

Studies on Consumer Awareness of Milk

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Marketing concept starts with the customer needs and ends in customer behavior in meeting these needs. Every action of a person is based on needs. The real problem is to learn what a customer takes into consideration when he chooses a particular brand. Such a study is concerned with customer behavior. Customer/buyer behavior is that subset of human behavior that is concerned with decision and acts of individuals in purchasing and using products or services. Before studying about consumer behavior, it is essential to understand first who a consumer is. According to Cravens, Hills and Woodruff, "Consumers are people in families and other kinds of households who buy and use products and services in order to satisfy their personal needs and wants" According to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong, consumers are "all the individuals and households who buy or acquire goods and services for personal consumption" from these definitions, it is clear that a consumer buys for his own personal and family consumption.

Consumer Behavior

The study of consumer behavior is the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources on consumption related items. It includes the study of What they buy? When they buy? Where and how they buy? According to **Ostrow and Smith**, consumer behavior means "Actions of consumers in the market place and the underlying motives for those actions"

According to **Kotler and Armstrong** "Consumer buying behavior refers to the buying behavior of final consumer's individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption"

The studies which are proposed by research are based on the empirical data at small and large scale level. Therefore an attempt has been made in this area to review the available literature on the research topic. The collected review of literature on the topic is presented under the following captions.

1. Customer satisfaction
2. Customer taste and preference
3. Channels of distribution
4. Customer loyalty

Prasanna (2003)¹ carried out a study on customer satisfaction rate towards Aavin milk in Coimbatore. The non-probability convenience sampling was adopted to draw a sample of 150 respondents. The study focused on ascertaining consumer preference in purchase of Aavin brand of milk and analyzing the perceived differences of various brands of milk on key attributes and also on identifying measures for improving customer satisfaction. Purity, taste, thickness, availability, price, service of agents and place of purchase were the criteria used in the study. It was found that Aavin brand was rated high for purity, taste and thickness. Attributes like availability, price and service of agents were also rated good. Other milk brands like Arokya and Amirtha rated the best for the purity and taste respectively. For all the brands price and service of the agents were rated best.

Rajendran, Mohanty and Samarendu (2004)² their study on "Dairy Co-operatives and Milk Marketing in India: Constraints and Opportunities" indicated that, 80 percent of the milk produced by the rural producer is handled by an unorganized sector and the remaining 20 percent is handled by an organized sector. It is found that the dairy co-operatives play a vital role in alleviating rural poverty by augmenting rural milk production and marketing. Involvement of intermediaries; lack of bargaining power by the producers; and lack of infrastructure facilities for collection, storage, transportation and processing are the major constraints which affect the prices received by producers in milk marketing. Milk quality, product development, infrastructure support development, and global marketing are found to be future challenges of India's milk marketing.

V.Kubendran and T.Vanniyarajan (2005)³ made a comparative analysis of rural and urban consumers on milk consumption. The impact of socio-economic profile of the consumers namely income status, occupational position, educational level, sex, age and region was analyzed using purposive sampling method. It was found that consumers of milk in rural areas fall behind the consumers in urban areas. The urban consumers were found to prefer branded milk especially Aavin milk whereas the rural consumer preferred mostly unbranded milks. It was hence suggested to discriminate the marketing strategies to position the product in the two different markets.

Sangu, Gupta and Kumar (2006)⁴ in their study entitled "Milk disposal and consumption pattern by milk producers in Western Uttar Pradesh" revealed that much stock size, productivity of animals, milk production, milk flow towards milk vendors, total consumption and conversion of retained milk into products was positively associated with land holding size, while the share of milk used in fluid form was negatively associated with landholding size.

Shiralashetti and Hugar (2007)⁵ in his article titled "Consumer Satisfaction with Special Reference to Milk Consumers in Gadag City" points out that more number of unpasteurized milk consumers' satisfaction level is high compared to pasteurized milk consumers towards quality, price and taste whereas it is the reverse towards supply of milk in the study area. The effectiveness of marketing management depends on the effectiveness in consumer satisfaction, as the consumer satisfaction is the main objective of marketing management. Therefore, the marketing management of pasteurized milk suppliers must go for regular consumer satisfaction survey to adopt appropriate marketing strategy at right time to enhance their effectiveness in satisfying the consumers of milk.

CumaAkbay and Tiryaki (2008)⁶ in their study entitled "Unpacked and packed fluid milk consumption patterns" suggest that unpacked fluid milk preference is related positively to household size, income and age of the household head, and negatively to education level of the household head and status of the household wife. Similarly, pasteurized and sterilized fluid milk preferences are related positively to income and the education level of the household head, and negatively to household size and age of the household head. Results from these analyses are used to suggest techniques for marketing fluid milk products to specific segments of the consumer population

Feroze, Verma and Sawhney (2008)⁷ in their study on "Economic Analysis and Milk Utilization Pattern: A Case Study of a Cooperative Milk Plant in Haryana", found that, the milk plants channelize the milk produced in rural areas towards the 'consumption pocket' to maintain the demand supply equilibrium and act as incentive for enhanced milk production. Milk being perishable commodity, its processing is the best alternative to enhance its quality and also increase the value of the product at each stage. There is need for proper planning to decide the product-mix and level of production for various products to become profitable and viable.

Bai, Junfei, McCluskey, Jill and Wahl (2008)⁸ in their study titled "Fluid Milk Consumption in Urban Qingdao, China" revealed that, the effect of increased income on milk consumption is positive, as expected. The expansion of modern food retailers also appears to play a positive role by facilitating consumers fluid milk consumption and influencing their food shopping patterns. The young and old consume significantly more fluid milk than the middle-aged. Health consciousness of the elderly and the openness of youth to new foods appear to be fueling these consumption patterns. If the findings of this study apply to other urban regions in China, then as urbanization continues so also will the trend of increasing fluid milk consumption in china.

Waheed Akhter (2011)⁹ Brand image is the important factor which contribute for a company in terms of brand equity and it also play vital role in creation of customer loyalty. Although it's not necessary that only because of brand image a customer can be retain. There can be too many other factors which can contribute towards customer retention and loyalty and these factors can vary from product to product and market to market.

Hossein Nezakati (2011)¹⁰ most of the companies not just only emphasize on their promotion but there are also the brand characteristics which can influence customer loyalty. Price and product quality becomes the prior elements in customer loyalty in brand characteristics. Customer loyalty develops on the basis of price and quality as these are the initial factors for considering a product for purchase again and again.

Deepa Ingaval and Thakar (2012)¹¹ made a study on customer preference for milk and milk products. The objectives of their study is to identify the customer preference towards the milk and milk products, to identify the reasons for change in the purchase decision and to find out the most preferred place for product purchase. The study revealed that the customers preferred packaged branded milk and milk products over a period of time from 1991 to 2006. The change in purchase decision was due to marketing factors such as availability, advertisement, product quality and price of the products. It was also revealed that grocery shops, bakeries and sweet markets were the preferred place of purchase of dairy products, some of them preferred to purchase from company outlets and milk shoppers.

Parag A. Inamdar, (2013)¹² in his study of “Consumer Protection - A Study of Consumer Awareness in Mumbai City District” found that 32% consumers were aware about the consumer protection law and 68% were not about such protection law and 14.6% know the procedure of filing a complaint in consumer courts and 85.4% does not know the procedure of filing a complaint in consumer courts.

Pushpa, M. and Senthilvasan, K.G. (2013)¹³ in their study “A Study on Consumer Awareness among the People in Palani Town” reveals that a vast majority of consumers in our country lack Consumer Education particularly those in rural areas who are easily subject to exploitation and for this purpose there must be practical support on the part of the Government, non- Government organizations, business and corporate Entities, consumer protection department and educational research institution.

Consumer awareness is mainly focus on quality of the product, price of the product, brand of the product. Consumer satisfaction, consumer preference towards the product, product distribution that is channels of distribution and customer loyalty is the major area to satisfy the customer. Consumerism is essentially a social movement started to secure more rights for the buyers. It requires the marketers to give greater attention to protect the interest of the consumers. In the western countries, the consumer movement focuses on such rights of the buyers as the right to choose, the right to safety and the right to be informed and heard. The movement of consumers is need to countries like India to protect the interest the buyers against such unethical practices of marketers, such as adulteration, high price, quantity loss and so on.

Creating awareness among the consumers on the precautions they should take while buying is one of the objectives of the consumer movement. The need to buy standardized products from authorized sellers will be stressed. Once a buyer becomes a victim to the fraudulent activity of markers all efforts need to be taken to protect his interest. This is yet at another objective of the consumer movement. Consumer movement is not something started against the seller’s interest. It goal is to safeguard the interest of the buyers and remind the sellers of their duty to adopt ethical business practices.

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