



## **RURAL CUSTOMERS AWARENESS, PREFERENCES AND SATISFACTION TOWARDS SELECTED HOME APPLIANCES**

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### **Abstract:**

The Current study pertains to find out the awareness, preference and satisfaction of rural consumers. Descriptive research was undertaken and questionnaires were issued to customers to know their level of awareness, preferences and satisfaction. The statistical techniques such as Simple percentage, Chi-square test, weighted average ranking and Friedman ranking are used to reach at conclusion and suggestion. Present study found that the factors like specific cost benefit, technological factors, promotional factors, social-culture, and trust factors are most important factors which influence the consumer preference. Demographical factors such as age, occupation, education, income and family structure also play a key role.

**Key Words:** Rural Customers, Home Appliances, Awareness, Preferences & Satisfaction

### **Introduction:**

In India all the market can be considered as rural market, because the maximum percentage of people lives in the rural area. Most of the marketers have established their efforts to sell their product in the rural market. The popular multinational firms have been tailoring their efforts in promoting the rural market. Rural marketing requires more intensive personal selling than urban marketing. Rural market brings bigger revenues in the country, as the rural region comprises of the maximum customers in our country. Consumer awareness, which refers to a buyer's knowledge of a particular product or company, allows the buyer to get the most attractive from what he wants. There is variety of choices in Home Appliances product. Variety of choices increases the consumer awareness and preference for Home Appliances product in advancement with new models and technological development. Due to increase in manufacture of Home Appliances product and competition price may fall down. Competition has forced the companies to offer efficient price offers, discounts, warranty & Guarantee, after sales service and this, in turn, has influenced the customer preference for Home Appliance products. The major Home Appliances product considered for study in the market is Refrigerators, Air-Conditioners, Water Purifier, Washing Machines, Microwave Oven, Induction Stove and Water heater.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

The study on rural customer about selected Home Appliances deals with customer's level of awareness and preference. Price and quality of the product is most important factors which induce the customers to prefer the particular product. The researcher has taken into consideration about various critical factors which induce customers in selection of household appliances. The factors may be brand-model, price, warranty\guarantee, price, customer services, quality discount/free offers, latest technology, color\attractiveness, etc. To find out the factor influencing rural customers, Ratika rastogi and Sonia chaudary (2012) made a study on it. The study reveals that customers plan before purchase and they buy product if only they need it only. Hence more awareness about the product should be given to customers to make them to know about the features of the Home Appliances. Likewise Tharani and et al (2017) made a study to identify level of awareness and satisfaction about customers with special references to Coimbatore city. They found that majority of them are aware about product through advertisement. It is important to know how far they are aware. What are the main sources of awareness? Moreover satisfactions of customers are important most of them are not satisfied with price of the product. They expect quality and life of the Home Appliances to be good. The study includes the process of identifying, when do the customers purchase? What is the purpose of purchase? What are the factors inducing to purchase selected Home Appliances?

Hence it possess some important questions like

- ✓ What is the customer's awareness and preferences level towards the selected Home Appliances?
- ✓ What are the factors influencing the buyer at the time of purchase?
- ✓ What is the level of satisfaction of the customers over the use of Home Appliances?

An attempt has been made to analyze the awareness and preference towards selected home appliances among the rural customers residing around Pollachi taluk.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

To trace out the possible outcomes the study has been carried out with the following objectives.

- ✓ To study the rural customer level of awareness towards Home Appliances.
- ✓ To identify the level of preferences among rural customers.

- ✓ To determine the rural customers level of satisfaction towards Home Appliances.

**Sources of Data:**

The strength of any research is based on the data collected for the study. The present study is based on primary data and as well as secondary data. The primary data were collected from the rural customers using questionnaire. The respondents are selected through convenient sampling method.

**Sample Size:**

The sample size selected for the study is 205 respondents. The required data were collected by applying convenient sampling method. Total of 220 questionnaires was issued, 15 questionnaires are found not suitable for analysis due to lack of information and remaining 205 questionnaires were taken for the study.

**Sampling Technique:**

The study is based on convenient sampling method.

**Framework of Analysis:**

The collected data have been analyzed with the help of

- ✓ Simple Percentage Analysis
- ✓ Chi-Square Test
- ✓ Weighted Average Ranking
- ✓ Friedman Ranking

**Significance of the Study:**

Most of the studies in the past have focused on Home Appliance. Only very few research have been done with regard to the selected Home Appliances. There is a wide scope for research on Home Appliances. The study of Home Appliances is very much useful to the marketers because it enables them to understand and predict awareness level, preference and satisfaction of consumers in the marketplace; it is concerned not only with what consumers buy, but also with why they buy it, when and where and how they buy it, and how often they buy it, and also how they consume it & dispose it. Consumer research is the methodology used to study about consumer; it takes place at every phase of the consumption process: before the purchase, during the purchase, and after the purchase. Hence, the present study is concerned with the rural customer's level of awareness, preference and satisfaction towards selected Home Appliances. The result of the study will be useful for marketers or producers of Home Appliances. It is very important to customers to understand how to use the product in efficient manner to properly maintain. Only when features of the product are clearly known customers can utilize it properly. Manufacturers have to give more importance to product for reaching every customer.

**Findings:**

The findings of the study are

**Simple Percentage Analysis:** The findings relating to socio-economic profile of the sample customers, level of awareness and level of preferences are presented below.

- ✓ Majority 128 (62.44%) of the customers are female.
- ✓ Most 99 (48%) of the customers belong to age group of 41-60 years.
- ✓ Majority 181 (88.30%) of the customers are married.
- ✓ Majority 112 (54.62%) customer's educational qualification is upto SSLC.
- ✓ The most 91 (44.30%) of the customers are agriculturist
- ✓ Majority 103 (50%) of the customers have 4 or 5 members in their family.
- ✓ Most of the (44.3%) 91 customer's families have two earning members in their family.
- ✓ Most 96 (46.82%) of the customers family earning per month is upto Rs.20,000.
- ✓ Majority 146(71.21%) of the customer's entire family involves in purchase decision of home appliances.
- ✓ Most of the 79 (38.53%) customers are aware about home appliances through friends and relatives.
- ✓ Majority of 195(95.13%) customers are highly aware of Refrigerator while comparing to others home appliances chosen for study.
- ✓ Majority of the customers are using Refrigerator followed by others appliances like Induction stove, Water heater, Washing machine, Water purifier, Air conditioner and Microwave oven.
- ✓ Majority of the 149(72.68%) customers make purchases of home appliances by ready cash.
- ✓ Majority 190(92.68%) of the customers make payment for home appliances through cash.
- ✓ Majority 171(83.41%) of the customers are making plan before they purchase of home appliances.
- ✓ Majority 172 (83.91%) of customers purchased new home appliance instead of preferring second hand product.
- ✓ Most 85 (41.45%) of customers buy home appliances according to the availability of money.
- ✓ Most 65 (31.87%) of the customers have revealed that, they are waiting for new arrival of home appliances.
- ✓ Majority 167 (81.46%) of the customers recommend their home appliances products to their friends and others.

- ✓ Majority 144 (70.24%) customers are satisfied with service provided to their problems.
- ✓ Majority 138 (67.31%) customers has faced problem of high price followed by others problems like non-availability in nearby showroom, poor after sales service, etc.,
- ✓ Majority of customers (52.19%) have an idea to re-purchase/change the home appliances.

As per weighted average ranking analyses priority of the customers are presented in following paragraph.

Among the factors influencing to purchase home appliances products brand-model got first rank, the second rank is occupied by price. The third rank is occupied by quality. The fourth rank is occupied by warranty\guarantee, The fifth rank is occupied by celebrity, The sixth rank is occupied by discounts and free offers, The seventh rank is occupied by advertisement, The Eight rank is occupied by color and attractiveness, The ninth rank is occupied by latest technology, the tenth place is occupied by after sales service, the eleventh place is occupied by the impulsive buying and the last place is occupied by dealers suggestion.

**Problems with Home Appliances – Friedman Ranking:** Friedman ranking is used to find out the problems faced by customers and rank is given.

Problems	Mean Value	Rank
High price	4.41	1
Lack of model	5.49	9
Non availability in nearby showroom	4.54	2
Non fulfillment of warranty/guarantees	5.11	6
High maintaince cost	4.89	4
Non availability of spare parts	4.98	5
Poor after sales service	4.84	3
Indifferent attitude of dealers	5.27	7
Poor performances	5.48	8

**Variables Influencing Level of Satisfaction towards Home Appliances:**

To assess the difference between levels of satisfaction towards home appliances are based upon the some variables and to find out the existence of association between the variables and level of satisfaction towards home appliances, seven variables have been selected. Chi-square is used to examine the associate between the variables and the level of satisfaction towards home appliances. The findings relating to this is presented below.

Variables	Significant
Gender	No
Age	No
Marital status	No
Educational qualification	Yes
Occupation	No
Family income	No
Type of family	No

It is found that educational qualification has significant association with level of satisfaction and other variables have no significant association.

**Suggestions:**

The suggestions are given by the respondents at the time of data collection which will be helpful for marketers to know about the rural customer’s expectations regarding home appliances in Pollachi.

- ✓ Most attractive schemes and offers can be provided to increase the customer’s continuation.
- ✓ Great care has to be taken to make use of the impact provided by the advertisement media themselves in advertising. Each and every feature of home appliances should be reached even to the rural areas.
- ✓ Detailed information about the new product available in the market must be given.
- ✓ It is found that majority of the sample respondents are suffering from the problem of high price. Hence it is suggested that the manufacturers may try to reduce the price of household appliances by reducing the cost of production by some of the expenditures like packing, distribution and other possible manufacturing expenses.
- ✓ Special schemes can be offered to attract more customers.
- ✓ As the major reasons stated for limited appliances in use is “Too expensive”, steps have to be taken to reduce the price.
- ✓ More credit facility can be provided by means of price cut, free servicing, offers, etc.,
- ✓ Demonstrations can be made in rural area to enhance awareness among rural people.
- ✓ The consumers are ready to replace the existing home appliances and expect for more features. Hence, the manufacturers need to concentrate on it.

**Conclusion:**

It is true that whatever may be the product, consumer is the “Boss” based upon his needs and tastes the producer’s are to be produced. Their satisfaction only makes the survival of the product in the market. Before purchasing the product, the consumer gathers much information about the product, through different sources. The market for consumer durables is becoming more competitive now a day. Marketers want to communicate with consumers and try to convince them through every possible media to buy their products. This study reveals that the contribution of customers on purchasing household appliances, their awareness level, usage of home appliances, factors influencing to purchase and their level of satisfaction are also analyzed. Most of the customers are not aware and usage of microwave oven is less. Hence, awareness has to be created for microwave oven to customers. The quality, brand-model and price are the prime factors of customers regarding home appliances. This study will be helpful for the producers and marketers of home appliances to know about their customers.

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