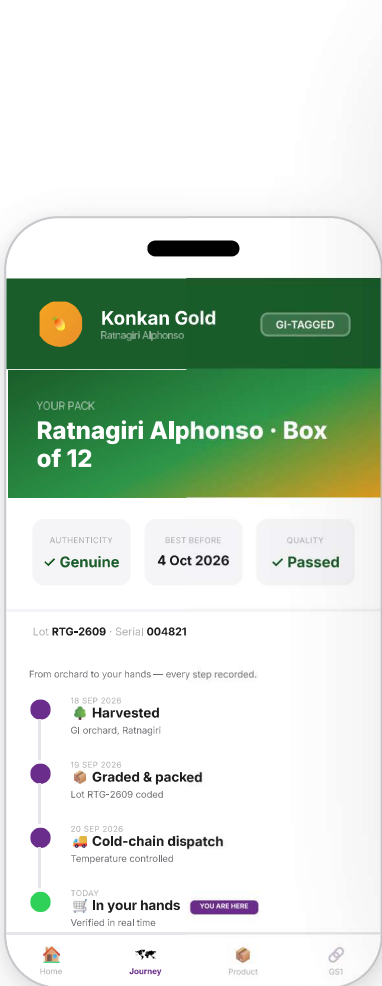
CoLOS® 7 gives every unit a unique serialized identity, traceable in real time across your network.

3

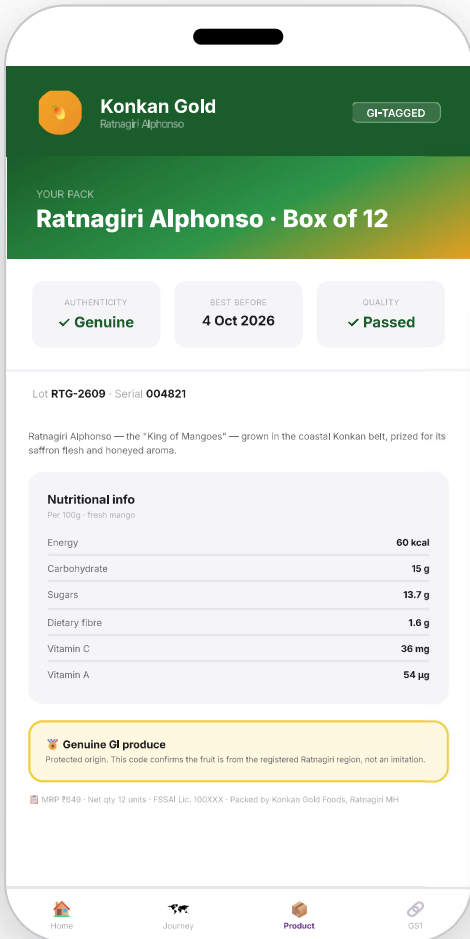
In their hands

One GS1 QR scan shows your consumer origin, freshness and authenticity — instantly on their phone.

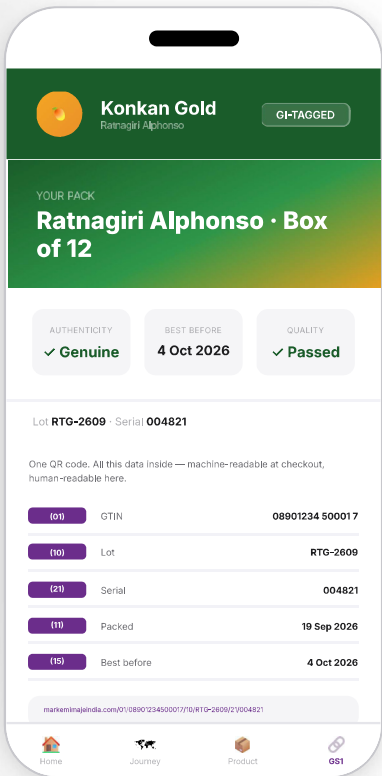
This is what your consumer sees in 1 scan.



The Journey
markemimageindia.com/experience



The Product
markemimageindia.com/experience



The GS1 Screen
markemimageindia.com/experience



Explore Our Products



CoLOS® Coding Software

The line between authentic and fake starts at your printer.



markem·image

a **DOVER** company

The report cites examples such as a lookalike of Dabur Amla being named ‘Lalita Amla’, or a lookalike of Tiger biscuits being named ‘Fighter biscuits.’

Duplicates

A duplicate product is a replica of a branded product. The overall appearance exactly matches that of a branded product, but the product may be manufactured using substandard ingredients.

The report notes that a duplicate of branded ghee may be manufactured using urea and packaged to look exactly like branded ghee. Similarly, low-quality tea leaves may be packaged to look like premium tea.

In some cases, counterfeiters may even mix a substandard product with a genuine product so that the resulting product gets sold entirely as the genuine product — for example, mixing substandard oil with branded mustard oil.

The products most targeted

“Products with high volume sales and higher margins are targeted the most.”

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| • Water | • Shampoo |
| • Salt | • Milk |
| • Flour | • Mustard oil |
| • Sugar | • Ghee |
| • Toothpaste | • Premium tea |
| • Soap | • Detergents |

This is what makes FMCG counterfeiting particularly concerning: the target is not necessarily an expensive product. It can be something sitting in almost every Indian household.

THE FMCG MARKET AT A GLANCE

A study of 74 FMCG companies by Crisil, accounting for a third of the sector’s estimated ₹6.6 lakh crore revenue in fiscal 2026, provides the market context. Food and beverages generate nearly half of sector revenue, while personal care and home care contribute a quarter each. Urban markets account for approximately 60% of revenue, with rural markets making up the rest.

The organised FMCG sector is expected to record 8–10% revenue growth in the current fiscal year, slightly higher than approximately 8% growth achieved in fiscal 2026.

According to the FICCI CASCADE report 2024, the illicit market for FMCG packaged foods nearly doubled from ₹1,124.74 billion in 2017–18 to ₹2,238.75 billion in 2022–23 — a 99% rise. Its share stood at 25.4% in 2022–23, after peaking at 26.4% in 2018–19.

The report further states that the fake/counterfeit FMCG-packaged food market is growing at an annual rate of 15%, higher than the growth rate of the overall FMCG market.

THE DIGITAL SHELF: E-COMMERCE CHANGES THE GAME

The counterfeit is no longer confined to the neighbourhood market

The growth of e-commerce has changed the way consumers discover, compare and purchase FMCG products.

The ASPA–Crisil report notes that counterfeiting seems to have increased with the evolution of digital marketplace and supply chain disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Counterfeiters are increasingly deploying technology to produce and sell counterfeit products.

The consumer survey provides an important warning.

- **41%** of consumers reported receiving counterfeit FMCG products through online aggregators.
- **28%** identified social media advertisements run by sellers.
- **43%** identified multi-brand stores.
- **20%** identified local retail outlets.
- **7%** identified company stores.

WHY E-COMMERCE MAKES AUTHENTICITY HARDER

The report’s broader assessment identifies complex multi-tier supply chains, limited adoption of

authentication and traceability technologies, and low consumer awareness among the factors that allow counterfeiting to thrive.

In FMCG, retailers interviewed for the study said counterfeiters enter the supply chain particularly through the unorganised sector, especially in Tier II/III cities and villages.

Some retailers also reported that counterfeiters typically offer margins of up to 40–50% to distributors and retailers to promote counterfeit products.

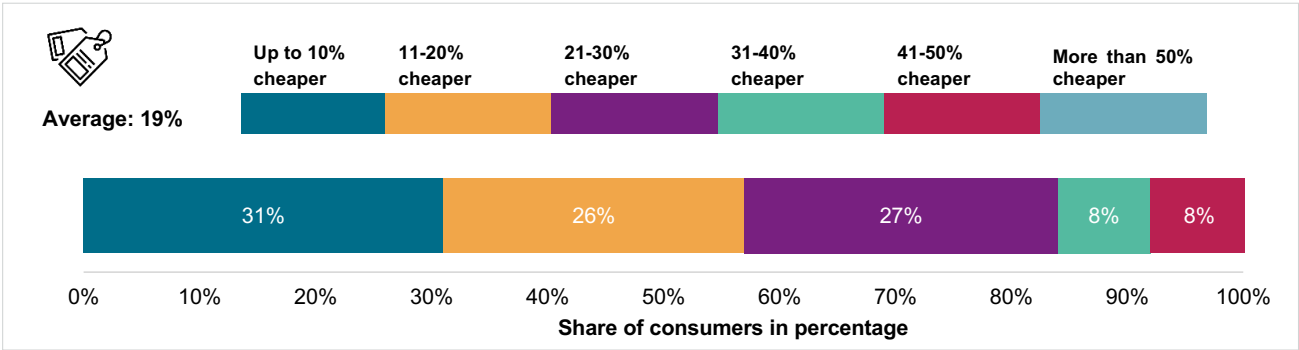
According to retailers:

- **32%** believed counterfeit FMCG products enter through retailers.
- **28%** believed they enter through distributors.

- 33% — Hologram on packaging
- 28% — Reputation of the retailer
- 27% — QR code on packaging
- 24% — Checking with manufacturer after purchase
- 23% — Any other digital ID of the product
- 18% — Invoice

“Given how counterfeit FMCG products are made to closely resemble their authentic counterparts, appearance is unlikely to be a reliable way to identify a fake product.”

In other words, the consumer may be looking — but the counterfeit may already be designed to pass that test.



THE CONSUMER: CONFIDENT, BUT NOT ALWAYS PROTECTED

Perhaps the most revealing finding is the contradiction in consumer behaviour.

- **70%** of FMCG consumers believe they can identify a counterfeit FMCG product.
- **64%** reported that they check for authenticity before purchasing an FMCG product.

Yet the report points out that consumers primarily rely on appearance.

- 62% — Quality of packaging
- 60% — Product look and feel
- 45% — Branding design and colour
- 39% — Label

THE PRICE OF A FAKE

Consumers perceive counterfeit FMCG products to be approximately 19% cheaper than genuine products.

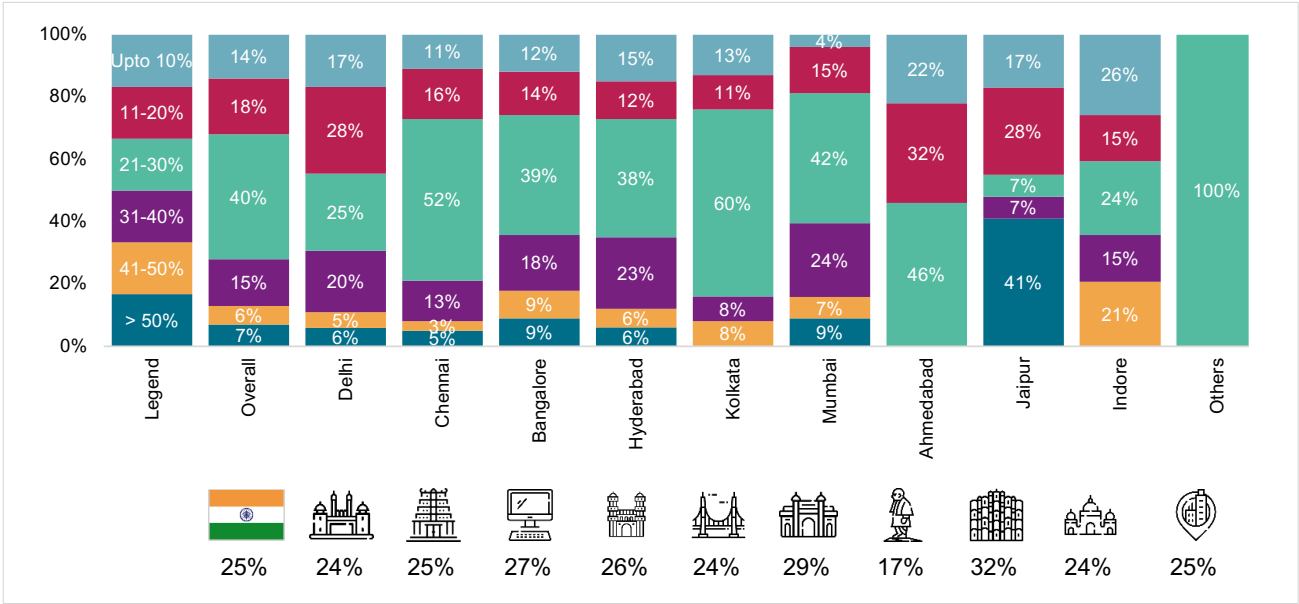
Yet consumers are willing to pay 9% more for guaranteed genuine FMCG products.

WHY WOULD CONSUMERS BUY A COUNTERFEIT FMCG PRODUCT?

62% of consumers said they would never consider buying a counterfeit FMCG product for any reason. But 23% would buy if they were unaware of the counterfeit nature of the product at the time of purchase; 9% would buy if the genuine counterpart was not available; and 4% would buy if the genuine counterpart was more expensive.

This means that the counterfeit market is not driven only by consumers deliberately seeking cheaper alternatives. Unintentional purchase is a major vulnerability.

- **94,288** samples of processed food were analysed in 2019.
- **26,077** were found to be adulterated or misbranded.



WHEN THE FAKE ENTERS THE HOME

Counterfeiting in FMCG is not just a brand-protection issue

For an FMCG company, a counterfeit product can mean loss of revenue, loss of reputation and dilution of brand image.

For the consumer, the consequences can be more immediate.

The report states that since counterfeit products are generally of inferior quality, they may not meet safety standards and can pose risks to consumer health. This is especially a concern when the counterfeit product is a packaged food item.

In the FMCG industry, there is a thin line between counterfeit and adulterated products.

Branded products can be counterfeit, while adulteration in unbranded products is pure adulteration. However, both are harmful because “they are not selling what they claim to be.”

The scale of the food safety concern is illustrated by an FSSAI survey cited in the report.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CONSUMER DISCOVERS THE FAKE?

- **42%** would discard the product.
- **40%** would lodge a complaint with a relevant body.
- **9%** would use the product.
- **8%** would return the product.

A consumer who unknowingly purchases a fake FMCG product may not immediately blame the counterfeit seller. They may blame the brand.

That creates a second-order impact: a counterfeit product can damage the reputation of the genuine product even though the brand owner did not manufacture or sell it.

FROM FAKE TO VERIFIED: THE WAY FORWARD
Authentication and traceability must move from an option to an integral part of the FMCG value chain

The report makes clear that counterfeiting cannot be addressed by one stakeholder alone.

Manufacturer → Distributor → Retailer →
E-commerce → Consumer

FMCG companies are already adopting several measures.

Most FMCG companies have anti-counterfeiting departments, with some engaging third-party consultants or investigators to keep a check on counterfeiting. The report cites Hindustan Unilever, Dabur, Tata Consumer Products and Emami among companies that regularly engage with third-party consultants or investigators.

FMCG companies are also leveraging authentication and traceability solutions. These solutions can facilitate real-time tracking of products in the supply chain and allow consumers to check authenticity through QR codes, holograms, tamper proof packaging and other digital identification technologies.

The report also highlights consumer awareness initiatives. For example, Bisleri ran the #HarPaaniKiBottleBisleriNahin campaign to help consumers differentiate between counterfeit and genuine products.

RETAILERS HAVE A ROLE TOO

Retailer measure	Share
Use authorised suppliers only	30%
Use direct manufacturers only	24%
Research suppliers thoroughly	18%
Conduct random authentication checks	16%
Traceability embedded in contracts	12%

THE FINAL GAP: AWARENESS

Around half of consumers reported having come across awareness campaigns on counterfeiting. Yet 93% of consumers believe more awareness campaigns are needed.

- **93%** Consumers believe more awareness campaigns are needed.

The message is simple: Awareness exists. But awareness is not enough.

Consumers need accessible ways to verify authenticity. Retailers need stronger supply-chain controls. Manufacturers need visibility across distribution channels. E-commerce ecosystems need mechanisms that make seller and product authenticity easier to establish. And authentication and traceability need to become part of the product journey.

The FMCG fight is ultimately a fight for trust

The counterfeit FMCG problem is not simply about a fake pack replacing a genuine pack.

It is about what consumers believe they are buying, what brands believe they are selling, and how confidently a product can be traced through the value chain.

The report shows that consumers increasingly want genuine products. They are willing to pay a premium for guaranteed authenticity. Yet many still depend on packaging, appearance and branding cues that counterfeiters can replicate.

The next phase of the fight therefore cannot depend only on asking consumers to “look carefully.”

It must make authenticity easier to verify, harder to replicate and possible to trace.

Because in FMCG, authenticity is not just a brand promise. It is a consumer promise.

Source: ASPA–Crisil, State of Counterfeiting in India 2025

ASPA Consumer Awareness Initiative - Hyderabad

89% of Indian Consumers Have Bought a Counterfeit Product: ASPA-CRISIL Report Calls for Greater Consumer Awareness

- Nationwide study of 1,639 consumers across nine cities and six sectors — apparel, FMCG, automotive parts, consumer durables, healthcare products and agro-products
- 89% of consumers have purchased a counterfeit product at least once in their lifetime; 93% say greater consumer awareness campaigns are needed
- Counterfeiting spans every sector studied, from apparel and electronics to healthcare products and FMCG

India, 24 August 2026: The Authentication Solution Providers' Association (ASPA) today called for greater consumer awareness and easier product-verification mechanisms to help consumers identify counterfeit products, as it presented the findings of the ASPA-CRISIL State of Counterfeiting in India 2025 report at its "Fake Free India" event in Hyderabad. The findings were presented by Mr. Ankit Gupta, President, ASPA.

Based on a survey of 1,639 consumers across nine Indian cities, covering six key sectors — apparel, FMCG, automotive parts, consumer durables, healthcare products and agro-products — the report found that 89% of consumers had purchased a counterfeit product at least once in their lifetime, while 35% reported encountering a counterfeit product in the past 12 months. Consumers estimated that nearly 29% of products available in local markets could be counterfeit, and 74% believed counterfeiting had increased in their region over the past year. Encouragingly, 50% of consumers said they would never knowingly buy a

counterfeit product — a sharp rise since the report's 2022 baseline — while 93% said more consumer awareness campaigns are needed.

Highlighting the regional spread of the findings, the report notes that Hyderabad - one of three South Indian cities covered in the survey, along with Chennai and Bengaluru - recorded the highest share of consumers (46%) who encountered a counterfeit product in the past 12 months, among all nine cities studied. Chennai (39%) and Bengaluru (33%) also recorded meaningful shares on the same measure, pointing to a broader South Indian trend worth watching.

The report finds that counterfeiting cuts across every sector studied, with perceived prevalence highest in apparel (34%), followed by consumer electronics (31%), healthcare products (28%), FMCG (25%), agrochemicals (23%) and automotive parts (22%) — underlining that the problem is not confined to any single category but spans the breadth of everyday consumer purchases.



On consumer behaviour, the report finds that while 62% of consumers say they now always check product authenticity before purchase, only 34% check holograms, 23% check QR codes and 13% check digital identities to do so. As many as 59–66%

of consumers still rely only on packaging quality and branding to judge authenticity — a gap ASPA believes needs urgent attention through wider consumer education on authentication and traceability solutions such as secure packaging, serialization, QR-based verification and track-and-trace technologies.

ASPA also pointed to the report's expanding regional footprint as part of its continuing awareness efforts: the ASPA-CRISIL State of Counterfeiting in India 2025

report was first launched in Mumbai in March 2026, and ASPA, headquartered in Delhi, is now taking its “Fake Free India” consumer awareness campaign to Hyderabad — reflecting the association’s pan-India push to build awareness of counterfeiting’s impact across regions. ASPA requested continued media support in taking this consumer awareness message to a wider audience.

The report is part of ASPA’s continuing efforts, across its four pillars of Awareness, Advocacy, Research and Innovation, to generate greater consumer awareness around counterfeiting and provide stakeholders with data-driven insights to strengthen India’s response to illicit and counterfeit products.



Ankit Gupta, President, ASPA, said, *“Our survey of 1,639 consumers across nine cities shows that counterfeiting is deeply embedded in the everyday consumer experience across sectors, and that has to be a wake-up call for consumer awareness. 62% of consumers say they check product authenticity before purchase, yet a large share are still relying only on packaging quality and branding to judge whether a product is genuine — that is the real gap we have to close. It will take brands, regulators and consumers acting together — our Trishul approach — to move towards stronger authentication, greater confidence and a safer tomorrow for every consumer.”*

Nakul Pasricha, Vice-President, ASPA, said, *“The role of authentication and traceability is becoming increasingly important in bridging the gap between consumer awareness and actual verification. Secure packaging, serialization, digital authentication, QR-based verification and track-and-trace technologies can provide multiple layers of protection. The objective should be to make authentication accessible and intuitive for consumers while creating greater visibility across the supply chain.”*



Prof. Bejon Kumar Misra, International Consumer Policy Expert & Honorary Member, ASPA, said, *“Counterfeiting is not merely an intellectual-property problem or a problem for brands — it is, first and foremost, a consumer protection problem. When a consumer unknowingly buys a counterfeit product, three victims are created simultaneously: the consumer, the legitimate trader and the nation. The last mile of authentication is the consumer, and the ultimate measure of success is consumer confidence. Consumers must be empowered with simple, accessible and affordable means to identify, verify and report suspicious products, not merely be told to buy genuine. This fight against counterfeiting must become a national consumer movement.”*

In the dynamic realm of innovation and collaboration, ASPA (Authentication Solution Provider Association) has embarked on groundbreaking collaborations, aligning with renowned organisers to fortify the industry and deliver immense value to ASPA members.

Events from Recent Past

- **Indusfood Ahmedabad 2026:** The event was held from 24th–26th July 2026 at the Helipad Exhibition Centre, Ahmedabad, and was organised by TPCI. The event showcased innovations in food processing, packaging, ingredients, and supply chain solutions. **ASPA supported the event as a Partner Association.**
- **Flexo Summit Asia 2026:** The event was held on 5th–6th August 2026 at Hilton – Manyata Tech Park, Bengaluru.
- **IP Advantage Summit 2026:** The summit was held on 6th August 2026 at The Imperial, New Delhi, and was organised by TPCI. It focused on intellectual property protection, innovation, and anti-infringement strategies. **ASPA supported the event as the Authentication Partner.**
- **India FoodCon Expo 2026:** The expo was held from 7th–10th August 2026 in Nashik. It highlighted advancements in food processing, manufacturing, packaging, and sustainability. **ASPA supported the event as a Supporting Association.**
- **Asia Security Conference & Exhibition 2026:** The event was held on 19th–20th August 2026 in Mumbai. It explored developments in security, surveillance, cybersecurity, and risk management. **ASPA supported the event as a Supporting Association.**
- **PackPlus Delhi 2026:** The event was held from 20th–22nd August 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. It brought together stakeholders from the packaging, converting, and supply chain sectors.
- **ElitePlus 2026 – 13th Speciality Films & Flexible Packaging Global Summit:** The summit was held on 26th–27th August 2026 at Jio World Convention Centre, BKC, Mumbai.
- **Future of Food, Engineered Today:** The event was scheduled for 11th September 2026 in Delhi and focused on innovation, sustainability, food safety, and emerging food technologies. **ASPA supported the event as a Supporting Association.** The event was organised by FoodTech Biz and Food & Drink Industry magazine.

Upcoming Events

- **Digital Print Asia 2026:** The event will be held on 24th–25th September 2026 at Hilton – Manyata Tech Park, Bengaluru. **ASPA will support the event as a Supporting Association.**
- **Packaging South Asia Conference 2026:** The conference will be held on 9th October 2026 in Mumbai. It will discuss packaging innovations, sustainability, regulations, and emerging technologies. **ASPA will support the event as a Supporting Association.** The conference will be organised by Packaging South Asia, a well-known publication for the packaging industry.
- **LOUPE India 2026: 29th October – 1st November 2026,** India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida, Delhi NCR. **ASPA will support the event as a Supporting Association.**
- **PackVision 2026:** The exhibition will be held from 15th–17th October 2026 at Chennai Trade Centre, Chennai. It will showcase advancements in packaging, labelling, printing, coding, and

automation. **ASPA will support the event as a Supporting Association.**

- **Indus Food 2026 – Bengaluru:** The event will be held from **25th–27th November 2026** at Bangalore International Exhibition Centre. It will be a major food and beverage trade show, with **ASPA supporting the event as a Partner Association.**
- **17th PrintPack India:** The exhibition will be held from **30th January – 3rd February 2027** at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida, India. **ASPA will support the event as a Supporting Association.**

These collaborations exemplify ASPA's proactive approach to fostering innovation, promoting security, and championing cutting-edge solutions across sectors such as Food and Beverage, Beauty and Cosmetics, Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals, Packaging, Brand Security, Security Services, Logistics, and technology. ASPA continues to be a driving force, navigating the industry toward a future of enhanced security and technological excellence.

Stay tuned for more exciting developments as ASPA continues to shape the landscape of authentication and traceability solutions.

We welcome new Members:

The logo for Seshaasai features the brand name in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized orange icon of a person with arms raised in a celebratory gesture. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the bottom right of the icon.



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and much more...



CERTIFICATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS



CMMI DEV /3



DMF's
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ASPA
Association of Spices Producers of Asia

ICOTA
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CH

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*Assumed a minimum of 1% efficacy