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**A study of consumer behaviour towards household durable goods in Sivaganga district in Tamil Nadu.**

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**Abstract:**

Consumption makes little meaning without consumers, who are users of goods and services or final takers of specified goods, even when the goods are to be converted or combined with some kind of service and resold. Consumer groups believe consumers have several basic rights that they are entitled to. The rights include products whose quality is consistent with their prices and the claims of manufacturers' protection against unsafe goods, adequate and accurate information about goods or services and of course a choice among a variety of products. On the other hand, consumers as buyers have some responsibilities such as making sure that a product is used for the purpose intended by the manufacturer, and following the instructions provided with the product. Consumer behaviours involves the study of when, how, what and where people do or do not buy products. Any marketer is keen in closely monitoring the changes in terms of numbers and specially keeping regular track of the changing pattern of consumers' aspirations and competitive actions. In our country 70% of the total population lives in villages. Revolution and economic reforms in India have brought out several changes in the whole market environment, especially in rural market. Several studies, seminars and meetings have been conducted on the rural markets with special reference to the consumer durable products. For studying the above changes in market in liberalized era, the attempt has been taken to study on rural consumer behaviour towards consumer durable products in Sivaganga District.

**Introduction:**

The Indian rural market with its vast size and heterogeneous demographics offers lot of opportunities to marketers to boost their revenues and also counters the saturation they are facing in the urban areas of the country. Two- thirds of India's population lives in rural areas and almost half of the national income is generated here. Nearly 70 per cent of the country's one billion plus population lives in over 6, 00,000 villages.

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**A consumer's buyer behaviour is influenced by four major factors:**

- 1) Cultural,
- 2) Social
- 3) Personal
- 4) Psychological.

Consumer's buyer behaviour and the resulting purchase decision are strongly influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics. An understanding of the influence of these factors is essential for marketers in order to develop suitable marketing mixes to appeal to the target customer.

**Cultural Factors** include a consumer's culture, subculture and social class. These factors are often inherent in our values and decision processes.

**Social Factors** include groups (reference groups, aspirational groups and member groups), family, roles and status. This explains the outside influences of others on our purchase decisions either directly or indirectly.

**Personal factors** include such variables as age and lifecycle stage, occupation, economic circumstances, lifestyle (activities, interests, opinions and demographics), personality and self concept. These may explain why our preferences often change as our 'situation' changes.

**Psychological factors** affecting our purchase decision include motivation (Maslow's hierarchy of needs), perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes

#### Objectives of the study

With the basic objective of enquiring the potentiality of rural markets in Sivaganga District in Tamil nadu. This study aims to enquire:

1. The pre-purchase rural consumer behaviour towards consumer goods.
2. The usage of consumer durable products in rural areas in Sivaganga district.
3. To identify the role of various socio-economic, cultural and psychological factors that influences the purchasing pattern of rural consumers;
4. Finally, to suggest some measures for effective implementation of marketing strategies by various consumer durable goods companies with reference to rural and urban areas in Sivaganga district.

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### Consumer Household durable goods

Household durable goods refer to various devices and equipments used in a household to reduce manual human labour content and to remove the drudgery in working and to make household activities speedy, tidy and enjoyable. There are, in the present day, a large number and variety of such household appliances like Multipurpose Mixer, Wet Grinders, Electrical Cooker, Vacuum Cleaners, Heaters, Electrical Induction Stove, sewing machines and Microwave Oven. To make home life enjoyable and entertaining as well as economical, we have audio and video players, home theatre and music systems. The researcher has selected household electrical cooking appliances like electric cooker, induction stove, microwave oven, mixer, wet grinders.

### Consumer Buying Process

Before business can develop marketing strategies, they must understand what factors influence buyers' behaviour and how they make purchase decisions to satisfy their needs and wants. Buyers are moved by a complex set of deep and suitable emotions. Their behaviour results from deeply held values and attitudes, their perception of the world and their place in it, from common sense, impulse or just plain whimsy. There are also several stages through which the consumer exhibits before deciding to purchase goods or services. Buying is a mental process. A decision to buy a product is taken after passing through different stages. The buying decision process involves the following steps:

- Need Recognition & Problem Awareness
- Information search
- Evaluation of Alternatives
- Purchase
- Post -Purchase Evaluation

### Selection of sample:

Indian rural market its size and demand base offers a great opportunity to markets. Rural market has 742 million consumers throughout India. Urban market is 27% in the total market. Durable products in the rural marketing are one of the latest mantra of business organization. In Tamil nadu Sivaganga is one of the Major districts, in which majority of people are living in rural areas. This study has selected six Villages from Sivaganga, Karaikudi, Thirubuvanam, Devakottai, Kalayarkovil, Kallal, Sakkottai, Thiruppathur in Sivaganga district. In each revenue division researcher has selected two villages depending on socio-economic standards of villages. One is developed and another is under developed village.

### Factors Influencing Post-Purchase of Household durable goods.

The opinion of the respondents regarding the factors influencing post-purchase behaviour of household durable goods.

**Table -1 Factors Influencing Post-Purchase of Household durable goods.**

| S. No.       | Factors             | Rural      | Urban      | Total            |
|--------------|---------------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| 1.           | Price               | 74 (39)    | 61 (12)    | 161 (23)         |
| 2.           | Quality             | 42 (22)    | 138 (27)   | 182 (26)         |
| 3.           | Appearance          | 25 (13)    | 92 (18)    | 105 (15)         |
| 4.           | After sales service | 17 (09)    | 117 (23)   | 140 (20)         |
| 5.           | Durability          | 19 (10)    | 56 (11)    | 70 (10)          |
| 6.           | Attractive model    | 13 (07)    | 46 (09)    | 42 (06)          |
| <b>Total</b> |                     | <b>190</b> | <b>510</b> | <b>700 (100)</b> |

**Source:** Primary data, Figures in parentheses are percentage

From the Table -1 it is seen that, the important buying factors considered while post-purchase of household appliances were: Quality for 26 per cent of the respondents, Price (23 per cent) and After sales service (20 per cent). Price was found to be the main factor influencing the rural respondents (39 per cent) followed by quality 22 per cent, while Quality was the main consideration by the urban respondents 27 per cent, followed by After sales service 23 per cent and Appearance 18 per cent. It is concluded that the majority of the respondents better quality for factors influencing post-purchase of household appliances.

**Criteria for Evaluation for Buying Household durable goods**

*Price*

In poor countries like India often alternative evaluation is done on price consideration which one can afford. For instance, in case of detergent, house or a car, first consumer decides the range which is in his reach or affordability or his willingness to spend upon a product. Then he examines those brands which are within his range. Many companies initially succeed because of low price.

*Quality*

The quality is an important factor in deciding to buy a particular brand or not. In case of industrial machinery and raw materials by industry and in case of consumer durables quality is an important selecting criterion. The same is true for hospitals and many other services in order that consumer gets the right quality and are not cheated. Various countries have laid down standards for quality. The factors influencing purchase behaviour are exhibited in the following table -1.

**Table -2 Factors Influencing Purchase Behaviour**

| S. No.       | Influencing factors | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1.           | Quality             | 455                | 65         |
| 2            | Quantity            | 42                 | 06         |
| 3            | Cost                | 49                 | 07         |
| 4            | Service             | 63                 | 09         |
| 5            | Price               | 21                 | 03         |
| 6            | Brand               | 70                 | 10         |
| <b>Total</b> |                     | <b>700</b>         | <b>100</b> |

**Source:** Primary data

The table-2 indicates that, 65 per cent of the respondents

were influenced by quality, 6 per cent of the respondents were influenced by the quantity, 7 per cent of the respondents were influenced by the cost, 9 per cent of the respondents were influenced by the service, 3 per cent of the respondents were influenced by the price and 10 per cent of the respondents were influenced by the loyalty to the brand. Thus, majority of the respondents purchase behaviour were influenced by the quality of the product.

**Brand**

In most of the markets for each product, a number of brands are available for almost any product including rice, wheat flour, tea, coffee, vegetables, pickles, mobile, to mention a few. The consumers give due weightage to brand Consumers of certain products feel that advertised products are better and they discard those products which are not advertised frequently. Some consumers feel that heavily advertised products are better than less advertised products.

**Suggestions and Recommendations**

Durable product manufactures should focus their attention on the sources of information from where the consumers get information about the products namely household appliances like electric cooker, induction stove, mixer, microwave oven and wet grinder and promote their products through these sources. Due to the economic and social changes that are taking place in our country, more and more people are buying durable products to suit their requirements. This gives plenty of scope for the manufacturers of durable products to tap not only the growing market but also the potential market. Since the purchasers care more for quality than the cost of the products, the manufacturers can produce only warranted goods that may in turn help them to be successful in marketing.

### **Attributes**

Different products have different attributes like taste, flavour, fragrance, durability, performance and so on. In case of products like basmati rice, tea, toothpaste and cosmetics brand is a very important factor. But in India many unbranded products are sold largely on price consideration, especially in rural markets. But their colour, smell, quality, shape are also considered. There are hundreds of attributes which are considered for different products.

### **Experience**

The prior experience about a product or service is an important factor to use it again or not to use it. If one has good experience on one product, he may not consider other brand and most likely will purchase it again unless better products have been introduced in the market and consumer feels them better than tried product or service.

### **Familiarity**

The familiarity about a product depends on a considerable extent on the advertisement, friends, relatives and family members. In evaluation the consumer considers only those brands which are known to him which is different from those in his personal experience.

### **Trade-off**

There are positive and negative aspects about a product or service. The consumer will select that product which has more positive points than negative points. He, in other words, trades off negative aspects with positive aspects and product must have net positive aspects to be considered for purchase.

### **Number of alternatives to be considered**

At present in India for most of the products and many services there are a number of alternatives with the exception of railways and electricity and to a certain extent communication services. It is not possible for an average consumer to consider all of them before making a choice. Therefore, he decides to restrict his choice to a few models/ brands.

### **Advertisement**

The consumer has to be made only aware but familiar about a product so that it may be included for alternate consideration. This important job is done by advertisements. Consumers of certain products feel that advertised products are better and they discard those products which are not advertised frequently. Some consumers feel that heavily advertised products are better than less advertised products.

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#### CONCLUSION:

Rural families are usually composed of large sized and are characterized by strong family bonds between members and thus given importance to any kind of high valued products. There seems to be a strong influence of family members in the purchase of durable goods. The chief wage earner has been identified as the chief decision maker for most of the durable goods supported and influenced by the other family members. The decision making process for the purchase of durable goods is elaborate as there are many members views are being considered including the opinion leaders before making a final purchase.

The criteria in selecting the durable goods are price of the product, dealer reputation and their advertisement in local papers, special discount and gifts given by the local dealers, brand name, warranty given to the product and the operational ease. The factors have high loadings which are grouped by factor analysis.

The information sources that are being used by consumers are the sources they get through a person like opinion leaders, friends, neighbours, relatives, past experience and through their son or daughter where they bring lot of information to household because of their urban counterparts. The free color television given by the government and channels provide commercial sources like advertisement and sales promotional offers. The aggressive rural advertisement campaign through various forms of traditional media like puppets shows, street plays influence the customers in purchase decision as these are sponsored directly by the companies in promoting a brand. The nearby rural trustworthy retailer provides lot of sources in final decision making. It was observed in this study that these sources strongly influence the rural customers in decision making.

When framing a marketing plan for rural areas it is the rural family that should be considered and not the individual as units, which is mostly done in urban areas.

- (i) The knowledge of family influences is often very important for developing appropriate marketing strategies.
- (ii) Long term influence of the family purchasing patterns on children's behavior. Parents teach children both directly and through observation, why, how, when, where and what to purchase
- (iii) Identifying the different sources will lead to find out the most significant way in reaching the rural areas.
- (iv) The rural buying behavior model prescribed will focus on formulating a separate rural marketing strategy for consumer durable manufacturers.

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