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## A STUDY ON CONSUMERS AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS DURABLE GOODS IN ERODE DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

*Consumer durables involve any type of product purchased by consumers that is manufactured for long-term use. As opposed to many goods that are intended for consumption in short term, consumer durables are intended to endure regular usage for several years or longer before their replacement is required. Just about every household contains at least a few items that may be considered to be of consumer durable nature. With India being the second fastest growing economy having a huge consumer class, consumer durables have emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in India. With the increase in income levels, easy availability of finance, increase in consumer awareness and introduction of new models, the demand for consumer durables has increased significantly. This paper makes an attempt to study the consumer behaviour of 150 consumers towards durable goods and their awareness while making such purchase.*

### KEYWORDS

consumers, consumption, consumer awareness, consumer durables.

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian consumer durables industry has witnessed a considerable change over the last few years. Changing lifestyle and higher disposable income coupled with boom in the real estate and housing industry and a surge in advertising have been instrumental in bringing about a sea change in the consumer behaviour pattern. Consumer durables involve any type of product purchased by consumers that is manufactured for long-term use. As opposed to many goods that are intended for consumption in short term, consumer durables are intended to endure regular usage for several years or longer before their replacement is required. Just about every household contains at least a few items that may be considered to be of consumer durable nature. With India being the second fastest growing economy having a huge consumer class, consumer durables have emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in India.

### CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The term consumer behaviour can be defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. To succeed in this dynamic and rapidly evolving industry as in all others, marketers need to know everything they can about consumers – what they want, what they think, what they buy, how, when and why. They need to understand the personal and group influences, which affect consumer decisions and how these decisions are made. Consumer behaviour is perceived as the cornerstone of a successful marketing strategy. Consumer behaviour is 'the mental and emotional process and the observable behaviour of consumers during searching, purchasing and post consumption of a product and service.

### DURABLE GOODS

Durable goods differ from non-durable goods in their characteristic lumpiness and in their durability. These characteristics have important implications; the latter means that durable goods do not quickly wear out and that they yield services and utility over time rather than being completely used up once they are consumed. Therefore, in contrast to non-durables, consumption and purchase are not the same for durable goods; purchases are considered as adding or acquiring stocks, whereas consumption is regarded as the depletion or physical deterioration of these stocks. Additionally, the reason for purchasing a durable good could either be the new demand of a consumer who wants to acquire ownership for the first time or, on the other hand, it could be the replacement demand of an actual owner who wants to maintain a certain utility flow from a durable stock which has decreased because of depreciation. The second important characteristic, the lumpy nature of durables, implies that the choice whether or not to buy a durable is largely a choice between two discrete alternatives. It differs, therefore, from the purchase of non-durables which can be made over a more continuous, quantitative range. This, in consequence, implies that price decision is discontinuous too for durables; they have higher unit cost.

### CONSUMER DURABLE PRODUCTS - A BRIEF OVERVIEW

A product is a bundle of satisfactions that a consumer buys. It represents solution to consumer problems. It is a combination of tangible and intangible benefits. For example, a refrigerator is not just merely steel, plastics, frozen gas, brand name, number of doors, etc., but also involves factors like installation, delivery, dealer network, after sales service, etc. It also connotes status in developing countries like India. Similar is the case with other products like television, music system, washing machine, personal computer, etc. Thus, want satisfying products are broadly classified under consumer durables and non-durables. Both the categories differ in respect of various parameters like unit price, usage pattern and durability of the product, concerns of the consumers and the complexity in the purchase decision process. As such, consumer durables differ from non-durables essentially in that the former normally are not consumed while using them, whereas the latter are consumed in the process of usage. Consumer durables are mainly characterized by high unit cost, long life, and consequently low frequency of purchase. Hence, high level of involvement, mental homework proceeds in a systematic way in the search, analysis and interpretation of information. An intensive preparation both psychologically and emotionally is found in the decision-making process as compared to the purchase of many non-durables where the behavior is more impulsive in nature.

For the purpose of this study - three major sets of durable products, which are classified under entertainment, general maintenance and kitchen appliances, are chosen. Products included under each category are given below:

**Entertainment appliances** - television, audio system, video system and personal computer / multimedia;

**General maintenance appliances** - refrigerator, washing machine, air conditioner, vacuum cleaner, water heater and power control equipment; and

**Kitchen aided appliances** - mixer-cum-grinder, wet grinder, food processor, microwave oven and gas stove.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF BUYER BEHAVIOUR

- Buyer behaviour comprises of mental and physical activities of a buyer when he wants to buy goods and service to satisfy his needs.
- It includes both visible and invisible activities of buyer. The visible activities refer to physical activity like actually going to the market place, buying the product and consuming them. The invisible activities on the other hand, refer to mental activities like thinking about the product, deciding to buy or not to buy that product, to buy one brand instead of another etc.
- Buyer behaviour is very complex and dynamic also. It is constantly changing requiring certain adjustment. The marketing management which fails to make such adjustments, would certainly lose its market.
- An individual buying behaviour is also influenced by internal factors such as needs, habits, instincts, motives, attitudes etc and also by outside or environmental factors such as family, social, groups, culture, status, positions, economic and business conditions. In narrow sense, consumer behaviour is the act of a consumer when he is engaged in buying and consuming a good or a service.

## CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND AWARENESS

It is a fact that Marketing firms use their knowledge of consumer behaviour to segment Markets, to design Marketing strategies and to Measure Marketing performance. The development of consumer behaviour studies is an outgrowth of the evaluation of Marketing philosophy from production and production orientation to a selling orientation to a Marketing orientation. Other factors that have contributed to the development of consumer behaviour studies include the fast pace of new product introduction, shorter ' product life cycles, the high rate of new product life cycles, the high rate of new product failures, increased interest in consumer protection by private group and public policy decision — Makers and the adoption of Marketing practices by service and non-profit organisations. Of these factors, the consumers protection and awareness has been main frontline task of the government and its agencies and voluntary organisations to protect the present day consumers from all malpractices of the traders. Because of the Government's Acts and the initiatives taken by the voluntary organisations from time-to-time, it can be hypothesized that the present day consumers are better educated, informed with a greater sense of awareness and right consumer behaviour. Hence, consumer protection and promotion of awareness among them is the need of the hour and important facet of the consumer behaviour.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Nikita Bhatbhai Patel (2014)** conducted a study of Consumer Awareness Behaviour among Consumers of North Gujarat. The study focuses mainly on the rural consumer behaviour towards selected Market products with the prevailing trend, it is necessary to focus on the essence and emergence of vibrant rural marketing efforts from the Market products companies. Thus with more number of companies entering into the rural market, with a variety of products, it is a must for the companies to study the rural consumer behaviour, on Market products. This study will highlight the rural consumer behaviour before purchase, at the time of purchase and post- purchase

**Dr. R. Prakash Babu & R. Buvaeswari (2014)** A study on Users Behaviour towards Durable Goods in Srirangam. As far as the durable products are concerned, the users' are indifferent when compared to purchasing of durables. Previously users' stuck to one particular shop and one particular brand. However, there is a remarkable change in the buying behaviour of the users' towards durable products. This is because of the different shopping outlets, various sources of information, multifarious aspects of article evaluation process and consistent promotional offers made by the marketers. Further, it is concluded that the changing concept of retail business into retail in detail, establishment of giant sized retail shops in the name of malls and the influx of foreign direct investment in retail business also influence the buying habits of the users'.

**S. Aruna & A. John William (2015)**, conducted a study on Consumer behaviour towards online shopping in Coimbatore District. Thus in the midst of technological advancements people mostly prefer online shopping to traditional shopping. It has become popular and is extremely convenient. Though it is convenient there are various factors such as price, quality of the product and delivery time which customers look before online shopping. So the online websites must aware of these factors to be successful and retain the customers. The final result from the study is that online shopping is growing rapidly in positive manner. By removing little flaws, it can be much profitable.

**Dr.K.M.Chinnadorai & R. Anusuya (2015)** conducted a study on consumer awareness and satisfaction towards handloom products with special reference to Coimbatore district. The study reveals that consumers are very much aware of the handloom products but that makes no profit to the handloom seller. Customers find comparing to the mill made and power loom cloth handloom products are the best and well known for durability. It concluded Private and government organization should take steps for increasing the quality and availability of products.

**Dr.C.Subramanian & Ms.C.Eswari (2016)** A Study on Women Consumer Behavior Towards Durable Goods with Special Reference to Pudukkottai Town. This present study concluded that, the women consumer behaviour and preference have a great impact on the home appliance products. The women consumers' behaviour owns a good degree of consciousness of the change taking place in their situation. Women grow in their educational level and the growth in the media has contributed to their development. Women are not only cost conscious but also a quality conscious customers. The sales promotional activities sometimes may help women consumers to purchase more but it cannot remain same.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study aims at assessing the consumers behavior towards durable goods. It consists of consumer behaviour and their level of awareness regarding the usage of durable goods. The study also focuses the problems of the consumers while using durable goods. It covers the consumers of durable goods in Erode District only.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Indian consumer durable industry is facing a tough competition with the entry of many companies. All the companies are constantly engaged in gaining the attention of consumers by introducing a novelty in the existing goods, changing the design and model. In view of the above, the researcher has made an attempt to study the consumer awareness and behaviour towards durable goods.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the demographic profile of the respondents
2. To study the factors influencing the consumers to purchase durable goods.
3. To study the consumers awareness and buying behavior towards durable goods
4. To summarize the key findings and offer suggestions for the study.

## HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference between the age and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durable goods.
2. There is no significant difference between the gender and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durable goods.
3. There is no significant difference between the educational qualification and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durable goods.
4. There is no significant difference between the occupation and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durable goods.
5. There is no significant difference between the income and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durable goods.
6. There is no significant difference between the marital status and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durable goods.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY****SAMPLING DESIGN**

Convenience sampling (sometimes known as grab or opportunity sampling) is a type of non-probability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population which is close to hand. That is, a population is selected because it is readily available and convenient.

**DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Both primary and secondary data were used by the researcher for this research study.

**PRIMARY DATA**

Primary data are data, which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character. The primary data were collected from various customers with the help of a well structured questionnaire.

**SECONDARY DATA**

Secondary data consist of information that already exists somewhere, Secondary data are collected from company websites, magazines and using some library books.

**AREA OF THE STUDY**

The study was undertaken in Erode District.

**SAMPLE SIZE**

A total of 150 respondents residing in the Erode District form the sample.

**STATISTICAL TOOLS****1. SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS**

Percentage refers to a special kind of ratio; percentages are used in making comparison between two or more series of data. Percentages are used to describe relationships. Percentages are also used to compare the relative terms, the distribution of two or more series of data.

$$\text{Percentage of consumer} = \frac{\text{No. of respondents}}{\text{Total consumer}} * 100$$

**2. CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS**

For the purpose of the analysis chi-square test was used to find out whether there is any significant relationship between dependent variables viz., level of consumer awareness and independent variables like age, gender, educational qualification, occupation, monthly income and marital status of the respondents. The following formula was applied for calculating the chi-square test.

$$X^2 = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where, O = observed frequency, E = expected frequency

$$E = \frac{\text{Row total} \times \text{Column total}}{\text{Grand total}}$$

If the calculated value is greater than the table value at 5 percent level of significance, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the level of consumer awareness of the respondents and that of independent variables. If calculated value is less than the table value, it is concluded that independent variable has no significant relationship in the level of consumer awareness of the respondents.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The analysis of data collected from primary source is presented in the form of tables and interpretation is given in description as required. Analysis refers to the course of finding out answers to the question that had arisen to the study. Interpretation finds out the relationship among the available data and the variables.

**TABLE 1: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Sl.No.	Particulars	Classification	Numbers	Percentage
1	Age	Below 30	15	10
		31-40	63	42
		41-50	55	36.67
		Above 50	17	11.00
		Total	150	100
2	Gender	Male	90	60
		Female	60	40
		Total	150	100
3	Educational qualifications	Upto SSLC	20	13.33
		HSC	40	26.67
		Degree/Diploma	48	32
		Professional	30	20
		Others	12	8
		Total	150	100
4	Occupation	Agriculture	37	24.66
		Employed	55	36.67
		Businessmen	40	26.67
		Others	18	12
		Total	150	100
5	Monthly Income	Below 15000	40	26.67
		15001-25000	50	33.33
		25001-35000	25	16.67
		35001-45000	20	13.33
		Above 45000	15	10
		Total	150	100
6	Marital status	Married	95	63.33
		Unmarried	55	36.67
		Total	150	100

Table-1 shows that out of 150 consumers taken for the study, 42 belong to the age group up to 31-40 years, 60% of the consumers are male. As regards to educational qualification 32% are degree/diploma level and 36.67% are employed, 33.33% of the consumer recorded monthly income of Rs. 15001 to Rs. 25000 and 63.33% of the consumers are married.

**TABLE 2: FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

Factors	Number of respondents	Percentage
Price	30	20.00
Brand image	24	16.00
Durability	25	16.67
After sale service	17	11.33
Warranty and guarantee	20	13.33
Easy availability	21	14.00
Advertisement network	13	08.67
Total	150	100.00

Table 2 shows that 30(20%) consumer are influenced by price; 25(16.67%) consumers are influenced by durability; 24(16%) consumers are influenced by brand image; 21(14%) consumers are influenced by easy availability; 20(13.33%) consumers are influenced by Warrantee and Guarantee; 17(11.33%) consumers are influenced by after sale service and only 13(8.67%) are influenced by advertisement network.

**CHI-SQUARE TEST****TABLE 3: AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND LEVEL OF CONSUMER AWARENESS**

Level	High	Medium	Low	Total	Chi square value	Table Value	Sig
Age							
Below 30	10	2	3	15	17.72	12.5916	**
31-40	20	13	30	63			
41-50	25	20	10	55			
Above 50	5	7	5	17			
Total	60	42	48	150			

At 5% level of significance, for 6 degree of freedom the table value is 12.5916. Since the calculated value (17.72) is more than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is a significant difference between the age and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durables.

**TABLE 4: GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS AND LEVEL OF CONSUMER AWARENESS**

Level	High	Medium	Low	Total	Chi square value	Table Value	Sig
Gender							
Male	42	20	28	90	5.09	5.9915	NS
Female	18	22	20	60			
Total	60	42	48	150			

As 5% level of significance, for 2 degree of freedom the table value is 5.9915. Since the calculated value (5.09) is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing durables.

**TABLE 5: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS AND LEVEL OF CONSUMER AWARENESS**

Level	High	Medium	Low	Total	Chi square value	Table Value	Sig
Educational Qualifications							
Upto SSLC	2	10	8	20	22.7709	15.5073	**
HSC	20	8	12	40			
Degree/Diploma	22	18	8	48			
Professional	12	3	15	30			
Others	4	3	5	12			
Total	60	42	48	150			

At 5% level of significance, for 8 degree of freedom the table value is 15.5073. Since the calculated value (22.7709) is more than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is significant difference between the educational qualification and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durable goods.

**TABLE 6: OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS AND LEVEL OF CONSUMER AWARENESS**

Level	High	Medium	Low	Total	Chi square value	Table Value	Sig
Occupation							
Agriculture	17	9	11	37	13.6808	12.5916	**
Employee	23	22	10	55			
Businessmen	15	6	19	40			
Others	5	5	8	18			
Total	60	42	48	150			

At 5% level of significance, for 6 degree of freedom the table value is 12.5916. Since the calculated value (13.6808) is more than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is significant difference between the occupation and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing durable goods.

**TABLE 7: MONTHLY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS AND LEVEL OF CONSUMER AWARENESS**

Level	High	Medium	Low	Total	Chi square value	Table Value	Sig
Monthly Income							
Below 15000	15	6	19	40	14.550	15.5073	NS
15001-25000	19	19	12	50			
25001-35000	13	9	3	25			
35001-45000	8	5	7	20			
Above 45000	5	3	7	15			
Total	60	42	48	150			

At 5% level of significance, for 8 degree of freedom the table value is 15.5073. Since the calculated value (14.550) is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no significant difference between the income group and their level of consumer awareness while purchasing durable goods.

TABLE 8: MARTIAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS AND LEVEL OF CONSUMER AWARENESS

Level	High	Medium	Low	Total	Chi square value	Table Value	Sig
Married	32	27	36	95	5.411	5.9915	NS
Unmarried	28	15	12	55			
Total	60	42	48	150			

As 5% level of significance, for 2 degree of freedom the table value is 5.9915. Since the calculated value (5.411) is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no significant difference between the marital status and the level of consumer awareness while purchasing consumer durable goods.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

From the analysis carried out with the above objectives and hypotheses, the following are the major findings:

- 42% belong to the age group of 31-40 years,
- 60% of the consumers are male.
- Majority 32% of consumers educational qualification are degree/diploma level.
- 36.67% consumers are employed
- 33.33% of the consumer have a monthly income from Rs.15001 to Rs.30000.
- Majority 30(20%) consumer is influenced by price
- 25(16.67%) consumers are influenced by durability;
- 24(16%) consumers are influenced by brand image
- 21(14%) consumers are influenced by easy availability
- 20(13.33%) consumers are influenced by Warrantee and Guarantee
- 17(11.33%) consumers are influenced by after sale service
- Only 13(8.67%) are influenced by advertisement network.
- There is no significant relationship with demographic profile such as gender, marital status and income and factors influencing level of satisfaction of consumer buying behavior.

## SUGGESTIONS

1. The purchase decisions of the respondents are influenced considerably by the price-factor. Concessions in the price, price reductions, discounts sale, gifts and offers have become common practices. The buyers of consumer durables should try to avail of these benefits, whenever they are available. However, the buyers of such goods should not take without considering the quality and performance aspects of these higher value products.
2. The buyers of consumer durables have largely shown their preference to make extensive enquiry from the dealers of different brands of the products. This trait should be emulated by all the buyers in order to avoid post purchase dissatisfaction about the quality and performance of the products
3. The buyers of the consumer durables should insist for all the technical information on the use of durable products without any technical fault leading to frequent repairs, free servicing of the durables by dealers during the guarantee period insisted upon the buyers.
4. The buyers of consumer durables prefer well known Indian brands to imported ones since the imported products have been found to be inconvenient in view of the problems of post purchase servicing faced by them
5. Marketers of consumer durables must identify who makes and influences the buying decisions. This will enable the marketers in understanding how consumers influence, different marketing campaigns that might be targeted to each type of persons. Marketers also examine buyer's level of involvement and numbers of brands available to determine whether consumers are engaging in complex buying behavior, dissonance reducing buying behavior, habitual buying behavior

## CONCLUSION

The market for consumer durables is becoming more competitive now a days. Therefore, the producer of durable products should understand consumer interest much to find higher sale of their products. Marketers communicate with consumers and try to convince through every possible media. Highly inevitable to produce goods as preferred by the customer, as he is the kingpin around whom the entire marketing activity revolves. Thus, a marketer who understands the behaviour of the consumers and plan his marketing strategies to suit the needs and aspirations of the target market will definitely have an advantage over his competitors

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study confined to Erode District only.
2. The researcher has studied only durable goods.
3. Only 150 respondents are taken to this study.

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