

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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- Bowersox, Donald J., Closs, David J., (1996), "Logistical Management." Tata McGraw, Hill, New Delhi.
- Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio" Ohio State University, Nigeria.

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**WEBSITES**

- Garg, Bhavet (2011): Towards a New Gas Policy, Political Weekly, Viewed on January 01, 2012 <http://epw.in/user/viewabstract.jsp>



**A STUDY OF CONSUMER PREFERENCES TOWARDS BATHING SOAP MARKET IN NAGPUR CITY****Dr. SNEHAL GODBOLE****ASST. PROFESSOR****Dr. AMBEDKAR INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES & RESEARCH****DEEKSHA BHOOMI****ABSTRACT**

*With change in time lot of things have changed over a period of time. The consumers who were not that conscious about discretionary products have started paying lot of attention on the features and the attributes that a particular product is providing. With more and more youth coming into the scene who are more skin conscious than other factors have change the face of the industry. But still a larger population is in the rural area and their attributes of selection are all together different. So there is wide scope for consumer research. as the consumers taste, consumers likes, consumers preferences etc., change often because of financial, psychological, sociological and some other factors. The present study would help the company to know the satisfaction of the respondents towards bathing soap and various soap brands and how potential target of the market must be matched with marketing mixes and then best attractive strategies to be chosen for implementation. The companies would be in a better position to make and utilize their marketing strategies to gain more and more customers.*

**KEYWORDS**

discretionary products, consumer's preferences, marketing mixes, marketing strategies.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The Indian FMCG sector with a market size of US\$13.1 billion is the fourth largest sector in the economy. A well-established distribution network, intense competition between the organized and unorganized segments characterizes the sector. The market is estimated to grow to US\$ 100 billion by 2025, according to market research firm Nielsen. In the last decade the FMCG sector has grown at an average of 11% a year; in the last five years, annual growth accelerated to 17%. The FMCG Industry is characterized by a well-established distribution network, low penetration levels, low operating cost, lower per capita consumption and intense competition between the organized and unorganized segments. The fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) segment is the fourth largest sector in the Indian economy. The market size of FMCG in India is estimated to grow from US\$ 30 billion in 2011 to US\$ 74 billion in 2018. India is a vast country with a population of 1,030 million people. Household penetration of soaps is 98%. People belonging to different income levels use different brands, which fall under different segments (see table below), but all income levels use soaps, making it the second largest category in India (detergents are number one). Rural consumers in India constitute 70% of the population. Rural demand is growing, with more and more soap brands being launched in the discount segment targeting the lower socio-economic strata of consumers.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Neha Joshi "A Study on Customer Preference and Satisfaction towards Restaurant in Dehradun City" talks about the changing habits of the customers towards their choices and the industries must achieve the service quality that surpasses the expectations of the customers however the satisfaction may be influence by various attitudes from internal, external factor. In his research paper Thiyagaraj. V. "A Study of Consumer Preference towards Branded Tea in Tiruppur City speaks about offerings by different companies and how the customers rank these bundles of goods according to the price levels of utility they give the consumer. Dr M Nishad Nawaz & Ms Wafa Yaqoob Ali Alajmi BS," A Study on Consumer Preferences for E Shopping with reference to Bahraini Consumers" observed that Different parts of the people have similar tastes, perceptions, styles and accessibility and which factors plays an important role in selection of specific product. Mr. S. Madhan Kumar M.B.A M.Phill, Mr. V. Sathish Kumar "A Study on Consumer Preference and Satisfaction towards Laptops with Special Reference to Erode" had observed that how the consumers are choosing their laptop with various opinion like accessibility of the product, assurance of the product, service of the product, user friendliness of the product, technical support of the product, quality of the product, etc. and how these factor affect their buying habits V. Anojan & T. Subaskaran "Consumer's Preference and Consumer's Buying Behavior on Soft Drinks: A Case Study in Northern Province of Sri Lanka" in his study observed that how potential target of the market must be matched with marketing mixes and then best attractive strategies to be chosen for implementation. Ms. M.Gomathi Ms.R.Gomathi, A" Study On Consumer Preference Towards Selected FMCG Personal Care Products In Erode Town, Tamilnadu" observed that In today's scenario, Consumer is the king because he has got various choices around him. If you are not able of providing him the desired result he will definitely switch over to the other provider. Therefore, to survive in this competitive competition, you need to be the best. Dr. S. Subadra (2010) on their study "Consumer Perceptions and Behaviour: A Study with Special Reference to Car Owners in Namakkal District" reviewed that the market is now predominantly consumer driver. The focus is shifting for product based marketing to need based marketing. Consumer is given many options to decide.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the consumer perception towards bathing soaps.
2. To study the awareness regarding various brands of soap.
3. To identify the factors considered before buying bathing soap.
4. To identify the product having best range of prices, attractive packaging and easy availability

**NEED OF THE STUDY**

Due to the entry of many players in this sector there is a need to determine the consumer perception towards the bathing soap. What are the various parameters that are taken into consideration when a bathing soap is bought? This will give the manufacturers some insight as to the manufacturing and marketing aspect of it.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

There is wide scope for consumer research. As the consumers, taste, likes, preferences etc., change often because of financial, psychological, sociological and some other factors. The present study would help the company to know the satisfaction of the respondents towards bathing soap and various soap brands. The companies would be in a better position to make utilize of their marketing strategies to gain more and more customers.

**HYPOTHESIS**

- a) Significant number of respondents perceives that price has no effect on the purchase behaviour.
- b) Significant number of respondents perceives that quality parameter has no effect on the purchase behaviour.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

1. **Research design:** In this study Descriptive research design is used.
2. **Data collection:** Data has been collected both from primary and secondary sources.

Primary- Questionnaire

Secondary- internet, magazines

3. **Sample size:** 100 respondents from across all demographics in Nagpur
4. **Sampling technique:** Convenient sampling and Random sampling.
5. **Sample area:** Nagpur city

**6. Limitations of the study:**

- This study is done in Nagpur city hence it is applicable only in this particular region and not elsewhere.
- Time frame of this study was limited. The result could be different if the time frame would have been long.
- Sometimes some respondents were not in full mood to give the answers to the questions so some of the answers may not be exact.
- The sample size considered here is not enough big to apply the findings of the study to the entire country.

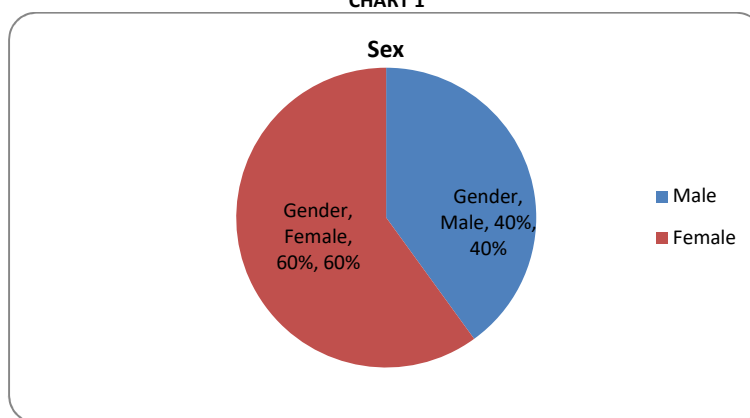
**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Personal Information**

**TABLE 1: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS**

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	40	40%
Female	60	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**CHART 1**

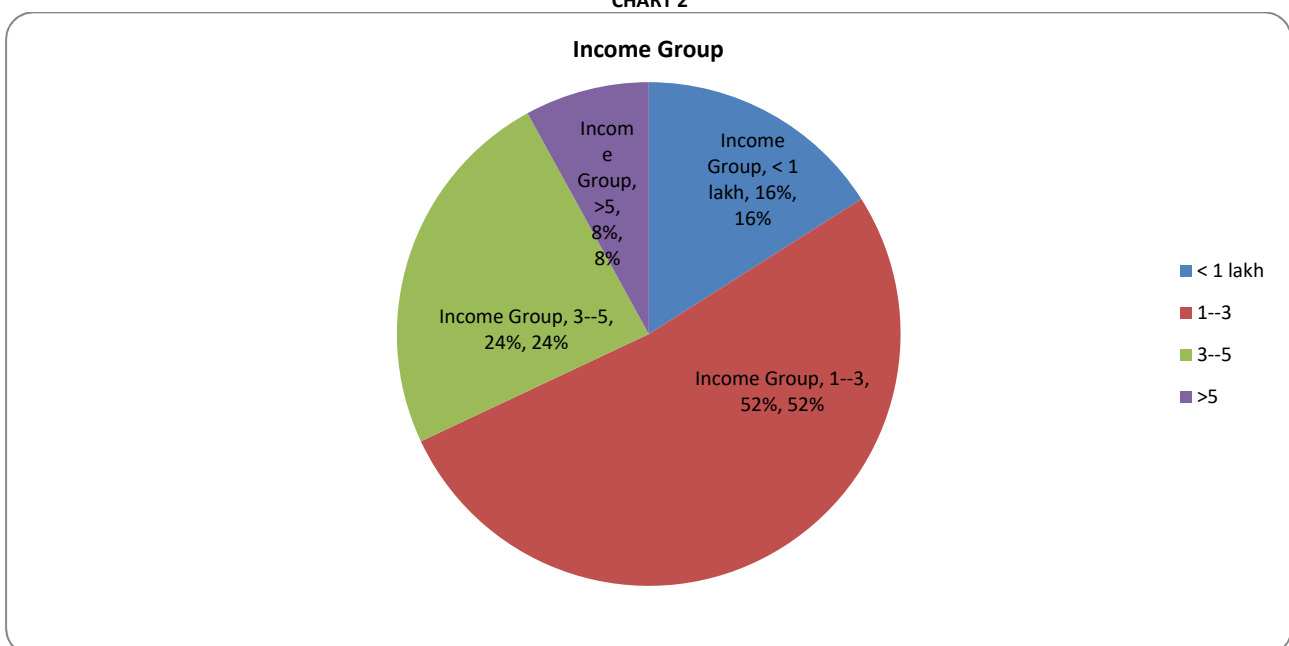


**Interpretation:** The above chart shows that 60% respondents are female, and 40% respondents are male. As females are the one who make the choices of the products which is to be bought for their family.

**TABLE 2: INCOME GROUP**

Income Group	Respondents	Percentage
< 1 lakh	16	16%
1--3	52	52%
3--5	24	24%
>5	8	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

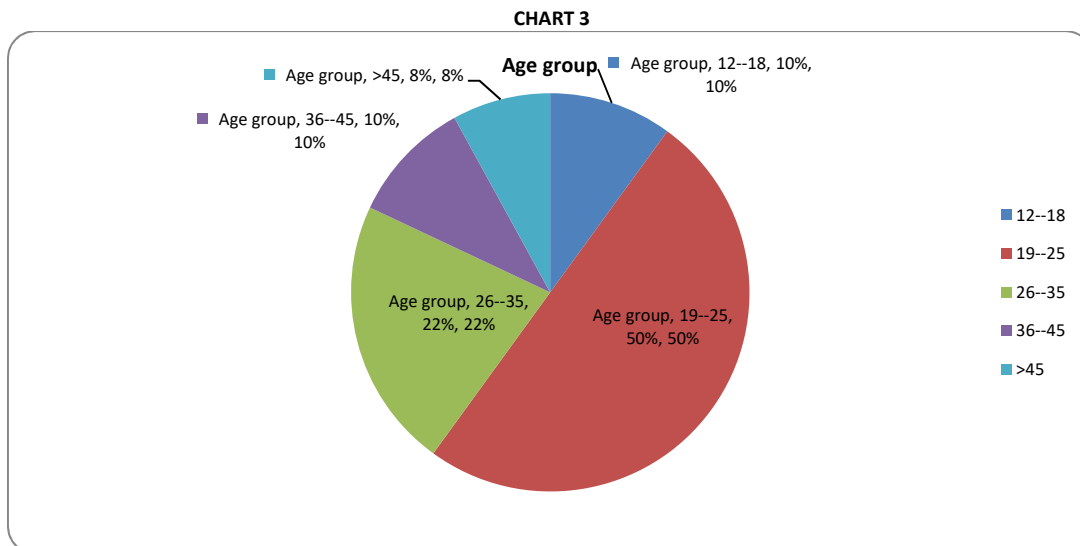
**CHART 2**



**Interpretation:** The above chart shows that 52% respondents are in the 1 to 3 lakh income group level, 24% respondents in 3 to 5 income level, 16% are less than 1 lakh and 8% respondents are greater than 5 lakh. All income groups have different perception and spending habits which allows the industry to have wide range of products.

**TABLE 3: AGE GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS**

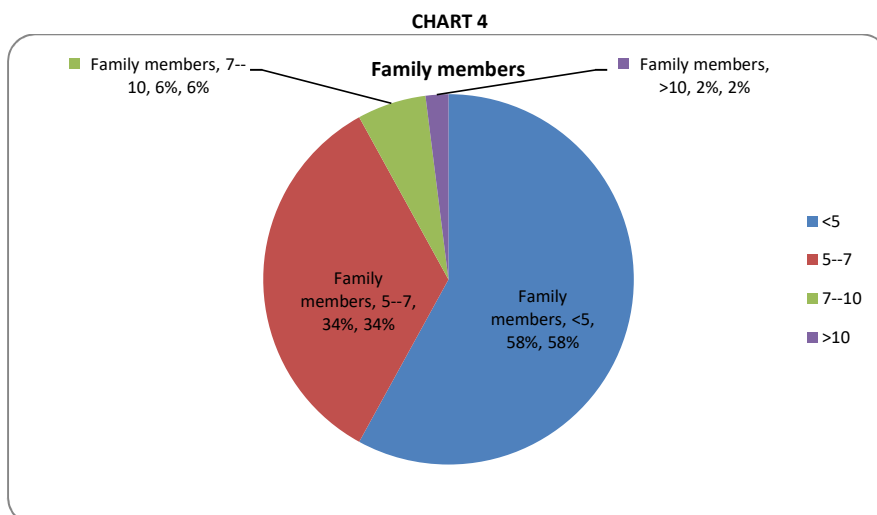
Age group	Respondents	Percentage
12--18	10	10%
19--25	50	50%
26--35	22	22%
36--45	10	10%
>45	8	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



**Interpretation:** The above chart shows that 50% respondents are in the range of 19 to 25 age group, 22% respondents are in 26 to 35 years of age, 10% respondents are in 36 to 45 years of ages, 8% respondents are in the age of greater than 45 year old, and 10% respondents are in 12 to 18 year of age. As the new customers are now much more aware and cautious among which are young people.

**TABLE 4: NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS**

Family members	Respondents	Percentage
<5	58	58%
5--7	34	34%
7--10	6	6%
>10	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

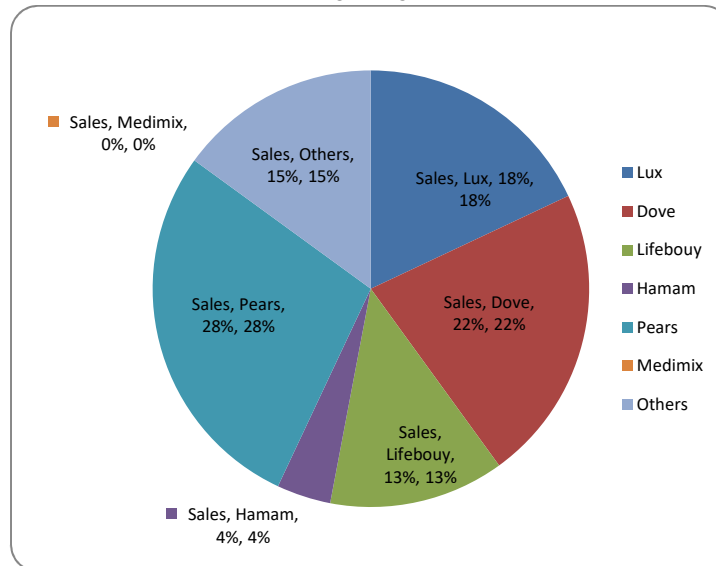


**Interpretation:** The above chart shows that 58% respondents have less than 5 family members, 34% respondents have 5 to 7 family members, 6% respondents have 7 to 10 family members, and 2% respondents have greater than 10 family members. This in turn will help the company to know how often a product is purchased as it gets consumed fast.

TABLE 5: SOAP ADVERTISEMENT INFLUENCE BY CUSTOMERS

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Lux	18	18%
Dove	22	22%
Lifebouy	13	13%
Hamam	4	4%
Pears	28	28%
Medimix	0	0%
Others	15	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

CHART 5

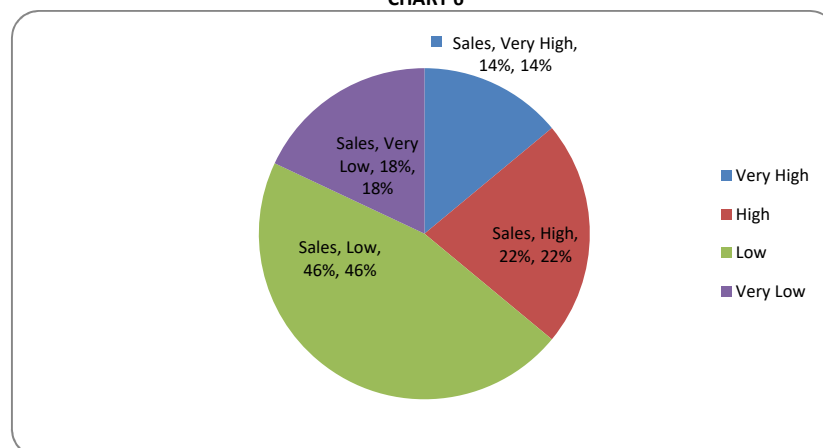


**Interpretation:** Out of 100 respondents 28% respondents were influenced by pears soap advertisement, 22% respondents influenced by dove soap advertisement, 18% respondents influenced by lux soap, 13% respondents influenced by Lifebouy soap, 4% respondents influenced by Hamam soap, and 15% respondents influenced by other soap such as Santoor (10), Dettol (5). As the recall value is more in advertisement.

TABLE 6: EFFECT OF THE PRICE FACTOR ON THE PURCHASE DECISION

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Very High	14	14%
High	22	22%
Low	46	46%
Very Low	18	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

CHART 6

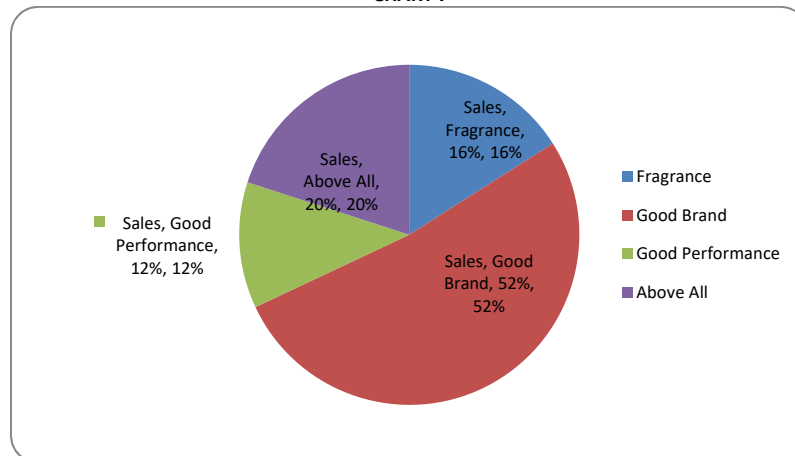


**Interpretation:** It is very much clear from the above chart that 22% respondents has high effect of the price factor on their purchase decision, 46% respondents has low effect of the price factor on their purchase decision, 18% respondents has very low price factor effect on the purchase decision, and 14% respondents has very high of the price factor effect.

TABLE 7: QUALITIES REQUIRED IN BATH SOAP

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Fragrance	16	16%
Good Brand	52	52%
Good Performance	12	12%
Above All	20	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

CHART 7

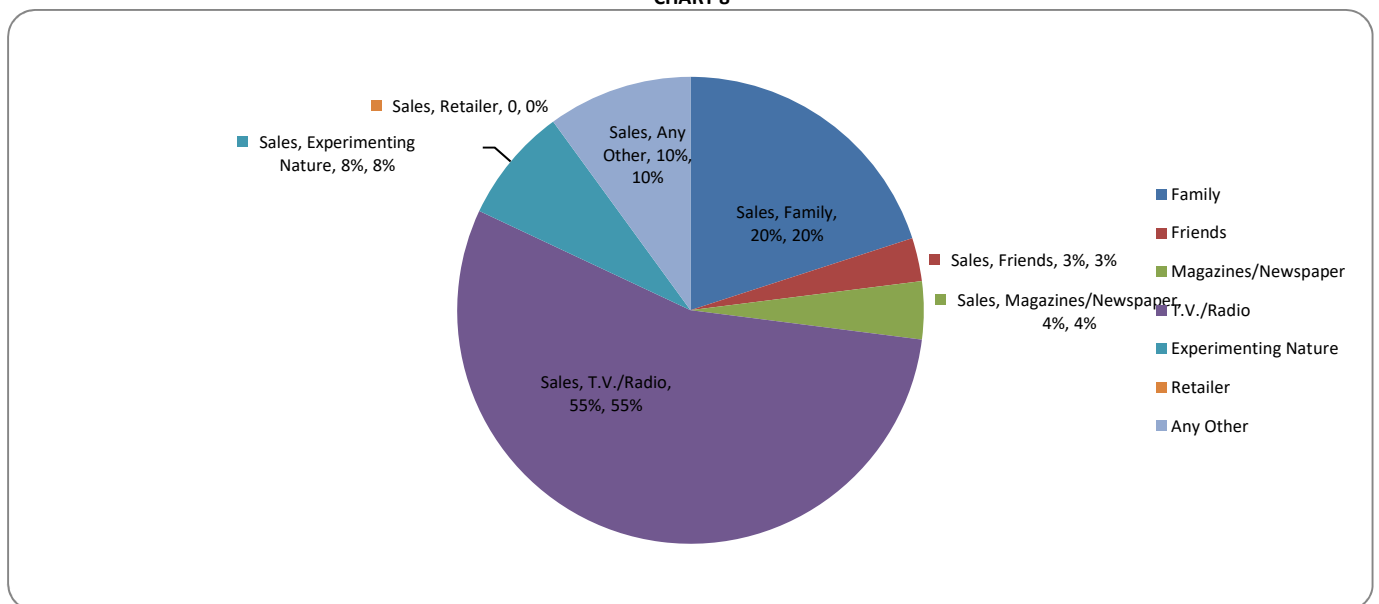


**Interpretation:** Out of 100 respondents 16% respondents required fragrance quality in their soap, 52% respondent’s required good brand in the soap, 12% respondents required good performance in their soap, and 20% respondents required above all qualities in the soap.

TABLE 8: SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT BATH SOAP

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Family	20	20%
Friends	3	3%
Magazines/Newspaper	4	4%
T.V./Radio	55	55%
Experimenting Nature	8	8%
Retailer	0	0
Any Other	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

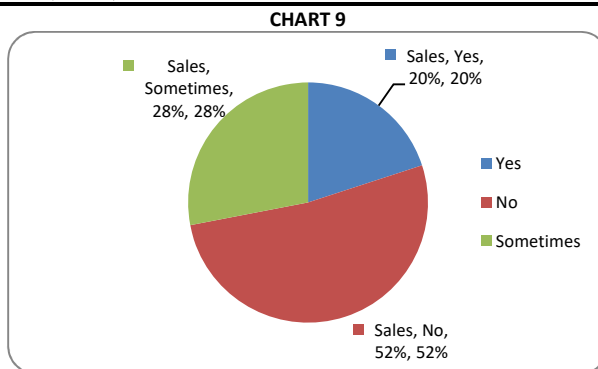
CHART 8



**Interpretation:** Out of 100 respondents 55% of the respondents got the information about the soap from TV, 20% from their family members, 8% from experimenting nature, 4% from newspaper, 3% from the friends, and 10% got the information from other sources. (Like doctor, display in shops)

TABLE 9: SALES PROMOTION PROGRAMME AFFECT YOUR PURCHASE BEHAVIOR

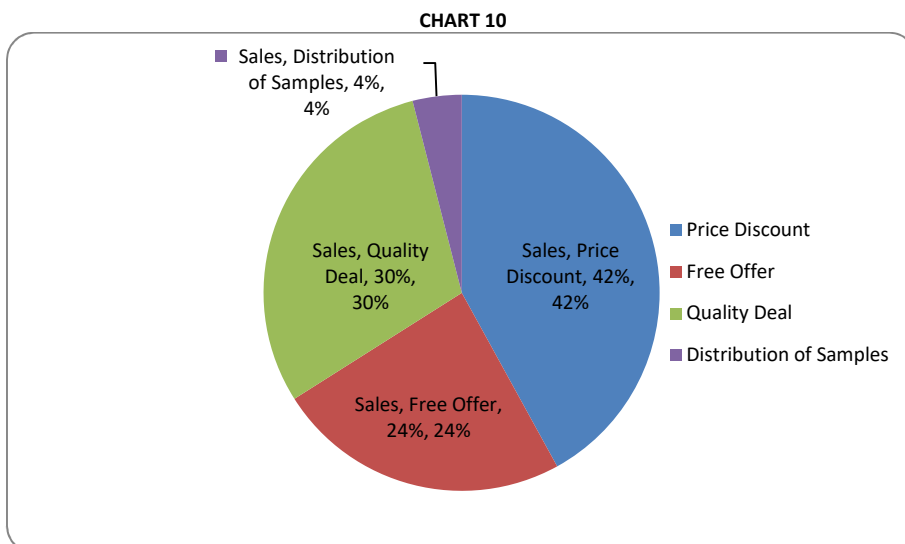
Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	20	20%
No	52	52%
Sometimes	28	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



**Interpretation:** The above chart shows that 52% respondents are not affected by sales promotion programme in their purchase behavior, 20% respondents are affected by sales promotion programme, and 28% respondents affect sometimes by sales promotion programme.

**TABLE 10: PROMOTIONAL SCHEMES DO YOU PREFER**

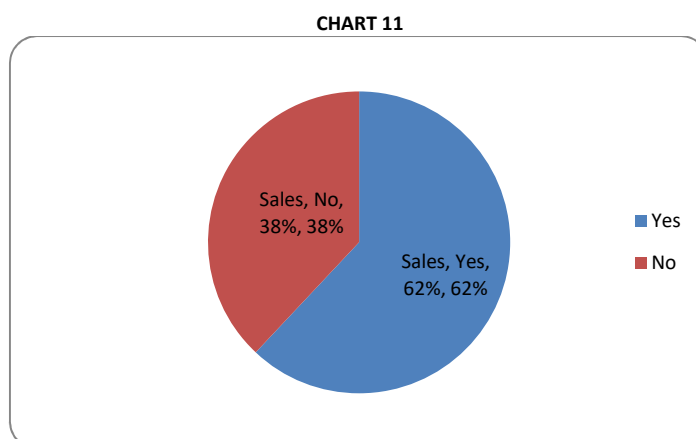
Options	Respondents	Percentage
Price Discount	42	42%
Free Offer	24	24%
Quality Deal	30	30%
Distribution of Samples	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



**Interpretation:** It is very much clear from the above chart that 42% respondents would like to prefer price discount promotional scheme, 24% respondents prefer free offer promotional scheme, 30% respondents would like to prefer quality deal promotional scheme, and 4% respondents would like to prefer distribution of samples.

**TABLE 11: RESPONDENTS GIVE ANY IMPORTANCE TO THE SOAP FRAGRANCE**

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	62	62%
No	38	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

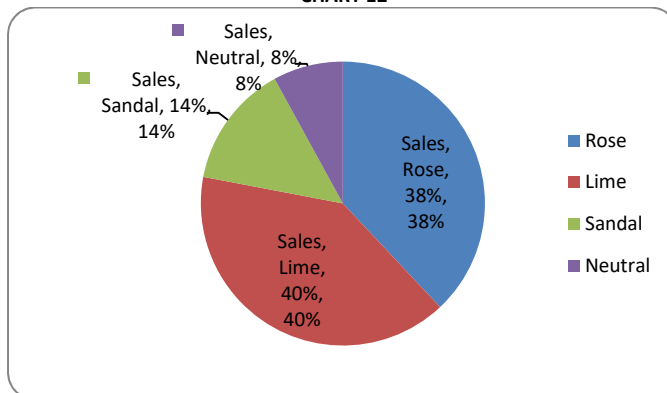


**Interpretation:** Out of 100 respondents 62% of the respondents give importance to the soap fragrance while 38% of the respondents not give any importance to the soap fragrance.

TABLE 12: SOAP FRAGRANCE CUSTOMERS LIKE MOST

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Rose	38	38%
Lime	40	40%
Sandal	14	14%
Neutral	8	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

CHART 12

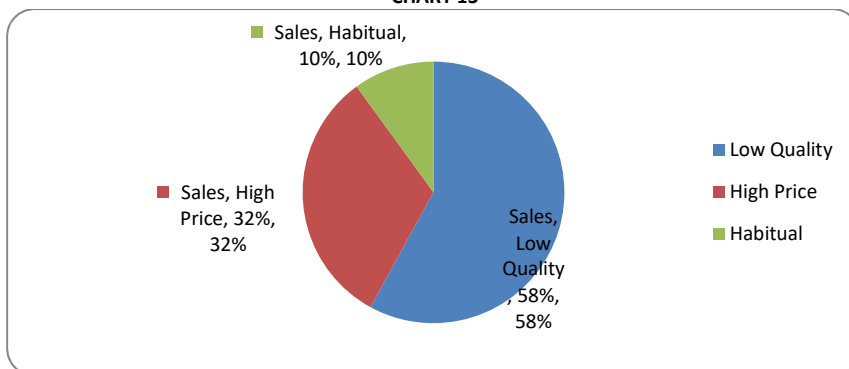


**Interpretation:** Out of 100 respondents 38% of the respondents like rose soap fragrance, 40% of the respondents like lime fragrance, 14% of the respondents like sandal fragrance, 8% of the respondents has neutral soap fragrance.

TABLE 13: REASONS TO SWITCH OVER THE BRAND

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Low Quality	58	58%
High Price	32	32%
Habitual	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

CHART 13

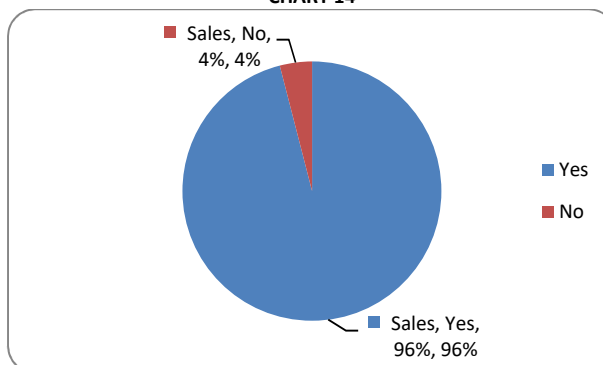


**Interpretation:** Out of 100 respondents 58% consider low quality as a factor to switch over the brand, 32% consider high price as a factor to switch over the brand, and 10% respondents are habitual.

TABLE 14: SATISFACTION REGARDING THE SOAP IN CURRENT USE

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	96	96%
No	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

CHART 14



**Interpretation:** Out of 100 respondents 96% were satisfied with the soap they are currently using while 4% respondents are not satisfied with their soap. These respondents are the user of lux and they want that their soap should contain medical value.

## HYPOTHESIS TESTING

a) Significant number of respondents perceives that price has no effect on the purchase behaviour.

TABLE 15

Particulars	Observed Value(O)	Expected Value(E)	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	$X^2 = \frac{\sum (O-E)^2}{E}$	$X^2 = \frac{\sum (O-E)^2}{E}$
Very High	14	25	-13	169	6.76	26.72
High	22	25	-3	9	0.36	
Low	46	25	21	441	17.64	
Very Low	18	25	7	49	1.96	

Significance at probability 0.05 is tested and the degree of freedom is 3

The tabulate critical value is 7.815

The chi-square value is 7.815 at probability of 0.05 and the tabulated chi-square value is 26.72 which is less as compared to the calculated value hence here we **reject** our null hypothesis that the **respondents perceives that price has no effect on the purchase behaviour.**

b) Significant number of respondents perceives that quality parameter has no effect on the purchase behaviour.

TABLE 16

Particulars	Observed Value(O)	Expected Value(E)	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	$X^2 = \frac{\sum (O-E)^2}{E}$	$X^2 = \frac{\sum (O-E)^2}{E}$
Fragrance	16	25	-9	81	3.24	40.16
Good Brand	52	25	27	729	29.16	
Good Performance	12	25	-13	169	6.76	
Above All	20	25	-5	25	1	

Significance at probability 0.05 is tested and the degree of freedom is 3

The tabulate critical value is 7.815

The chi-square value is 7.815 at probability of 0.05 and the tabulated chi-square value is 40.16 which is less than the calculated value hence here we **reject** our null hypothesis that **respondents perceives that quality parameter has no effect on the purchase behaviour.**

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 60% of the respondents are female who make the purchasing decisions for their families.
- 52% of the respondents belong to the income group of 1 to 3 lakh which is more prices sensitive and price plays an important role in purchase decision. 33% respondents were having no income that was because most of them were students.
- 50% of the respondents were in the age group of 19-25 years. 22% respondents were in the age group of 26 to 35 years. Almost 72 % are from young generation who is now more sensitive to skin, health and wellness of their being.
- As more and more families are now becoming nucleus families the members in family are now having their personal choices as a result of which there are more than one bathing soap purchased as each members has different choice.
- Branded soaps are still preferred as compared to less known brands as the users of soaps consider good brand quality as the most preferred factor before buying soap as it is being seen that a good brand has all possible factors and price does not affect the choice of soaps.
- As advertisement plays an important part and has a great recall value the advertisement featured on televisions are of great influence among the customers.
- Aesthetics such as color, shape, fragrance also have an influence on the purchase of bathing soaps.

## RECOMMENDATION

- ✓ Companies must improve on their packaging and should be made more attractive and appealing to the women customers as they are the one who do the purchasing for their families and not all customers are well knowledgeable.
- ✓ As more and more customers now a days are becoming health and beauty conscious the companies should now be using more natural ingredients as it appeals not only to the masses but also to the classes.
- ✓ Most of the respondents are under the income group of 1-3 lakh p.a. So the company should take efforts to position their products in this group in order increase their sales. Celebrity endorsements may be of great help as the young crowd are getting more influence by the celebrities'
- ✓ As a quality is the first influencing factor of the company has to focus on quality and improve it for better sales. While segmenting the FMCG market it must be kept in mind that people prefer a good quality product rather than a good scheme or offer. A good scheme or an offer may fetch customer occasionally but the impact of the good quality is long lasting. Companies should work on retaining the customers rather than generating more new customers.
- ✓ Reference from friends and family members is the most influential factor in the purchasing soap. Doing advertisement only is not sufficient for attracting the customers. New marketing techniques like viral marketing or word of mouth marketing for FMCGs should be encouraged.

## CONCLUSION

This paper is a combination of both theoretical and practical knowledge. From this research one can conclude that in the recent years the awareness regarding the varieties and effects of soaps have increased many folds. While buying soaps quality is preferred over the price. It was also found that packaging and celebrity endorsements influence the buying decisions of the consumers.

Customers 'satisfaction plays a significant role in modern market in the present era. Soap is an important product for the day to day consumption of the customers. Nowadays competition is going on with a flame of advertisement war. A lot of varieties of soap are being introduced by several producers.

In thus intense competition situations, some soap can cause evil effects due to a mixture of chemical compounds. People need quality soap for which they are ready to have brand loyalty or switch over from one brand to another. In order to capture the needs of all the segments of people, the products are introduced or new features are added to the products to capture the market potential for soap.

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