

A STUDY ON BRAND AWARENESS AND BRAND PREFERENCE OF INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS AMONG WOMEN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PALAKKAD DISTRICT

Dr. P. GISHA

*Assistant Professor of Commerce
Sree Narayana Guru College
K.G. Chavadi, Coimbatore*

RAMYA.M.R

*M. Phil scholar
Sree Narayana Guru College
K.G. Chavadi*

ABSTRACT

Today women are not only playing the role of hardcore 'housewives', they are also playing a different role of 'chief purchasing officer' and controlling 85% of buying decisions. 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. A lot of studies have been conducted by many researchers, practitioners and professional on behaviour of consumers towards instant food products but only a few studies have been conducted on specific for women buying behaviour. In this context, a study on women buying behaviour was deemed to be important. This paper makes an attempt to understand the women's purchase behaviour along with an attempt to know what factors play a significant role in her purchase behaviour.

Keywords: *instant food products, consumer behaviour, women buying behaviour*

INTRODUCTION

The modern technology has entirely changed the living patterns. Nowadays quick food styles are catching up fast because of more number of working couples, domestic fuel crisis, non-availability of reliable domestic servants and breaking up of joint family system. Capitalizing this situation, business houses ranging from small scale manufactures to multinational corporations have started innovating and commercializing "easy to cook food items" that are otherwise called instant food products.

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defined instant food products as "Instant food products which are prepared and packaged often in powered form are required only the addition of a liquid as water or milk for final

preparation". Instant food mixes formed a range of convenience food for households, being easy to use without terminal processing and women found it very convenient to use. It helped them to save time and effort and relieved them of the tedious jobs of collecting various ingredients, cleaning and sorting them and preparing food.

Keeping in view the changing preferences towards instant food products, the study has its focus to understand the buying behaviour of women towards instant food products. This study was carried out in the Palakkad district of Kerala.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the extent of awareness among women towards instant food products.
- To identify the most familiar source that provides information regarding instant products.
- To study the brand preference of instant food products among women.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the objective of analyzing the brand awareness and brand preference of women towards instant food products in Palakkad district. Palakkad is one of the major districts in Kerala. The major consumers in the study area are highly influenced by the ever changing environment of the district. Due to the convenience factor and changes in the lifestyle in this area, women are more positively inclined towards instant food products. Though there were so many instant food products available in the market, most commonly available and used instant food products in Palakkad are idli/dosa mix, puttu podi, idiyappom podi, appam mix, pathiri mix, curry powders, curry masalas, payasam mix, etc. So these were selected for the study after discussion with the local women consumers of the study area. For the convenience these Instant Food Products are classified into three categories namely Instant rice products, Curry powders/ masalas and Instant payasam mix.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature. In this study, primary data were used and collected from women consumers directly, using structured questionnaire. Using convenience sampling technique, responses were collected from 205 respondents during a six month period (April – September 2015) in Palakkad District. The collected data were carefully coded and transited to SPSS package. With this the tabulation was made in scientific and systematic way.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A Jafersadhiq (May,2014) in his study, "A study on buying behaviour of Instant food products at Coimbatore" revealed that consumer buying behavior is influenced by the traditional way of manufacturing process, traditional ingredients and the availability of products next to their shops. Interestingly the study reveals that consumers are not ready to change over their brands.

K.Baskar et al.(Jan,2013) in their study, "A study on instant food products buying behaviour of consumers in Cuddalore district" it was evident that the awareness of consumers about Instant food products across different income groups, about 66.67 per cent, 56.67 per cent and 46.67 per cent of the respondents of Chidambaram, Neyveli and Cuddalore taluks were aware of the Dosa/Idli mix product availability in the market In case of pickles and sambar masala, cent per cent of the respondents in all the taluks and across income groups were aware about these selected instant food products due to their common and traditional usage of these products.

M. Bala Swamy et al.(May, 2012) in their study, " Buying behaviour of consumers towards instant food products", a study done at hyderabad city of andhra pradesh state, concluded that all the respondents were aware of pickles and Sambar masala but only 56.67 per cent of respondents were aware of Dosa/Idli mix. About 96.11 per cent consumers of Dosa/Idli mix and more than half of consumers of pickles and Sambar masalas prepared their own. Low cost of home preparation and differences in tastes were the major reasons for non consumption, whereas ready availability and save time of preparation were the reasons for consuming Instant Food Products.

R.Sivakami and S.Chithra (June (2014), in their study "Buying behaviour of working women towards ready-to-eat food products in Thanjavur district", revealed that working women are more positively inclined towards ready-to-eat

food products and this is mainly due to the convenience factor and changes in the lifestyle of the people. Based on the findings of the study there is a significant relationship between monthly income and frequency of purchase. There is also a significant relationship between educational qualification and factors influencing to prefer a particular brand. High price is an important reason for non-consumption of ready-to-eat food products.

Dr. Anu Nagpal Chopra (June 2014) in his study, "Factors affecting purchase behavior of women grocery consumer- An Insight" concluded that the selling process of women take longer than men primarily due to backward spiral during purchase decisions, but the post purchase behaviour of women on a brand/product/service can have huge implication. Hence it is important for a marketer to provide as much information to a woman buyer as he can because communication plays an integral part in buying decisions. Men rely on their personal assessment while women rely more on personal trust when it comes to buying and are open for inputs at various stages.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1. Personal Profile of the Respondents

Factor	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 20	20	9.8
	20-40	105	51.2
	40-60	78	38.0
	Above 60	2	1.0
Marital Status	Married	166	81
	Unmarried	39	19
Educational Qualification	School level	87	42.4
	College level	87	42.4
	Professional	26	12.7
	Others	5	2.4
Occupational Status	Home maker	112	54.6
	Employed	60	29.3
	Business	2	1.0
	Students	31	15.1
Monthly Income	Below 10,000	45	22.0
	10,000 - 20,000	82	40.0
	20,000 - 30,000	40	19.5
	Above 30,000	38	18.5
Family Size	2 - 4	95	46.3
	4 - 6	85	41.5
	Above 6	25	12.2

The socioeconomic background of individuals affects their buying behaviour. It can be inferred from table1 that majority (51.2%) of the respondents belongs to the age group of 20 – 40 years and most of them (81%) are married. It is evident from the above table that 42.4% respondents have school level education and another 42.4% respondents have college level education. It is interesting to note that most of the respondents are homemakers, the family monthly income of most of the respondents was between 10,000 – 20,000. Majority of the respondents had nuclear families with 2 – 4 members in their family.

Table 2. Awareness of Instant Food Brands

Category	Brand Name		Aware	Not aware	Total
INSTANT RICE PRODUCT	Eastern	N	165	40	205
		%	80.5	19.5	100.0
	Nirapara	N	186	19	205
		%	90.7	9.3	100
	Double Horse	N	154	51	205

	Priyom	%	75.1	24.9	100	
		N	85	120	205	
CURRY POWDERS/ MASALAS	Eastern	%	41.5	58.5	100	
		N	197	8	205	
	Nirapara	%	96.1	3.9	100	
		N	179	26	205	
	Double Horse	%	87.3	12.7	100	
		N	142	63	205	
	Priyom	%	69.3	30.7	100	
		N	93	112	205	
	PAYASAM MIX	Eastern	%	45.4	54.6	100
			N	139	66	205
Nirapara		%	67.8	32.2	100	
		N	142	63	205	
Double Horse		%	69.3	30.7	100	
		N	154	51	205	
Priyom		%	75.1	24.9	100	
		N	94	111	205	
			%	45.9	54.1	100

N- Number of Respondents

In case of instant rice products majority of the respondents (90.7%) are aware about Nirapara. In case of curry powders/masalas they are more aware about Eastern (96.1%), while Double Horse is the most (75.1%) familiar brand among instant payasam mixes.

Table 3. Showing Source of Information

Source	Instant rice product		Curry powder		Payasam mix	
	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Retail shop display	28	13.7	31	15.1	19	9.3
Newspapers/ magazines	16	7.8	11	5.4	14	6.8
TV/ radio ad	90	43.9	90	43.9	103	50.2
Friends/ relatives	23	11.2	12	5.9	26	12.7
Retail shop display & newspaper	9	4.4	15	7.3	12	5.9
Retail shop display & TV/radio ad	6	2.9	5	2.4	0	.0
Newspaper & TV, radio ad	16	7.8	16	7.8	13	6.3
Shop display, newspaper, TV, radio ad & friends	17	8.3	25	12.2	18	8.8
Total	205	100	205	100	205	100

The above table depicts that 43.9% of the respondents got information about instant rice products from TV/ radio advertisements, 13.7% from retail shop display and 11.2% from friends/ relatives. Likewise 43.9% of the respondents opined that they got the information regarding curry powders/ masalas from TV/ radio advertisements and 15.1% from retail shop display. In case of instant payasam mix most (50.2%) of the respondents got information from TV/ radio advertisements, 12.7% from friends/ relatives and 9.3% from retail shop displays.

Table 4. Showing Favourite Brand among Instant Food Products

Brand	Instant rice product		Curry powder		Payasam mix	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Eastern	58	28.3	144	70.2	49	23.9
Nirapara	84	41.0	31	15.1	27	13.2
Double Horse	53	25.9	24	11.7	106	51.7
Priyom	10	4.9	6	2.9	23	11.2
Total	205	100	205	100	205	100

Most of the respondents selected Nirapara as their favourite brand among instant rice products (41%), Eastern as their favourite brand for curry powders/ masalas (70.2%), Double horse for payasam mix (51.7%).

CONCLUSION

Today instant food products occupy a legitimate place in the kitchen shelves. The dual role of women may shift her cooking behaviour towards the buying of instant food products. The present study conducted an investigation of buying behaviour towards instant food products among women consumers in Palakkad mainly centric to rural females with a sample of about 205 females across diverse groups. The results are interesting and will give important insights to the marketer to redefine the strategies of retailing instant food products. It was found in the study that there is a complete awareness of instant food brands amongst females and Eastern is the most preferred brand among instant food products. From the study it is absolutely clear that television advertisements are the most familiar source that provides information regarding instant food products. Hence, marketers should try this media more to persuade women customers.

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