



## Consumer Behaviour of Kitchenware Durables: A Study with Special Reference to Madanapalle Town in Andhra Pradesh

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### ABSTRACT

*Purchase of consumer durables is today, a major challenge before many families, especially those having a limited income. Within their income, such a family has to meet its obligatory needs and find ways to purchase items which are, today, being increasingly considered as essentials – and not luxuries. This phenomenon can be found ever in small towns. The increase in awareness levels of the residents can be attributed to either the influence of the media (mostly the print media) or through interaction with relatives, friends and neighbours. A significant issue is that the buyers are exercising their minds' and not blindly purchasing these items, simply because the dealer speaks highly about these. It is also seen that buyers are reasonably conscious about the reputation of the manufacturer. Since such items are quite costly, the consultation process - which may range between a few days (in case of relatively cheaper items) to even a year (in case of items like Mixer-grinders and refrigerators) - with a number of influential 'players' is almost imperative. This paper presents a detailed analysis of the purchase behaviour of selected respondents with regard to four durables- gas stoves, rice cookers, mixer grinders and refrigerators from Madanapalle town of Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh.*

**Keywords : Consumer Behaviour, Durable Products and Buying Decisions.**

### Introduction

One of the major challenges that a family with a limited income faces is regarding purchase of consumer durables. Such a family has to weigh several options, which include whether the item is really required and is within its budget. In many cases, it is a one-time purchase, involving relatively heavy expenditure. There is also the issue of competing brands vying for the customer's attention with all types of allurements like: facility for payment in instalments, gifts, tempting discounts, warranty, free home delivery and assured after-sales service.

At times, customers may be drawn into making impulsive purchases merely on account of attractive packaging, and persuasive salespersons. In the process, the family budget may go topsy-turvy. This paper seeks to understand the issues that have played a major part in arriving at the actual purchase decision regarding gas stoves, rice cookers, mixer-grinders and refrigerators by respondents in a small town (Madanapalle) in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh. All the four items have more than one manufacturer. Hence, the issue boils down to which of the products to buy.

Another aspect examined is the time gap between a need for the item being felt and the actual purchase. Yet another aspect studied is the person(s) whose opinion counts the most in such matters. The increasing reach of the Telugu print media in this town has also helped in spreading awareness about such durables. The responses about the most 'influential' magazines/newspapers are also analysed. It can be seen from the study that it is not a totally 'sellers' market and that the potential customers are considering a number of factors, before taking the final purchase decision.

Consumer behaviour, as a part of the large field of human behaviour, is a relatively new field of study. It seeks to understand and predict human actions in the entire purchasing process – right from feeling the need for an item, conducting a market survey of the available brands and the nearby dealers, choosing from among the competing brands (after

considering issues like the price and features and facilities offered), budgeting for the item and then making the actual purchase. Consumer durables differ from the non-durable ones in a number of aspects. The most important is the relative degree of longevity of the items. In the case of non-durables, the consumer has the option of going in for a different brand once the item procured is consumed. Durables have the issue of newer versions (as in the case of computers and automobiles) appearing in the market. Yet another important issue is the relatively high price of the durable items.

### NEED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The prices of durables will be different from that of non-durables, since the quantum of funds invested is huge enough, which warrants more rational decisions. With growing awareness among the citizens, even the residents of small towns and villages are showing interest in acquiring items which were earlier considered as luxuries. Considering that a significant proportion of our country's population resides in such areas, marketers have before them a market that has not been fully tapped. An understanding of the psyche and factors that trigger purchase decisions would be of tremendous help to sellers of durable (and even non-durable) items. This paper attempts to examine this and other related issues.

Marketing is seen as the whole business from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer's point of view (Peter Drucker, 1986). The consumer is king in the age of consumerism (McGuire, 2000). The term consumer behaviour can be defined "the behaviour of consumers in deciding to buy or use or not to buy or use or dispose or not to dispose of the products which satisfy their needs" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1995, Chunawalla, 2000, Solomon, et al, 2001). Moreover, one of the key analyses under the heading "consumer behaviour" refers to the interaction between price changes of products and consumer demand too (<http://www.bized.ac.uk/fme>). It reflects in their search for different products of different level of their involvement required to purchase and consume. Looking at this classification of products by the con-

sumption patterns, buying of the durable goods needs higher attention and involvement of consumers. In most instances, durables goods are expected to last longer than three years ([www.wisecon.org/OnlineGuide](http://www.wisecon.org/OnlineGuide)). This characteristic of the consumer's behaviour towards durable goods, makes it a more suitable and appropriate behaviour to study.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to know the brand preference of select consumer respondents while purchasing durable products like gas stoves, rice cookers, mixer-grinders and refrigerators. The study also examines the behavior pattern and the persons and others who have played a major role in determine the particular brand to the purchased.

### METHODOLOGY

The present study is purely based on the primary data collected directly from the consumers of select consumer durables in Madanapalle town. The required information was gathered by administering a questionnaire among the sample respondents. Care was taken to make the same as representative as possible, by including respondents of different age groups, income levels and educational status.

The quota sampling method was adapted to draw a sample size of 100 respondents. Ward-wise household list, made available by municipal administrative authorities, was consulted. While selecting the consumer households, only those households possessing all the four products were included in the sample.

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Of the 100 respondents, 84 belong to the age group up to 45 years and the others, to the above this age group. Of these, 30 each are either professionals or Government servants, the balance 30 are business persons and teachers 30, agriculturalist 5 and others 5. The majority (70 percent) hold a graduate degree and the rest are at least matriculates. Most of the respondents (70 percent) are residing in nuclear families, while the rest continue to stay in joint families. The respondents' preferences of different brands towards gas stove are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Respondents' Preferences for Different Brands of Gas Stoves**

S.No	Brands	No. of Respondents
1	Pigeon	26
2	BPL	26
3	Laxmi	26
4	Vintage	22
Total		100

**Source: Primary Data**

It can be seen from Table 1, an equal (26 per cent each) of respondents preferred Pigeon, BPL and Laxmi brands and only 22 per cent of them preferred to go for the Vintage brand. It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents have shown interest towards buying popular brands only. The respondents' preferences for different brands of rice cookers are presented in Table 2

**Table 2**  
**Respondents' Preferences for Different Brands of Rice Cookers**

S.No	Brands	No. of Respondents
1	Panasonic	26
2	Prestige	32
3	Birla	26
4	Polar	16
Total		100

**Source: Primary Data**

It can be seen from the Table 2 that majority of the respondents (32 per cent) had preferred to buy Prestige rice cookers. An equal number of them (29 per cent) opted for Panasonic and Birla brands. It can be concluded that majority of the respondents have preferred to purchase rice cookers of popular brands, namely, Prestige, Panasonic and Birla. The respondents' preferences for different brands of mixer grinders are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Respondents' Preferences for Different Brands of Mixer-Grinders**

S.No	Brands	No. of Respondents
1	Butterfly	28
2	Prestige	26
3	Polar	24
4	Khaitan	22
Total		100

**Source: Primary Data**

It is evident from the Table 3 that the maximum number of respondents (28 per cent) had preferred to buy Mixer Grinder of Butterfly Company, followed by Prestige (26 per cent), Polar (24 per cent) and Khaitan (22 per cent). From the above analysis, it can be concluded that 54 per cent of respondents have opted for the two brands, i.e., Butterfly and Prestige. The respondents' preferences for different brands of refrigerators are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Respondents' Preferences for Different Brands of Refrigerators**

S.No	Brands	No. of Respondents
1	Godrej	30
2	Allwyn	24
3	Kelvinator	24
4	Voltas	22
Total		100

**Source: Primary Data**

It can be seen from the above Table that the largest number of respondents (30 per cent) had preferred to buy refrigerators of Godrej Company, followed by Allwyn and Kelvinator (24 per cent each). It is clear that three brands, namely, Godrej, Allwyn, and Kelvinator have commanded the largest market share (78 per cent) among the respondents. This establishes the fact that even in a relatively small town like Madanapalli, buyers are more inclined towards the established brands than the relatively new entrants.

### Time gap between the need recognition for a particular durable product and actual purchase

Since all the four items are quite costly, especially for those belonging to low and middle income groups, the element of impulsive buying would be marginal. Also even among the four items, Mixer-Grinders and Refrigerators are relatively costly, as compared to the other two. Hence, the former two items would need a longer time span, more so since funds for buying these have to be arranged and opinions of others on the 'best – buy' have to be sought. The researchers sought to categorise the items into: most essential (gas stoves) essential (rice cookers) and luxuries (mixer-grinders and refrigerators). The time gap between the need recognition and actual purchase towards the actual purchase of kitchenware durables is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 The time gap between the need recognition and actual purchase of the kitchenware durables											
No. Of Respondents											
Gas Stove			Rice Cooker			Mixer Grinder			Refrigerator		
Time gap between need Recognition actual Purchase (in days)	No. of Respondents	Total Percentage	Time gap Between need Recognition and actual Purchase (in days)	No. of Respondents	Total Percentage	Time gap Between actual Purchase (in months)	No. of Responders	Total Percentage	Time gap Between Actual Purchase (in months)	No. of Respondents	Total Percentage
0 - 2 days	30	30	0- 2 days	30	30	1 Month	30	30	1 Month	30	30
3 -5 days	30	30	3 -5 days	20	20	3 months	26	26	3 months	26	26
6-8 days	30	30	6- 8 days	30	30	6 months	24	24	6 months	24	24
Above – 8 days	10	10	Above – 8 days	20	20	Year	20	20	Year	20	20
Total	100	100	Total	100	100	Total	100	100	Total	100	100

### Source: Primary Data

As can be seen from Table 5, gas stoves, need the less time span, followed by rice cookers (since most of the respondents are essentially rice eaters) and mixer-grinders and refrigerators. The time gap between the felt need and actual purchase can be summarised, as under:

- Gas stoves:** the largest numbers of the respondents (90 per cent) were able to make the purchase within eight days of deciding to purchase the item.
- Rice cookers:** Here too, the majority of the respondents (80 per cent) purchased the item with eight days of the felt need.
- Mixer-Grinders:** Since this item is relatively costlier, the time span could extend to months. Still, it emerged that (80 per cent) of the respondents purchased these items within six months.
- Refrigerator:** This is the costliest of the durable goods still it could be seen that (80 per cent) of the respondents bought their items within six months for it Influence of family members on the purchase decision in shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
Influence of Family Members on the Purchase Decision

Gas Stove			Rice Cooker		Mixer Grinder		Refrigerator	
Family Members	No. of Respondents	Total Percentage	No. of Respondents	Total Percentage	No. of Respondents	Total Percentage	No. of Respondents	Total Percentage
Spouse (Wife / Husband)	50	50	46	46	52	52	44	44
Son	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Daughter	22	22	24	24	28	28	26	26
Other Family Members	28	28	30	30	20	20	30	30
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

### Source: Primary Data

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