

## A STUDY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DURABLE GOODS IN MADURAI CITY

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### Abstract:

*Indian is a country with varied resources and people are more prone to use variety of products for their consumption. The process of consumption in the post liberalized era has started dominating the consumer community particularly the women segment. There are numerous products available in the market for the consumption and this situation has created a consumerist society. The multiple products with similar utility have created a competitive situation in the market. People at one side are not able to decide what to buy and on the other side they remain faithful to some products in particular. Thus, consumer behavior is one of the most important topics to be studied. The liberalization and global operation of businesses have given an opportunity to the customers/ consumers to select one out of various similar products available in the market. The global trend in the market has affected the consumer's behavior to a great extent, whether it is a case of seller operating in international, regional, local level or a case of consumers involved in purchasing consumable/ industrial products. Due to globalization of business and liberalized policies of the government the auto industry has witnessed a major selling prospect. Many multinational companies have entered to fray, turning the market place into a virtual battlefield.*

### KEYWORDS:

Consumer Behaviour , Special Reference , liberalization , global operation .

### INTRODUCTION

Today consumers have many options and are much better equipped with information to choose from these available options. The consumer now exhibits a totally different behavior what they used to do in a regulated market. In the present context, the consumers get many information at hand due to the information revolution. Media (electronic and print), TV, Radio and satellite communication have made easy to consumers to choose the best products available in the market for their use. The marketers have to play a key role in attracting the potential buyers in favor of their products. The buying decision varies as per the information available with the women consumer before buying a particular product. Information available through Internet with the help of cable TV has created a new dimension in making decision before the buying any product. Thus, the decision of buyers depends a lot on the information available with the buyers. All the purchases made by a family follow a certain decision making process. The character and the extent of interaction between a husband and wife present an extremely important dimension in the decision making process. No sale can be effective unless a favorable decision is made by a buyer towards a particular product of a company. The dynamics of purchase decision making of husband/wife for different consumer non-durables, include, "wife-only", "the wife more than the husband", "both the husband and the wife exactly the same", "the husband more than the wife", "the husband only" pattern. A very important aspect of the purchase process is the actual activity of making, the purchase, who actually goes shopping are

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something that reveals the aspects of consumer behavior. This study aims to focus on consumer's behavior of women on durable goods. Today the Indian urban women is an active pattern in the family. She is the major factors in all purchase decisions of her family. She has acquired a place in the society by virtue of her education and employment. Indian manufacturers realized the need of her patronage and hence communicate with her and try to convince her through every possible media. They plan the marketing strategy to attract this segment, satisfy the needs and retain them.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the socio economic profile of the selected women consumers.
2. To identify the factors influencing the women consumer's in the purchasing of durable goods.
3. To examine the problem faced by the women while purchasing.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In the beginning of the research, on pilot work to identify major areas of women consumer behavior in durable goods was carried out. It helps to take a lead to study women consumer's behavior for durable in study area. For this secondary data has carried out with the utilization of available books, business magazines, journals, newspapers, annual reports and newsletters of different companies, web sites etc. Also primary data were collected informally for the purpose of the pilot study. Consumer behavior or buyer behavior has attain increasing importance in a consumer oriented marketing planning and management. To study any aspects of consumer behavior, it is required to use a proper research method. The study area was confined to Madurai City and the sample has been chooses there from. From the universe of total population of Madurai city, the households those paying house tax to the Madurai Municipal Corporation were identified as the population for the purpose of this study. From the above population every household utilizing consumer durables were defined as sampling unit for the purpose of the study. Sample size of the study was decided to be 300 women respondents of Madurai city, from the total tax payers and households utilizing consumer durables residing within the limits of Madurai Municipal Corporation. The significant and distinctive stage of research in social science is collection of necessary information to provide hypothesis. The sources of information are generally classified as primary and secondary data. Primary data is the information collected or generated by the researcher for the purpose of the project immediately at hand. Questionnaires are used to collect this primary data. Questionnaires are the most frequently used method of data collection. There methods are considered to have particular relevance to collect data on personal preference social attitudes, opinions, beliefs and feelings etc. Totally 300 samples collected from Madurai Municipal Corporation. The published materials from Books, Journals, Magazines, Reports, Newspapers, Web sites and unpublished research works on business, Management, Marketing Management and consumer behavior are used as Secondary data sources. The reference data is analyzed in the review of literature. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaire is used to collect the information. Questionnaire deals with the personal information, product knowledge, purchasing period, process, buying habits, sources of information, influence of different people on decision making etc., regarding the purchase of consumer durable goods. A minor pilot work had been done for selection of easily available and more utilized consumer durables in Madurai city.

### **REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SUBJECT**

#### **Existing literature is always like guiding light in any research.**

GaurarJaiswal, Dr.PraveenSathu, ManitaMatharu, (2010) made an attempt in their study "Consumer Preferences towards Service Industry: A Factorial Study of Restaurants", they suggest that payment options and behaviour of staff has emerged as the most important determinants of factor affecting selection of restaurant. They also suggest that, the restaurant management must focus on its ambience and food packaging. The behaviour of the staff should be polite so us to gain loyalty of consumer.

RohitS.Kunder and M.Devaraj,(2010) made an attempt to study the "Changing Patterns of Food Consumption in Karnataka". This analysis points out that the consumption basket of the rural and urban households is getting diversified. With urbanization the non-cereal / animal product food is emerging as an important source of nutrition. The food gap between urban and rural masses are widening much and within themselves as well. Agricultural policies needs framed in a pragmatic manner to have impact on the structure of production, processing, marketing system to ensure intersect oral food security of the state.

Lilly J., (2010) made an attempt to study, "Customer Perception and Preference towards Branded Products with special Reference to Television sets". This study suggested that pricing, promotion deals and product availability, all have tremendous impact on the position of the brand in the consumer's preference set. This study concludes that the demographic valuable such as age, gender, educational qualifications are quite popular with the rural folks.

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Dr.Sakthivel Rani, (2010) made an attempt in her study “Consumer Behaviour in Rural Markets: A.B.C.D. Paradigm and its application”, identified that the practical application of rural consumer behaviour finding in Indian Markets has often posed a problem for marketers for two reasons. First, most consumer research in rural markets has used a piecemeal approach. Second, there has been no comprehensive framework to the findings in a meaningful manner. A.B.C.D. Paradigm is an attempt which provides a comprehensive framework that will enable marketers to understand, integrate and apply consumer behaviour in rural markets.

Kumar (2002) revealed that, the majority of consumers are highly enlightened and are concerned of quality of the products. He also revealed that, the consumers uniformly both in urban and rural areas, desire to have quality of the products at reasonable price and trust more the advice of the retailers.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research study aims at identifying the consumer preference of women with special reference to durable goods in Madurai City. The following are the outcomes from the above said study;

#### I. Findings related to the socio-economic profile of the respondents:

- 1.Majority of the respondents are in the age group of 40 and above. This age group is very common as the family responsibility in the Indian context emerges from this age group.
- 2.Majority of the respondents are home makers and part of them are involved in business and service sectors like textile show rooms, beauty parlours, nursing, teaching and bank employees.
- 3.Most of the respondents are graduates which show that the educated people are more involved in the purchase of consumer durables than the other segments. It may be a reason that the study area is a corporation which mostly has educated population.
- 4.Majority of the respondents live in a nuclear family style. The nuclear family style has become the order of the day particularly in cities like Madurai. The reason behind this is that there is an employment potential available to the family head or the respondents only in cities.
- 5.The family income of the respondents is observed to be between 10,000 and 20,000. The nominal income prevailing in Indian context is the above stated income range.
- 6.Majority of the respondents live in their own houses. Having and owning house has become a pleasure for middle class employed personnel. The reason behind this is the availability of loan facilities to the income class of the society.
- 7.Most of the respondents purchase through authorized dealers. The dealers through their attractive advertisements in the news papers, distribution of pamphlets, representatives meeting at the door steps of the customers, etc., make the buyers to rely on the authorized dealers and move on to purchase their choice of goods to their houses.

#### II. Findings related to the factors influencing the purchase of durable goods:

1. There are ten factors identified to be influencing the purchase of durable goods by women consumers. Of all these the most dominating factor is observed to be company's advertising followed by the quality of the product and the joint decision of the family. The other factors are not found to be influencing the purchase of durable goods.
2. Companies owing to competition try to enter into the minds of the consumers through various convenient method of influencing women segment that are the prime source of purchase of house hold goods. The door step interactive advertisements through the sales representatives convince the women flock to a larger extent and make them to buy the product by all means.
3. The easy availability of loan facilities by banks and finance companies with convenient method of settlement as EMI (equated monthly installments) appears to be the most influential factor for women to buy the households without any hesitation.

#### III. Findings related to the reasons behind the purchase of durable goods

1. Women are very sensitive and they aim at the purchase of consumer durables in-order to enhance their efficiency, to improve their social status and to ensure their social image. These are found to be the most important reason behind the purchase of durable goods.
2. The other reasons are to enjoy the benefit of convenience in the use of varied products. The ownership of these products at home lift the image of women in the midst of their neighbors and relatives.
3. In-order to state that they are busy in their purchase of consumer durables; they aim at the purchase of consumer durables which lead them to enhance their knowledge over the market, product and other marketing practices. The interaction with various groups associated with the purchase of consumer durables provide a rich knowledge as to what to buy? How to buy? Where to buy? And the effective cost of

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purchase.

4. The curiosity to purchase the product on their own leads them to be economical in their purchase process which is often a problem to male members. The frequent interaction with sales representatives and comparison with other similar products in the purchase zone make the women to be more prudent in negotiating with the seller during the time of purchase.

5. The occupation and income of the family makes women to safe guard the status through the purchase of consumer durables with the convenient method of purchase using the availability of finance from banking and non-banking companies.

6. The status of relatives and neighbors and their attitude towards the purchase of consumer durables is another reason for women to be more addicts towards the purchase of consumer durable goods.

#### **IV. Findings related to the problems faced in the purchase of consumer durables:**

1. Majority of the respondents feel that there is problem in the availability of spares which sometime lead to forego the product and opt for some new products in a short span of time. This situation sometimes leads them to go for some other product than the ones that already bought.

2. There is no immediate or frequent service available to the buyers which provide a strong sense of dissatisfaction which sometimes make the women buyers to share with other people that ultimately affect the sale of the product in one form or the other.

3. In the name of AMC (Annual maintenance charge) a lump sum is annually charged and the service is not properly done. Women being the sensitive group either fire at the office personnel and complaints their default with the head office.

4. Complaints are not attended in time and as years pass by, the company does not respond to queries and complaints.

5. Exchange and replacement cost of the product is very less when customers go on to change the product due to wear and tear, defect identified, adopting to the new and updated version of the product. However, the purchase through exchange and replacement is inevitable as women consumers are prone to change and adapt to the modern and updated products that invade the market very frequently.

6. The charges to the credit purchase are heavy. A huge sum of money is sanctioned and credit settlement period is very less and for consumer durables it is only eight dues for the loan amount and hence the banking and private finance companies stand to charge heavily for this short term loan.

#### **V. Mode of payment for the purchase of consumer durables:**

1. Majority of the consumers buy their product through cash only. However, a meager percentage of the consumers buy for credit facilities arranged by the same dealers either in a banking or private finance companies

2. The availability of credit facilities make the buyers to buy costly products and make them to pay in installments conveniently.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In this research study, the consumer behavior was analyzed in respect of their purchase of durable goods in Madurai city. Madurai city one of the biggest districts of Tamilnadu with varied demographic population, culture, religion and employment. There are many show rooms and dealers dealing with variety of consumer durable products who compete with each other for sale. This city is considered to the hub for consumer durables for Tamilnadu and hence companies try to sell the consumer durables both to retailers and ultimate consumers through their creative marketing practices. The most important segment for consumer durables is women flocks that is large in number and have varied taste and preferences. Thus the consumer behavior to the consumer durables changes from time to time owing to their preferences in the available products in the market. The middle class house wife is a cautious buyer. Women are not averse to change and therefore willing to try new products, but does not adopt any product instantly. The women consumers possess a good degree of awareness of the change taking place in their environment. Women grew in education level and the growth in the media has contributed to their development. Women are not only cost conscious but also a quality conscious buyer. The sales promotional activities sometimes may help women consumers to purchase more but it cannot remain same. Thus, creating and enhancing consumers is one of the most important aspects of companies and the companies must always aim at the same. Selling durable goods is not an easy joke and that too to women consumers and hence companies must make and adopt new methodology to create and retain customers in the competitive environment. The producers of durable products should understand consumer interest much to find increase the sale of their products. The study concludes that the competitive market provides opportunity on one hand and

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threats on the other hand to both the consumer segment of women and products of the product. It is quite important to improve core product with value addition to enrich customer satisfaction more in the similar price range. Not only quality improvements but improvement in after sales service can develop and replace demand for consumer durables as well as for replacement of the products. The dealers / producers and the retailers must understand the importance of the consumers and their change attitude in the process of marketing. Only then the companies can withstand and survive in the sale of consumer durables.

TABLE 1

Socio-economic profile of the respondents

S. No	Type	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Age	Up to 40 years	198	66
		More than 40 years	102	34
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
2.	Occupation	Service	140	46.7
		Business	88	29.3
		Profession	72	24.0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
3.	Education	up to HSC	76	25.3
		Graduate	104	34.7
		Post Graduate	80	26.7
		Others	40	13.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
4.	Type of family	Joint family	136	45.3
		Nuclear Family	164	54.7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
5.	Monthly Income	UPTO 10,000	72	24.0
		10,000 to 20,000	122	40.7
		20,000 to 30,000	65	21.7
		More than 30,000	41	13.7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
6.	House type	Owned	176	58.7
		Rented	124	41.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

**Table 2**  
**Factors influencing the purchase of durable goods (Factor analysis)**

S. No	Factor	Score	Rank
1.	Company Advertising	.985	First
2.	Company Reputations	.740	
3.	Friends Advice	.645	
4.	Relative Advice	.620	
5.	Quality of the product	.890	Second
6.	Free Gift	.575	
7.	Price (use discount)	.555	
8.	Retailers Advice	.780	third
9.	Joint Decision of Family	.620	
10.	Credit facilities	.670	

**Table 3**  
**Reason behind the purchase of durable goods**

S. No	Particulars	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree	Total
1	enhances the efficiency	62	138	40	28	32	300
		20.7	46.0	13.3	9.3	10.7	100
2.	Increase in social status	48	128	69	35	20	300
		16.0	42.7	23.0	11.7	6.7	100
3	Traditional image	130	89	41	28	12	300
		43.3	29.7	13.7	9.3	4.0	100
4	Concentrate on chores	92	160	28	15	5	300
		30.7	53.3	9.3	5.0	1.7	100
5.	Free time	68	92	72	49	19	300
		22.7	30.7	24.0	16.3	6.3	100
6.	Savings	38	185	69	5	3	300
		12.7	61.7	23.0	1.7	1.0	100
7.	Savings is false idea	96	40	130	34	10	300
		32.0	13.3	43.3	8.0	3.3	100
8.	Better care of health	58	48	111	46	37	300
		19.3	16.0	37.0	15.3	12.4	100
9.	More efforts in house work	45	48	56	70	81	300
		15.0	16.0	18.7	23.3	27.0	100

**TABLE 4**  
**Problems in the purchase of consumer durables**

S. No	Particulars	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree	Total
1	Non availability of spare parts	68	98	62	41	31	300
		22.7	32.7	20.7	13.7	10.3	100
2.	Repair and service	58	138	67	24	13	300
		19.3	46.0	22.3	8.0	4.3	100
	Low quality material	86	107	69	25	13	300
		28.7	35.7	23.0	8.3	4.3	100
	Defective spare parts	58	138	66	20	18	300
		19.3	46.0	22.0	6.7	6.0	100
	Time consuming	79	110	66	25	20	300
		26.3	36.7	2.0	8.3	6.7	100

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