

## A Study on Consumer Behavior towards Instant Food Products (With Special References to Kanchipuram Town)

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**Abstract:** Consumer behaviour refers to the behavior that consumers display in searching for , purchasing using , evaluating and disposing the products and services. Consumer behavior is important in helping to forecast and understand for products as well as brand preference. The present paper highlights the study of consumer behavior regarding instant food products among the consumers. The most dramatic change is the change in consumer demographics and demand preferences. Hence , an attempt has been made to analyse the consumer purchasing frequency for the instant food products. Further efforts have also been made to know the consumer awareness towards products and to analyse factors influencing the instant food products.

**Key words:** Consumer behavior, Demographic, Instant food products

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### I. Introduction

With liberalization, privatization, globalization and modernization, the modern competitive business is based on understanding the best products and services that he wants. Considering the truth that the consumer is the king , every organization wants to increase market share and profit . the competitors are also following the same strategy. It involves the psychological processes that consumers got through in recognizing needs, finding ways to solve these needs, making purchase decisions , interpret information ,make plans and implement those plans by engaging in comparison shopping or actually purchasing a product . consumer behavior is one of the stimulating and challenging areas in marketing studies being a human activity focused on the products and services . understanding the behavior of the consumers is a great challenge.

Today, instant food products occupy a legitimate shelf space in stores and super markets in india. New and high quality of instant food products have changed the life style of people and led to more number of indian companies enter the market with varieties of instant food products . instant food products save time and energy. Parents can send the children to school early, go to office in time and get more time to involve in other activities. Urban modern women seek to empower themselves in the society as they have higher education , better employment opportunities and good exposure environment that increase the needs at a faster rate . Instant food products make them to cook any time with less labour , time and energy.

#### Objectives of the study

1. To study the awareness about instant food products in kanchipuram town
2. To analyze the consumer purchasing frequency of instant food products.
3. To know the media for selecting the instant food products.
4. To find out the influencing factors on instant food products.

#### Scope of the study

“Nothing is stable except change” in the modern days, life is changing fast time is very valuable to every person. Instant food products play a vital role in every human in his day –to-day life. The present study gives an insight into important factors creating awareness and purchasing frequency of the product. It is based on a questionnaire method confined to only the users of instant food products. The study has been restricted to be following selected popular instant food product:

- Sambar / rasam mix
- Puliogare mix
- Jamun mix/payasam mix
- Chicken masala
- Noodles

### II. Statement of the problem

Most of the women are employed and they want to save time in cooking and yet maintain natural taste. In this modern era, instant food products play a vital role in satisfying this attitude of modern women. The

advantage of instant food products is that they have changed the life style of urban population and also rural people with the help of mass communication and advertisement. Apart from large number of products , selection of the product plays a major role. This study highlight the awareness of the consumers towards the product and factors that influence in purchasing the instant food products.

### Limitation

Data collection period is aug- September 2013. As the sample size is 100 only and drawn from a single town the findings cannot be generalized.

### Review of literature

- ❖ Indumathi et al.(2007) in their study have revealed that occupation of the women, income of the family and saving time while cooking are the most influencing factors of spicy products. The authors say that most of the consumers have purchase 200 gm pack of powders and masalsa, while small number of consumers prefer 100 gm packets.
- ❖ Kamalareni and nirmala (1996) in their study, have portrayed that most of the instant food products. Most of the consumers regularly purchase at least three varieties of food items and they suggest that the door to door distribution of free sample is used as a main tool of sales promotion by the instant food product manufactures.
- ❖ Kumar et al(1987) examined various factors influencing the purchasing decision making of different food products. Origin and brand of the products were cross-tabulated against age, gender and income. Results revealed that age, education and income were the singnificant factors influencing in buying decision. Consumers were attracted by the brand image than the origin of the product.
- ❖ Ramasamy et al (2005) have concentrated on the buying behaviour that is vastly influenced by awareness and brand image towards the product. Television advertisement is the most important source of information followed by display in retail outlets. Based on the opinion of consumers accept, quality and price of the product as an important factor to purchase.
- ❖ Ranjith kumar (2007) concluded that the advertisement influences product purchase for a non-durable product like masala powder, the main factor is the quality. Consumers get more awareness and influence from the advertisements. As there is an option for home made preparation of masala powder, the marketers should be highly competitive without sacrificing the quality of the product.
- ❖ Saritha Bahl (2012) has develope a model to understand the determinants of consumer behaviour regarding buying dication. The frequency of consumer's shopping for food products has been analysed among different occupations. Efforts have been taken to know the attitude of the consumers towards food product labels and their perception about food safety which has also analysed.

### Research methodology

The present study has incorporated the collection of both primary and secondary data for an in depth investigation. All the relevent information, data and opinion are collected directly and indirectly. A questionnaire was prepared to test the attitude of 100 consumers towards instant food products with various demographic variables. Sampling method has been used to collect the data on the basis of likert scale. Percentage analysis have been used to study the characteristics of the responds like age, sex, education, occupation and consumer awareness of instant food products. The purchasing decision, place of purchase and frequency of purchase were also analysed using percentage analysis. Chi-square test has been applied to know the significance or relationship of certain variables at 5 percent of significance.

## III. Analysis And Findings

### Hypothesis Testing

**Table -1**  
**Analysis of consumer awareness of instant food products**

Products	gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Sambar / Rasam	10	16	26
Puliogare mix	8	6	14
Jamun /payasam mix	7	10	17
Noodles	16	9	25
Chicken masala	9	9	18
Total	50	50	100

**Application of chi-square test:**

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no difference in relationship between gender and their awareness of instant food products.

Calculated value  $\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 4.16$

Degree of freedom  $= (2-1)(5-1) = 4$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 9.49

The Hypothesis does hold good at 5% level of significance as table is greater than calculated value. It can be interpreted that there is no significant difference between gender and the consumer awareness of instant food products.

**Table-2**  
**Analysis of consumers awareness of instant food product**

Products	>25	25-35	35-45	Above 45	Total
Sambar / Rasam	3	12	10	5	30
Puliogare mix	5	5	5	-	15
Jamun /payasam mix	2	2	5	5	14
Noodles	10	7	2	5	24
Chicken masala	-	4	8	5	17
Total	20	30	30	20	100

**Application of chi-square test:**

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no difference in relationship between age and their awareness of instant food products.

Calculated value  $\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 16.53$

Degree of freedom  $= (4-1) (5-1) = 12$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 21

The hypothesis hold good at 5% significant level as the table value is greater than the calculated value. There is no significant difference between age the consumer awareness of instant food products.

**Table – 3**  
**Analaysis of made and female consumer preference to shop from different shopping outlets.**

Gender	Retail Shops	Whole Sale Shops	Food Zone / Supermarket	Total
Male	5	15	30	50
Female	10	12	28	50
Total	15	27	58	100

**Application of Chi-Square test:**

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no difference in relationship between gender and their preference about shopping outlets.

Calculated value  $\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 2.06$

Degree of freedom  $= (3-1) (2-1) = 2$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 5.99

By applying chi square test it is found that the calculated value is less than the table value 5% level. Hence we conclude that there is no significant relationship between gender and their preference for shopping outlets.

**Table – 4**  
**Analysis of consumer’s preference to shop from different shopping outlets.**

Products	Age				Total
	>25	25-35	35-45	Above 45	
Retail	5	5	6	5	21
Whole sale shops	6	7	10	7	30
Food zone / supermarkets	9	18	14	8	49
Total	20	30	30	20	100

**Application of Chi-Square test:**

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no difference in preference regarding shopping outlet and age of consumers.

Calculated value  $\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 2.47$

Degree of freedom = (3-1) (4-1) = 6

Table value at 5% level of significance = 16.9

As the table value on 6 degree of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is greater than the calculated value, the hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in preference regarding shopping outlet and age of consumers.

**Table – 5**  
**Analysis of male and female consumers purchasing of instant food products**

Gender	Weekly	Monthly	Whenever needed	Total
Male	12	24	14	50
Female	16	25	9	50
Total	28	49	23	100

**Application of Chi-Square test:**

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no difference in relationship between gender and the shopping frequency.

Calculated value  $\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 1.678$

Degree of freedom = (3-1) (2-1) = 2

Table value at 5% level of significance = 5.99

As the calculated value is less than the table value. The hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant relationship between gender and the purchasing frequency.

**Table – 6**  
**Analysis of consumer's Television as the media for purchasing instant food products**

Degree of rating	Income				Total
	>10,000	10,000-20,000	20,000-30,000	Above 30,000	
Strongly agree	15	10	7	5	37
Agree	20	22	13	8	63
Disagree	0	0	0	0	-
Total	35	32	20	13	100

**Application of Chi-Square test:**

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significance difference between television is the media for purchasing instant food products and different income levels.

Calculated value  $\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 21.692$

Degree of freedom = (4-1) (3-1) = 6

Table value at 5% level of significance = 12.6

As the calculated value is more than the table at 5% significance, null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) does not hold true. Therefore, alternative hypothesis seems good to show television as the media for purchasing instant food products of different income levels.

**Table – 7**  
**Quality is the important factor of influence to buy the product.**

Degree of Rating	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	30	30	60
Agree	15	20	35
Disagree	05	0	05
Total	50	50	100

**Application of Chi-Square test:**

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significance difference between male and female consumers as far as quality of the product is concerned.

Calculated value  $\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 6.218$

Degree of freedom = (2-1) (3-1) = 2

Table value at 5% level of significance = 4.61

The calculated value is more than the table value. And hypothesis is not accepted. Hence. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference of quality as the important factor of influence to buy the product based on gender preferences.

**Table – 8**  
**Convenience is the factor of influence to purchase the product**

Degree of rating	Income level				Total
	>10,000	10,000-20,000	20,000-30,000	Above 30,000	
Strongly agree	20	18	15	7	60
Agree	15	14	5	6	40
Disagree	0	0	0	0	-
Total	35	32	20	13	100

**Application of Chi-Square test:**

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no significance difference relationship between convenience as the factor of influence to purchase the product among different income groups.

Calculated value  $\frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 2.387$

Degree of freedom  $= (4-1)(3-1) = 6$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 12.6

As table on 6 degree of freedom at 5% level of significance is greater than the calculated value, the hypothesis stands accepted. There is no significant relationship between convenience as the factor of influence to purchase the product.

**IV. Suggestion**

Distribution of free sample would increase the sales promotion of instant food products. Most of the respondents have felt that the price of the instant food products is very high and if the products are reasonably priced, sales would shoot up. Television advertisements significantly influence the consumers of instant food products. Hence, more and more TV advertisements will lead to an increase in the sales of products.

**V. Conclusion**

Consumer behaviour is a stimulating sphere consisting of the consumers themselves. Consumption of increase of instant food products is due to increase in urbanization, breaking up of the traditional joint family system, time, convenience, changing lifestyles and increasing level of affluence in the middle income group. Noodles are found today in the kitchen shelves of every Indian household. All the respondents are aware of various instant food products. The ready availability, and saving of the time are the reasons for consuming instant food products. Food zones and supermarkets are the major source of purchase of instant food products. The consumer's relationship with food and other everyday goods has changed dramatically, not only in the way products are purchased, but also in the way they are consumed.

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