

## CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF SOAPS AND DETERGENT WITH REFERENCE TO THANJAVUR DISTRICT, TAMILNADU

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior is a complex pattern and sophisticated understanding for marketing research, but simply defined; study of psychological, social and physical actions who people buy, use and dispose products, service and ideas and practices. (Solomon 2006; Blackwell et al., 2001; Peter and Olson, 2008). Basic idea behind the consumer research was questioning of buying reasons, however researchers have to go deeper and also ask people how and in which circumstances purchase and consume. (Blackwell et al., 2001)<sup>1</sup>

Consumer behavior as the behavior that consumer display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products, services and ideas which they expect will satisfy their needs. (Leon G Shiffman)<sup>2</sup> Consumer behavior as a field study, focusing consumer activities. As the study of consumer behavior focused on buyer behavior or "why people buy". More recently, researchers and practitioners have focused on consumption analysis, why and how people consume in addition to why and how they buy (Blackwell et al.)

Now a day's consumers are looking forward not only to improving upon their eating habits but also improving their lifestyle by practice healthy living. Hygiene is an essential component of healthy living, integral to achieving health and preventing disease. Soaps and detergents are essential to personal and public health. Soaps and detergents found in the home can be grouped into four general categories: Personal cleansing, Laundry, Dishwashing and Household cleaning.

Personal Cleansing Products include bar soaps, gels, liquid soaps and heavy duty hand cleaners. Laundry Detergents and Laundry Aids are available as liquids, powders, gels, sticks, sprays, pumps, sheets and bars. Laundry detergents are either general purpose or light duty. General purpose detergents are suitable for all washable fabrics. Light duty detergents are used for hand or machine washing lightly soiled items and delicate fabrics. Dish washing Products include detergents for hand and machine dishwashing as well as some specialty products. They are available as liquids, gels, powders and solids. Household Cleaners are available as liquids, gels, powders, solids, sheets and pads for use on painted, plastic, metal, porcelain, glass and other surfaces, and on washable floor coverings.

#### 1.1 SOAP MARKET IN INDIA

Soap was introduced in India by the Lever Brothers during the British reign in the country. There after soaps were imported from England and marketed in India. However the first local soap manufacturing unit was set up by Mr. Jamshedji Tata in Cochin, Kerala around the period 1918. Since then soaps have become an important part of the lives of the people of the country. Today India has one of the most developed soap markets and is dominated by numerous multinational and also quite a few major domestic companies. Some of the most popular soap brands in India include Lux, Cinthol, Lifebuoy, Liril, Shikakai, Rexona, Nirma, Dettol etc. The Indian soap market is ruled by three major giants; Hindustan Unilever Limited, Godrej and Nirma<sup>3</sup>. These three companies alone account for 88% of the total market share in India.

### 1.2 DETERGENT MARKET - OVERVIEW

The Detergent Market is one of the segments of the FMCG market in India that has high growth potential. The detergent based segment is divided into two broad categories - oil-based laundry soaps and synthetic detergents, including bars, powder, and liquids. The detergent market is mainly concentrated in the urban areas but the level of penetration in the rural for the past few years has been good.

#### 1.2.1 DETERGENT MARKET - SEGMENTS

Detergent market in India can be further divided into four sub categories

- Concentrates and Compact Segment for washing machines such as, Surf Excel, Henko, Ariel, etc.
- Premium Segment such as Surf Excel, Henko, Ariel, etc.
- Mass Premium and Mid Price Segment such as Rin, Mr. White, Tide, and other regional brands
- Popular Segment such Nirma, Wheel, Chek, 501, etc.

#### 1.2.2 DETERGENT MARKET - CONSUMPTION

The detergent consumption in India is less in comparison to the other Asian countries. The per capita detergent consumption in India is around 2.7 kg per year, whereas places like Philippines and Malaysia, the per capita consumption is 3.7 kg, and in USA it is around 10 kgs. The detergent market in India is expected to have a growth rate of 7 % to 9 % per year in terms of volume. The major players in the detergent market are the Uni Lever and Nirma. The Uni Lever dominates the premium and mid priced segment, and the Nirma dominates the low priced segment<sup>4</sup>.

#### 1.2.3 DETERGENT MARKET - GROWTH POTENTIALS

- The penetration level should be enhanced to enable the market to grow at the rate of 8 to 10 % per year.
- The consumer awareness programs should be launched in the rural areas in order to increase the per capita consumption in such areas.

### 1.3 DISWASH MARKET IN INDIA

Dish care category is estimated to be around Rs. 1200, while the branded dish wash market is roughly 40%. The per capita consumption of this category (value terms) in India is hardly Rs 4 while in UK it is Rs 150<sup>5</sup>. There is long way to go for this category. Vim has created the dish wash bar category in 1993. Till that time urban households used dish wash powders. The bar offered many advantages to the homemaker over the powder which was messy and uneconomical. Since then Vim Bar ruled the dish wash market. The other brands present in this category are Nirma Clean Dish Wash, Nima Bartan Bar, Odopic, Exo, Private Labels (Spencer's DishWash Bar etc)

### 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the socio-economic profile of the sample respondents and their shopping pattern.
- To assess the factors influencing the consumer to purchase soaps and detergents products.

#### 2.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cleaning product play an essential role in our daily lives. By safely and effectively removing soils, germs and other

contaminants, they help us to stay healthy care for our homes and possessions and make our surroundings more pleasant. Soaps and Detergent plays an important role in FMGC sector. The overall soap penetration in Indian household is 98%. Compare to other sectors investors prefer to make their investment in this sector only. However there is high growth tendency for FMGC sector it faces some difficulties in achieving their destination. Hence the purpose of this study is to identify the force that influence on consumer shopping pattern particularly in Thanjavur. Soaps and detergents are used by each one in their day today life, that's why the reason behind to select the particular product for the study.

## 2.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study target of consumers in Thanjavur district, understanding their behaviour helps to identify the preference influence of brand in their purchase decision etc on the purchase of soaps and detergents. The insight will help the manufactures to adopt new strategies which would help not only to attract new customer but also maintain the loyalty of the existing customer, as in the present competitive scenario the consumer are prepared to choose their right product not only based on their needs but also on the basis of personal interest shown by the manufactures on them.

## 2.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The research concentrates only toilet soap, laundry detergent and dishwashing bar.
- 400 respondents are taken for the study. with the income in sample size the result may vary.

## 2.4 REVIEW OF LITRATURE

FRANCIES GNANASEKAR<sup>6</sup> (1997) in his study titled "A study on brand positioning of detergent soaps and powders in Thiruchirappalli District" suggested that the manufacturers of various brands should take necessary steps to ascertain the position of their brands.

RABIA JAHANI FARZANA<sup>7</sup>(2008), "Study on sales promotion activities for toilet soaps and their impact on purchase behavior in Thirichirapalli district" explained the lifestyle and attitude of consumers on their purchase behavior and various sales promotion activities adopted by manufacturers for marketing their product.

THIRUMOORTHY P and KARTHIKEYAN P<sup>8</sup>, in their study, "A Study on retailer and customer attitude towards P&G detergent powder in Coimbatore city" found that the consumers are influenced by major factors such as brand name, price ,quality, availability, packaging, advertisements, etc. during the purchase decision. The study also suggest advertisement plays an important role for selection of a particular brand of detergent powder.

GIHAN WIJESUNDERA<sup>9</sup> (2010) in this article "Factors influencing the demand of beauty soap among female consumers in the greater Colombo region" Purpose of this study is to explore how the marketing mix & demographical factors influence the brand preference & purchasing behavior of beauty soap among the female consumers in the greater Colombo region. The results indicated that there were statistical relationships between price, product, education, occupation and band preference and there was no statistical relationship

between place, promotion, age, income level, marital status, skin type, social factors, and substitute product with the brand preference.

Thus the research concludes that the price, product, education & occupation are only having a statistical relationship with the brand preference of female consumers in the greater Colombo region.

NUNTASAREE SUKAT<sup>10</sup> (2009) in this article "A model of male consumer behaviour in buying skin care products in Thailand" The study purpose of the research was evaluated in some depth the phenomena of male consumer behaviour in buying skin care products in Thailand. In order to cope with the research purpose, Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action model is employed as a theoretical framework and modified by adding the self-image construct. The research objective was find out the "To what extent do beliefs in product attribute, self-image, Normative influences, and attitudes toward applying skin care products, affect Thai male consumers' purchase intention and purchase behaviour in buying skin care products. The researcher was find out the result or confirm that beliefs, self-image, normative influences, and attitudes have impacts on purchase intention and purchase behaviour in buying skin care products among Bangkok male consumers.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**3.1 Research Design** This research is descriptive in nature as the study aims to find out the consumer behavior about soaps and detergents. The study is carried out the naturalistic observation and survey questioning, which are attributes of descriptive research.

**3.2 Data Collection technique** Collection of data for the purpose of the research study is in the form of primary data and secondary data, as the study being empirical in nature. Primary data includes expert's suggestions, executive's opinion, face-to-face interviews, and survey questionnaires. Questionnaires were collected based on the sampling technique from consumer behaviour about Soaps and Detergents.

The interviews that took take place with the consumer. Further, secondary data sources include focus group transcripts, observation records, research related documents, published books, article, newspapers, published and unpublished research work of various institutions.

**3.3 Designing the Questionnaire** Questionnaire is designed by the researcher in such a way that there are several questions designed on the basis of scaling namely Likert Scales which have five scales like strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. This enables the respondent to answer the questions in a structured manner by choosing one option among the five options. It provides a sense of comfort by choosing the precise answers. Each construct has minimum five sub constructs related to the key factor of the main construct .

**3.4 Sampling Design** The sampling technique involved is Convenient Sampling. This study conducted in various place in Thajavur district and as the population is very high the researcher couldn't conduct a census study. Due to time constraint convenient sample was followed.

## 3.5 Sample size of the study

### 3.5.1 Sample size identification

Here are the formulas used in our Sample Size Calculator:

$$S_s = \frac{Z^2 \times (P) \times (1 - P)}{C^2}$$

Where:

Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

p = percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal

(.5 used for sample size needed)

c = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., .04 = ±4)

Determine Sample Size Confidence Level: 95% 99%

**Confidence Interval:** 0.5% **Population:** 2,402,781 (as per 2011 census)

**Sample size needed** 351(round off near hundred)

**Statistical tool applied**

Questionnaires were distributed and 400 samples were collected from the consumer. The verbal data in these questionnaires were transformed into numerical data using a software application called PASW statistics 18. Further, all the questionnaires were entered as values and different statistical tools like Percentage Analysis, and Mean Score.

**Table 1.2 Respondents brand of Toilet soap**

S.No.	Name of the product	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Lux	44	11
2.	Cinthol	72	18
3.	Hamam	84	21
4.	Lifebuoy	56	14
5.	Dettol	40	10
6.	Pears	32	8
7.	Dove	26	6.5
8.	Medimix	20	5
9.	Rexona	16	4
10.	Vivel	10	2.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

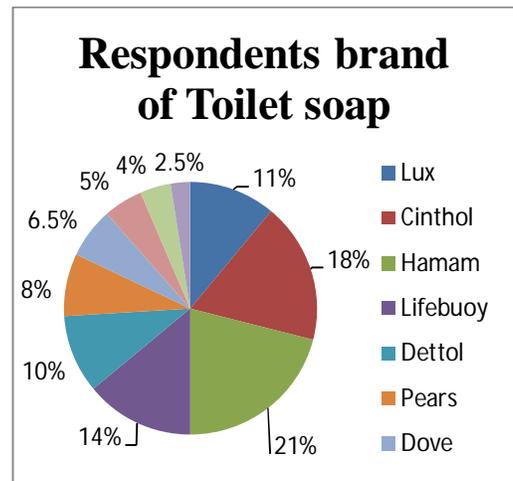
Table 1.2 shows various brands of Toilet soap used by the respondent. The above Table shows that majority of the respondent(21%) used Hamam soap then followed by Cinthol (18%) and Lux (11%).

**Table 1.1 Demographic profile of the respondent**

S.No.	Particular	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	168	42
		Female	232	58
2.	Age	18-28	132	33
		29-38	124	31
		39-48	88	22
		49-58	56	14
3.	Educational level	No Formal education	20	5
		School level	104	26
		UG	136	34
		PG	100	25
		Above PG	40	10
4.	Monthly Income	Below Rs.5000	32	8
		Rs.5000- 15000	88	22
		Rs.15001-25000	112	28
		Above Rs.25000	168	42

Source: Primary data

From the above table 1.1 it is inferred that majority of the respondent(58%) are female and belong to the age group of 18-28 (33%) and who have completed their higher education (34%) and earn monthly income above Rs.25000.(42%)

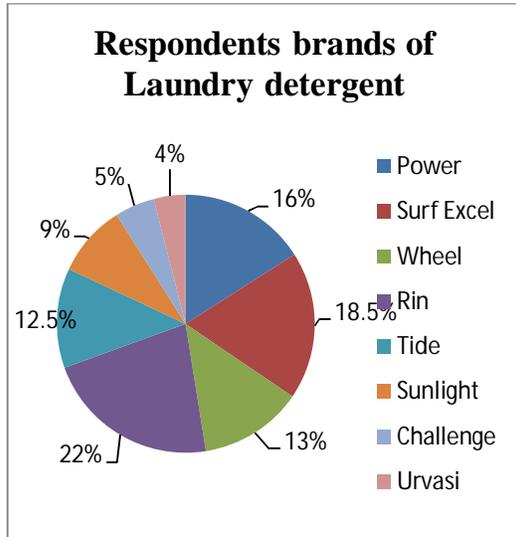


**Table 1.3 Respondents brands of Laundry detergent**

S.No	Name of the product	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Power	64	16
2.	Surf Excel	74	18.5
3.	Wheel	52	13
4.	Rin	88	22
5.	Tide	50	12.5
6.	Sunlight	36	9
7.	Challenge	20	5
8.	Urvasi	16	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source : primary data

Table 1.3 Shows various brands of Laundry Detergent used by the consumer. Through the table Rin detergent possessed 22% of the respondent as a highest in the rank then Surf Excel(18.5%), Power(16%) and so on.

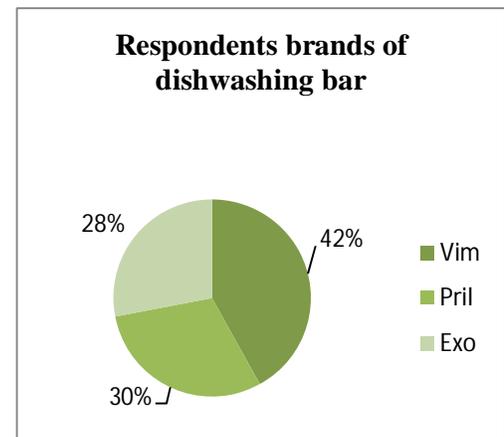


**Table 1.4 Respondents brands of dishwashing bar**

S.No	Name of the product	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Vim	168	42
2.	Pril	120	30
3.	Exo	112	28
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source : Primary data

Table 1.4 shows various brands of dishwashing bar used by the consumer. Vim possessed top most rank(42%) in the dishwashing segment.



**Table 1.5 Factors influencing Buying decision of respondent regard to Toilet Soap, Laundry Detergent and Dishwashing bar.**

S.No	Name of the product	Toilet soap		Laundry detergent		Dishwashing Bar	
		Garrett Score	Rank	Garrett Score	Rank	Garrett Score	Rank
1	Brand Name	62.36	1	62.67	1	62.83	1
2	Quality	57.02	2	57.07	2	56.50	3
3	Quantity	55.13	3	55.04	3	55.27	4
4	Price	54.79	4	55.01	4	57.21	2
5	Easy availability	53.37	5	53.27	5	52.18	5
6	Package	49.88	6	50.33	6	49.02	6
7	Trade Name	45.60	7	46.02	7	47.42	7
8	Date of Manufacturing	43.42	8	42.28	8	43.62	8
9	Transparent	40.57	9	39.39	9	39.46	9
10	Affordability	36.43	10	36.68	10	36.86	10

Source : Primary Data

From the above table 1.5 brand name is the most important factor influencing the consumer to make purchase decision.

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## FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

1. Through the study of consumer behavior of soaps and detergents most of the consumers make purchase decision on the basis of brand name, quality and their prices. So that the management should position their brand in a better way and to achieve quality and fix reasonable prices by proper training and development.
2. There are lot of competitors in the soap and detergent market so that the manufacturers are required to promote various sales promotional activities to survive in the market.
3. Introduce different package design and size to retain the existing consumer and attract new consumer.
4. Suitable channels are required to sustain the market.

## CONCLUSION

The Indian soap and detergent market is characterized by immense competition and high penetration levels. As a result of rapid urbanization the demand for better quality household product is constantly on a rise. There is a tremendous opportunity for the branded and quality product at a reasonable price to consumer.

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