

Consumer Behaviour Towards Durable Goods: A Study On Thiruvananthapuram District

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Abstract:

Understanding consumer behaviour is fundamental to modern marketing, making it essential for effective marketing management. While consumers may articulate their needs and desires, their actual behaviour often diverges, reflecting deeper motivations they might not even recognize. India's consumer market is currently flourishing, fuelled by the nation's robust economic growth. This expansion is largely driven by a youthful population with increasing disposable incomes and easy access to financing options, leading to remarkable market outcomes. The challenges posed by consumer behaviour are becoming more pronounced, especially in the context of durable goods. In recent years, the popularity of durable goods in India has surged, with the introduction of various products bringing about significant changes in consumer tastes and preferences.

Keywords: *Consumer behaviour, Consumer Durables, Consumption decision*

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I. Introduction

The buying behaviour of consumers have grown in significance in consumer-focused marketing strategy development and administration. In the current marketing system, it is essential to comprehend this behaviour since a company's ability to succeed or fail ultimately depends on the purchasing habits of its target market, both as a whole and as individuals. Marketing management must determine the numerous elements influencing consumers' purchase decisions in order to apply marketing tactics across a range of market groups. Consumer personality, conduct, and attitude are important factors when making decisions. Since customer satisfaction and profitability are the ultimate aims of marketing, these elements are now fundamental to modern marketing. The study of consumer behaviour focusses on how individuals, groups, and organisations choose, purchase, utilise, and discard concepts, products, and services to fulfil their needs and desires. It speaks of the behaviours of customers in the marketplace as well as the underlying reasons behind those behaviours.

Consumer Behaviour- Definitions

1. According to Engel, Blackwell, and Mansard, "consumer behaviour is the actions and decision processes of people who purchase goods and services for personal consumption".
2. According to Loudon and Bitta, "consumer behaviour is the decision process and physical activity, which individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services".

Consumer behaviour includes a consumer's mental and physical actions when they look to buy a good or service to fulfil their wants. Consumer behaviour encompasses both visible and invisible activities. Visible activities include physical actions such as visiting the marketplace, purchasing products, and consuming them. In contrast, invisible activities involve mental processes, such as contemplating a product, deciding whether to buy it, and selecting one brand over another.

The dynamic and intricate nature of consumer behaviour necessitates ongoing adaptations. Marketing management faces the risk of losing its market position if it is unable to adjust to these changes. A person's purchasing decisions are influenced by both external and internal elements, such as family, social groups, culture, status, and economic circumstances, as well as internal factors including requirements, habits, instincts, impulses, and attitudes. Consumer behaviour, to put it more precisely, is what a consumer does when they buy and use a good or service.

The Consumer Durable Goods Industry in India

The consumer durables industry in India has experienced robust growth and dynamic changes in recent years, driven by factors such as increasing disposable incomes, urbanization, digitalization, and evolving consumer preferences.

India's consumer durables industry is expected to reach USD 30 billion by 2025, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 10% from its estimated USD 18 billion in 2022. A burgeoning middle class, rising discretionary incomes, and easier access to credit and financing choices have all contributed to this expansion. The market for smart household appliances, such as air conditioners, refrigerators, and TVs, has been expanding quickly. In 2022, for example, the smart TV market alone saw growth of over 40%, and today, smart TVs make up over 70% of all TV sales in India. With a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13%, the Internet of Things (IoT) market in India, which includes linked appliances, is projected to reach USD 15 billion by 2025. The use of energy-efficient appliances has significantly increased as a result of rising environmental consciousness.

Sales of refrigerators and air conditioners with five stars, for instance, have increased dramatically, with the energy-efficient AC market expanding by about 20% a year.

Through the use of its star rating system, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) has played a significant role in promoting energy-efficient products and increasing the market share of energy-efficient appliances.

Businesses are concentrating more and more on growing into semi-urban and rural areas. Approximately 35–40% of consumer durables sales now come from the rural sector, where businesses like LG and Samsung are seeing double-digit growth. In response to these markets, manufacturers have launched more reasonably priced and long-lasting goods; in recent years, sales of these products have grown at a 15% compound annual growth rate (CAGR).

A notable increase has been observed in the proportion of online sales in the consumer durables sector. In 2022, e-commerce platforms made up around 25–30% of all consumer electronics sales, an increase from 15% to 20% in 2020. Businesses are merging online and offline sales through an omni-channel strategy. Reliance Retail and Croma, for example, have grown their physical shopfronts and increased their online presence concurrently.

The Consumer Durable Goods Industry in Kerala

Like the rest of India, Kerala's consumer durables sector has grown steadily as a result of growing earnings, urbanisation, and consumer awareness. Kerala's market offers important trends and insights, even though specific data for the state may not be as accessible as national statistics.

Kerala has a very high per capita income, making it one of the wealthier states in India. Kerala's consumer durables industry is expected to provide a substantial contribution to the entire market in the southern region, which makes up between 30 and 35 percent of India's total consumer durables market. Over the last few years, Kerala's consumer durables industry has expanded at an estimated compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8–10%. This growth has been attributed to the state's stable economic climate and high literacy rate, which raise consumer awareness and spending. Kerala's metropolitan centres, which include Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, and Kochi, are important centres for sales of consumer durables. Kerala's urban market has been steadily expanding, and there is a strong demand for high-end, intelligent appliances. Kerala's rural market exhibits considerable promise, although being smaller than the state's urban market. The demand for basic consumer durables like televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines has been rising due to increased rural electrification and improved infrastructure, which has aided in the overall market expansion. With more than 90% of households possessing a TV, television use is widespread in Kerala. Smart TV demand has been rising quickly, with growth rates believed to have exceeded 20% in recent years. In Kerala, refrigerators and washing machines are two of the most widely used consumer durables. The market for refrigerators has grown at a rate of approximately 15% per year, while the washing machine category is growing at a rate of about 12–14% per year due to rising customer convenience preferences.

Despite Kerala's generally mild temperature, demand for them has been rising, especially in metropolitan areas. Kerala's air conditioner market is predicted to expand at a 10-12% annual rate, with inverter air conditioners seeing a rise in popularity.

II. Review Of Literature

The Rs. 25,000 crore consumer durables market, which increased by 12% in 2008, is taking a very unconventional strategy to combating the slowdown, according to Amit Sharma's (2009) study on how durables giants try to push new models to fight the recession. The introduction of more recent models and items with improved features and technology would encourage more people to make purchases.

Anil Kumar and Jelsey Joseph (2012) examined the purchasing behavior of working women towards durables in both urban and rural areas and found significant differences between the two markets regarding general and product-specific factors influencing their decisions. The study highlighted a global shift in consumer

preferences and attitudes, especially within the white goods sector, driven by intense competition from foreign brands entering the market. This competition has pressured marketers to identify key elements that consumers prioritize and understand their satisfaction levels. Without this insight, marketers face challenges in effectively meeting the evolving needs and desires of their customers.

R. Dharmaraj (2017) surveyed 100 male and female respondents in Arni, Tamil Nadu, to learn more about their purchasing habits with regard to durables. Three everyday necessities—televisions, cell phones, and electric fans—were the subjects of the investigation. According to the research, people consider price and quality above all else when making selections about what to buy. Furthermore, advertising is an important source of product knowledge. The survey also discovered that consumers, who are generally happy with their purchases of these three sorts of durables, have a strong brand loyalty.

Statement of the Problem

Thiruvananthapuram district has a growing market for consumer durable goods, however a thorough grasp of the particular issues influencing consumer decisions in this area is lacking. Customers in this district deal with a distinct set of issues that might have a big impact on their purchasing decisions, include different product knowledge levels, cultural influences, and financial limitations. Moreover, little is known about the function of family decision-making processes, especially in an environment where traditional and modern values frequently collide. This lack of knowledge poses a serious challenge to companies hoping to serve this market well and to legislators trying to protect the interests of consumers. In order to solve this issue, this study carefully examines the variables influencing Thiruvananthapuram consumers' decisions to purchase durable items.

Objectives

1. To determine factors influencing consumers' choices and usage of selected durable goods.
2. To examine consumer satisfaction with the design of selected consumer durables.

Significance of the Study

The study is noteworthy because it provides a thorough grasp of the elements impacting consumer decisions in a given geographic location. The study, which examines purchase habits and preferences for durable items in Thiruvananthapuram, provides important insights into how local cultural, economic, and social issues influence consumer behaviour. This study not only identifies major drivers like price, quality, and brand image, but it also sheds light on rising trends and preferences specific to the district. Understanding these nuances is critical for firms seeking to modify their marketing strategy and product offerings to better meet the needs of consumers in this region. Furthermore, the study contributes to broader market research by offering a detailed case study that may be utilised to inform comparable assessments.

III. Methodology

Primary and secondary data were used in the collection of the data for this investigation.

This study was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala. The sample was selected using the random sampling method. The study had a total sample size of 100 respondents. The pre-structured questionnaire served as the research method for gathering the necessary information from the study's sample. The data was represented using percentages, mean values, standard deviations, and garret rankings. The secondary data was collected from books, journals, periodicals, brochures, reports, and others.

The primary factors propelling the Indian consumer durables sector's rise:

Increase in disposable Income: The demand for consumer electronics has been increasing due to the rise in disposable income, especially as more households are becoming double-income families. The expanding Indian middle class presents a significant opportunity for companies eager to attract these consumers

Availability of New Variants: The introduction of new product variants has given consumers a lot more options. Businesses can draw in customers by releasing new and improved models of items.

Product Pricing: The cost of goods is very important to the consumer durables sector. Pricing is a key consideration for consumers on a tight budget when making purchases. But for middle-class and upper-class consumers, product features, technical innovations, and brand prestige are more important.

Financing Plans: The availability and conditions of financing alternatives have a big influence on how affordable consumer durables can be. Product sales can be significantly impacted by the cost and adaptability of credit plans.

Growth of Organised Retail: The Indian consumer durables market is expanding more quickly as a result of the growth of organised retail. In FY07, organised retail made up just 4% of the retail industry. However, a report by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) predicts that organised

retail will increase at a rate of 45–50% annually, reaching 16% of the retail sector by 2011–2012. The larger retail firms entering the market will be the main driver of this growth.

Creative Advertising and Brand Promotion: To stand out from the competition and draw customers, a business should employ powerful sales promotion techniques like freebies, exchange offers, and discounts.

There are four key aspects of consumer behaviour. These include cultural, social, personal and psychological factors.

Cultural factors: These comprise the social class, subculture, and culture of the consumer. These components, which mould our choices and behaviours, are firmly ingrained in our values and decision-making processes.

Social Factors: These include roles, status, family, and a variety of groups, including aspirational, membership, and reference groups. Social effects can affect our purchasing decisions either directly or indirectly by influencing other people's beliefs and actions.

Personal Factors: These include self-concept, personality, activities, interests, opinions, economic situation, age, lifecycle stage, occupation, and lifestyle (including hobbies, interests, and demographics). Individual circumstances may lead to shifts in preferences and purchasing decisions, which can be explained by personal considerations.

Psychological factors include perception, learning, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation (as outlined by Maslow's hierarchy of needs). Customers' interpretation of information and decision-making processes based on their emotional and mental states are influenced by psychological aspects.

IV. Findings And Discussion

Profile of Respondents

		No. of Response	Percent(%)
Age	18-30	25	25
	31-50	55	55
	Above 50	20	20
Education	School education	15	15
	Graduate	54	54
	Post-graduate	31	31
Occupation	Private Employee	23	23
	Government Employee	20	20
	Professional	16	16
	Business	16	16
	Self employed	25	25
Monthly Family Income	Below Rs 10000	21	21
	Rs 10000 to Rs.25000	28	28
	Rs.25001- Rs.50000	32	32
	Above 50000	19	19

The table provides a detailed demographic breakdown of a sample of respondents, categorized by age, education, occupation, and monthly family income. Here's an in-depth explanation of each category:

Age: The age group 18-30 constitutes 25% of the sample. It represents a segment of younger individuals who may be early in their careers or still pursuing higher education. 31-50 Years (55%) is the largest group. Above 50 years group comprises 20% of the sample.

Education Level: 15% of respondents have only completed school education. This group may have limited educational qualifications, which could influence their employment and earning potential. The majority of respondents (54%) hold a graduate degree. This suggests a well-educated sample with a higher level of formal education. 31% of respondents have completed post-graduate education. This indicates a significant proportion of individuals with advanced degrees, potentially influencing their career prospects and earning capacity.

Occupation: 23% of the sample works in the private sector. These individuals are likely employed in various industries, with varying levels of job stability and income. 20% of respondents work in government positions. Government jobs often offer stability and benefits, which may affect spending and savings behaviour. 16% of respondents are professionals, such as doctors, engineers, or consultants. This group typically has specialized skills and may earn higher incomes. 16% are engaged in business activities. This group includes entrepreneurs and business owners, who may have varying income levels and financial stability. 25% of respondents are self-employed, indicating a significant portion of the sample is engaged in independent or freelance work, which may influence their income variability and financial management.

Monthly Family Income: 21% of respondents have a monthly family income below Rs 10,000. This group represents lower-income households, which may face more financial constraints. 28% of respondents fall into this income bracket, reflecting a moderate level of income that may afford a reasonable standard of living. The largest segment in terms of income, with 32% of respondents earning between Rs 25,001 and Rs 50,000.

This group likely has a higher disposable income and greater spending power. 19% of respondents earn above Rs 50,000 per month, indicating a higher-income bracket with greater financial flexibility and purchasing power.

Possession of Selected durables (washing machine and refrigerator)

Table 2: Washing Machine Ownership and Usage

Category		Number of Respondents	Percent (%)
Possession of Washing Machine			
More than 2 Years		40	40.00
1-2 Years		30	30.00
Less than 1 Year		20	20.00
Usage of Washing Machine			
Daily		20	20.00
Alternate Days		70	70.00
Occasionally		10	10.00

Table 3: Refrigerator Ownership and Usage

Category		Number of Respondents	Percent (%)
Possession of Refrigerator			
More than 2 Years		100	100.00
1-2 Years		-	-
Less than 1 Year		-	-
Usage of Refrigerator			
Daily		100	100.00
Alternate Days		-	-
Occasionally		-	-

40% of respondents have owned their washing machines for more than 2 years. This indicates a significant portion of consumers have had their machines for a substantial period. 30% of respondents have owned their washing machines for between 1 and 2 years. This group represents relatively recent buyers. 20% of respondents have owned their washing machines for less than a year, suggesting recent purchases or upgrades. All respondents (100%) have owned their refrigerator for more than 2 years. This suggests that refrigerators are long-term appliances in households and are not frequently replaced. Every respondent (100%) uses their refrigerator daily.

Table 4: Awareness and Family Members' Involvement in Decision Making

Particulars	Frequency		Percentage (%)
a. Sources of Awareness about Consumer Durables			
Advertisement	42		42.00
Representatives	20		20.00
Exhibitions	08		8.00
Relatives/Friends	30		30.00
b. Family Members Involved in Decision Making			
Husband	20		20.00
Wife	16		16.00
Both	40		40.00
Entire Family	24		24.00

Table 4 provides insights into the sources of awareness about consumer products and the involvement of family members in the decision-making process. For sources of awareness, advertisements lead with 42% of respondents citing them as their primary source, followed by relatives or friends at 30%, representatives at 20%, and exhibitions at 8%. This indicates that advertisements and personal connections are the most influential in informing consumers. Regarding family involvement in decision-making, 40% of respondents reported that both partners are involved, while 24% involve the entire family. The husband and wife are involved for 20% and 16%

of respondents, respectively. This highlights that decisions on purchasing consumer durables are often made collaboratively, with a notable emphasis on joint or family-level input.

Factors Affecting the Purchase of Selected Consumer Durables

Several factors influence the purchase of consumer durables, including price, quality, design, utility, durability, brand image, and advertisements. For instance, when purchasing a refrigerator, durability, price, and quality are the primary considerations. In contrast, for washing machines, brand image, price, and quality are the key factors influencing decisions (see Table 5). This aligns with findings from Suganthi and Mohan (2014), who identified brand loyalty, price, quality, warranty, and durability as crucial factors in buying a washing machine. Similarly, Revathi (2016) and Rajeshwari et al. (2019) highlighted price as a significant factor in consumer product purchases, while Mehrotra and Kaur (2004) emphasized price as a critical determinant for electrical kitchen equipment. Conversely, Kotler & Armstrong (2007) and Ahmad & Kuldeep (2020) found that factors such as cultural, personal, and psychological components also play a significant role in consumer purchasing decisions. Garret rankings were used to rank the factors influencing the purchase of washing machine and refrigerator.

Table 5: Factors Influencing the Purchase of Selected Consumer Durables According to Garrett Rankings

Consumer Products	Factor	Garrett Score	Rank
Refrigerator	Price	64.76	II
	Quality	58.83	III
	Design	45.56	VI
	Utility	30.80	VII
	Durability	76.20	I
	Brand Image	48.56	V
	Advertisement	10.00	VIII
	Washing Machine	Price	76.30
Quality		66.13	III
Design		51.43	VI
Utility		53.90	V
Durability		42.90	VII
Brand Image		76.80	I
Advertisement		36.79	VIII

The table lists the variables that affect the decision to buy washing machines and refrigerators arranged in order of Garrett scores. Durability (Rank I) is the most important factor for refrigerator, followed by price (Rank II) and quality (Rank III). Utility and design are ranked lower, indicating less weight in the decision to buy. Advertisement is the least influential component (Rank VIII), with brand image having a significantly lower influence.

Regarding washing machines, consumers prioritise the brand's reputation, as seen by the highest ranking (Rank I) for brand image. After quality (Rank III) and utility (Rank V), price (Rank II) is another important consideration. Again, advertising has the least influence, followed by design and durability, which are less important than other aspects (Rank VIII). These rankings show that while both goods' price and quality are crucial, consumer durables place different emphasis on brand image than do refrigerators. Washing machines, for example, place a larger value on brand reputation.

Table 6: Satisfaction of Users Towards the Design of Consumer Durables

Satisfaction with Present Design	Washing Machine	Percentage (%)	Refrigerator	Percentage (%)
Yes	100	100	100	100
No	0	0	0	0
Changes in Design of Products	Washing Machine	Percentage (%)	Refrigerator	Percentage (%)
Yes	100	100	72	72.00
No	0	0	28	28.00

Table 6 explains that all respondents (100%) are satisfied with the design of their washing machine. Similarly, all respondents (100%) are satisfied with the design of their refrigerators. In both cases, there is no dissatisfaction reported (0%). Every respondent (100%) desire changes in the design of their washing machines. This indicates a unanimous preference for design improvement. 72% of respondents want changes in the design of their refrigerators, while 28% are satisfied with the current design and do not desire any changes. All users are currently satisfied with the design of both washing machines and refrigerators, there is a strong desire for design changes, particularly for washing machines where the demand for updates is universal. For refrigerators, a majority also seek design improvements, but a notable minority are content with the existing design.

V. Conclusion

Based on the facts presented above, it is possible to conclude that various factors have a substantial impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. Price and quality are the most important variables, followed by design and utility. Marketers should prioritise these influencing elements in order to better cater to consumer preferences. To succeed, businesses must prioritise customer satisfaction, developing a strong brand image, and encouraging brand loyalty. Meeting consumer needs is critical to converting these insights into profitable marketing opportunities.

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