

“A Study on Buying Behavior towards Ready to Cook Food among Working Women with Special Reference to Ranni Taluk”

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Abstract— In India, the most of the consumption is still at home. But with the time, convenience food consumption is increasing due to increase in urbanization, breaking up of the traditional joint family system, desire for quality, shortage of time, increasing number of working women, rise in percapita income, changing lifestyles and increasing level of affluence in the middle income group had brought about changes in food habits. The high speed and type constrained lifestyle of many consumers has forced to the rise of the convenience food industry and its significant influence on society's food consumption behaviors. Consequently the food industry in India will face a rising demand for ready to cook food products. Ready to Cook foods can be defined as a food product which is beneficial to the consumer during any of the meal preparation and consumption stages: planning, storing, preparation, eating and disposal/tidy –up. This means a product which can be easily obtained, prepared, stored, served, or eaten, thus proving to be convenient by saving time, physical energy and mental energy.

Keywords— Ready to Cook Foods, Buying Behavior, Working Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

The demand for ready to cook foods in the India has been boosted by the elevated female involvement in the labourforce. The term ‘mother is at home cooking food’ seems to be disappearing because these mothers are now gone out of kitchens and homes to get their career settled. Since providing meals and securing family health are traditionally been the responsibility of women, but their employment has reduced the time available for household work. The high work pressure felt by working women has resulted in more use of convenient food products. During week days, time would be one of the constraints in preparing food; hence convenient food would be the solution to the time constrained women.

The food consumption behaviour of each household varies by differences in the socio-economic characteristics and income structure, but also by the value of the homemaker's time. Food preparation and consumption occupy scarce time, and households may choose between prepared food at home and food away from home. The need of at –home convenience foods has been driven by the division of labour in food preparation. Traditionally, household cooked most of their food at home and consumes it at home. But now marketers are providing such type of foods to the consumers where most of the preparation work has been done outside home.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The relevance and importance of understanding the consumer behaviour is rooted in the modern marketing concept, it means that the manufacturer's attention has switched over from the products to the consumers and specially concentrated on the consumer behaviour, the manufacturers possess no control over the behavior of consumers. Today women are not only playing the role of hardcore housewife; they are also playing a different role of ‘chief purchasing officer’ and controlling 85% of buying decisions. Most of the women are employed and they want to save time in

cooking and yet maintain natural taste. In this modern era, ready to cook food products plays a vital role in satisfying this attitude of modern women. In this context, a study on women buying behaviour on ready to cook food is deemed to be important.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most of the women are employed and they want to save time in cooking and yet maintain natural taste. In this modern era, ready to cook food products plays a vital role in satisfying this attitude of modern women. The advantage of ready to cook food product is that they have changed the life style of urban population and also rural people with the help of mass communication and advertisement. Apart from large number of products, selection of the products plays a major role. This study highlight the awareness of the consumers towards the product and factors that influence in purchasing the ready to cook food products.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify consumer's attitude towards Ready to Cook (RTC) food among women.
- To analyze whether the family income level can influence the consumption of RTC foods.
- To analyze the factors which influence the purchase of RTC Food products.
- To identify the most preferred brands in the RTC food Products among women.
- To find out the reasons for resistance of using RTC Foods.

HYPOTHESIS

- There is no significant relationship between Income and Frequency of consumption of Ready to Cook (RTC) products

SOURCES OF DATA

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data includes the collection of information from the selected respondents by the help of questionnaire. The secondary data covers the published book reports, websites etc.

SAMPLE DESIGN

For the purpose of study, Ranni Taluk in Pathanamthita district is selected. Convenient sampling method was adopted. 60 respondents were selected.

V. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study about 'The Consumer buying behavior towards Ready to Cook Food among women with Special Reference to Ranni Taluk' is mainly analytical in nature. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. When compared with secondary sources, primary sources form the major part of the data, which were collected by using a well-designed and structured questionnaire. Secondary data are collected from books, journals, and websites were used for the overall study.

VI. TECHNIQUE FOR ANALYSIS

Data collected have been analyzed by using both mathematical and statistical tools and also presented by means of tables and diagrams. Statistical techniques such as percentage analysis, LIKERT'S scaling technique, ranking method, statistical graph and statistical tools like Chi-square test are used. The hypothesis tested with the help of "Chi-square".

VII. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**Consumer Buying Behavior towards Ready to Cook Products**

The Ready-to-cook Industry in India and Consumers food choice: Due to Change in lifestyle and FII investment there is a drastic change in Indian culture and food habits. Most of the family members doesn't have time to cook the food in traditional way and most of the families are living in separate environment. Despite modern cooking devices, consumers still need ready-to-eat/cook food because it consumes very less time. The change in lifestyle and dual income consumers prefer these types of products. The products may vary from noodles, pasta, masala packages, stuffed paratha, etc... And many more.. Other than national player like nestle, PepsiCo, ITC, haldiram's, cavinkare, there are many regional players who is making foray into ready-to-eat segment. Rapid urbanization is also one of the reasons for people to buy such products. Consumers make purchase decisions on the basis of several criteria including brand, quality, price etc. These criteria with many other factors like social, demographics, psychographic, lifestyle, etc influence the purchase decision of consumer of ready to cook (RTC) packaged foods. Consumers purchasing decisions take place over a period of time. The overall goal during this decision process is to evaluate various alternatives and choose the product that satisfies the consumer in an optimal way. Consumers get influenced by several major factors while they make their decisions. These factors can be grouped as social, cultural, psychological, and personal factors. In addition, increase in the number and variety of goods, stores, and shopping malls, and the availability of multi component products and electronic purchasing capabilities have broadened the sphere for consumer choice and led to complicated decision making. There are peoples, who are migrating to cities for job and education and these people have find the Ready-to-eat products are comfortable to eat rather than depending on restaurants. Most of the dual income (both husband and wife are office goers) families want to spend much less time on cooking because of less availability of time. During weekends they want to spend time with their kids and outing, whereas in weekdays the office duration is large and these factors forced them to go for buying such products. Other factors that are influencing these products are availability of different flavours and dishes. Consumers who are looking for different dishes and flavours now depend on these products. This products brings variety to their eating's and palatable too. There is no conclusion which one precedes-whether the availability or taste or time constraint, all these factors complement each other in driving these products.

When India becomes the hub of many multinationals and there is a rapid change in people lifestyles. Modernization, majority of young population, knowledgeable consumers, will make an impact on these products. Due to raise in literary levels, proliferation of communication technology, consumers are becoming more aware of the foods they intake and they take decision based on the wealth of resources available. More than male, the female consumers shown much interest in knowing the level of calories, ingredients and certain product approval certificates in choosing the products. This shows a good sign of healthy generation in India, especially in the age group of 20-40. Females are also weight conscious and they decide the products based on their consciousness.

Often, house wives become the major influential factors in deciding the food products for the whole family. They now go for purchasing high fibre, low calories and nutrition rich products for their family protection. Advertisements about these products are also becomes a major factor in deciding these products. Level of obesity is on the rise of Indian population and on one side consumers are becoming awareness of the food they intake and on the other side consumers are carried away by advertisements information and packaging styles. Since ready to cook packaged food has met a stiff resistance on health grounds, the decision maker in the family is also an important aspect. Prior research in this area has found that mothers make the purchasing decisions for monthly food expenditures

of the family however; fathers carry out the act of purchasing. Promotional activities such as commercials, new product development efforts, packaging, pricing & distribution strategies all play a significant role in determining the person that makes the purchasing decision in the family. Consumer decision-making behaviour can be explained by eight central decision-making dimensions that influence a consumer's decision making behaviour. The eight decision-making style dimensions were perfectionism/high-quality consciousness, brand consciousness, novelty consciousness, price/value consciousness, impulsive/careless shoppers, recreational and hedonistic shopping consciousness, confused by over-choice shoppers, and habitual and brand/store loyal shoppers.

Finally, the evaluation of appropriate goods and services depend upon the relative price, value for money, convenience, service and other factors. Kotler (2003) stated that effective marketing mix helped the ready to cook foods retail companies to get the success. The last phase with the consumer buying behavior is concerned with the post purchase behavior of the consumers. Precisely, the consumers judged the ability of the products towards satisfying the needs. This is judged by the performance, value for money and the level of satisfaction received from using or consuming the products.

VIII. ANALYSIS OF DATA

1. Opinion on managing home when meals are not cooked

The study says that that majority of respondents pick up a ready to cook food with almost 66.67%,26.67% visit a restaurant and only 6.66% order food when meals are not cooked at home.

2. Frequency of buying Ready To Cook(RTC) foods

From the study it is clear that 63.33% purchase ready to cook foods weekly ,16.67% buy it rarely ,13.33% buy it monthly and 6.67% purchase it daily.

3. Awareness of respondents on RTC foods

Table .1 Table showing Awareness of respondents on RTC foods

Sl.No	RTC Foods	Yes		No		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Noodles /Pasta/Soups	60	100		-	60	100
2	Idli /Dosa mix	56	93.33	4	6.67	60	100
3	Canned meats /Chicken nuggets	36	60	24	40	60	100
4	Cake /ice-cream/falooda/gulab jamun mix	56	93.33	4	6.67	60	100
5	Chat mix(Bhelpuri)	30	50	30	50	60	100
6	Biryani mix	48	80	12	20	60	100
7	Indian breads(chappathy,nan,porota etc.,)	54	90	6	10	60	100
8	Masala rice	32	53.33	28	46.67	60	100
9	Avial mix	30	50	30	50	60	100
10	Payasam mix	54	90	6	10	60	100

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table,it is clear that, out of 60 respondents ,100% of respondents are aware about Noodles/pasta/soups.93.33% are aware on idle/dosa mix and only 6.67% are not aware about it.60% are aware and 40% arenot aware about canned meats/chicken nuggets.93.33%are aware and 6.67% are not aware about cake/ice

cream /falooda/gulab jamun mix. Out of total respondents half of the respondents are aware and other half are not aware about chat mix. 80% are aware and 20% are not aware about biriyani mix. Out of total respondents, 90% are aware about Indian breads like chappathy, nan, porota etc., and remaining 10% are not. Respondents are aware and not aware about masala rice with 53.33% and 46.67% respectively. Half of the respondents are aware about avail mix, and at the same time other half not. 90% of respondents are aware and remaining 10% are not aware about payasam mix.

4. Preference for consumption of RTC foods

The study shows that 36.67% of respondents prefer RTC foods for snacks, 33.33% prefer it for breakfast, 26.67% prefer it for dinner and only 3.33% prefer it as lunch.

5. Opinion on influence of RTC food on food habits

The study reveals that, 46.67% of the respondents are moderately affected, 3.3% are highly affected, 16.67% have neutral opinion, 26.67% are less affected and 6.66% are not at all affected.

6. Place of consumption of RTC foods

It is clear that a majority of respondent's usual place of consumption is at home with almost 73.33%. 20% use at the time of travel and only 6.67% use RTC foods at workplace.

7. Factors to be considered while buying Ready to Cook Foods

Table.2 Table showing computation value based on rank

Factors	Rank (Score)										Index	Rank
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
Cost saving	10	27	40	21	36	25	-	3	6	3	171	5
Quality	50	18	8	7	12	15	12	9	6	7	144	6
Taste	30	54	48	28	24	20	8	3	-	-	215	2
Hectic lifestyle	70	36	32	21	-	15	8	6	-	5	193	4
Influence of children	20	36	24	42	36	20	12	3	-	1	194	3
Convenience	130	63	32	-	18	5	-	-	4	-	252	1
Nutrition	-	-	16	21	6	-	32	24	10	3	112	9
Advertisement	-	18	8	21	18	20	16	15	14	1	131	8
Lack of cooking skill	-	-	16	28	12	10	16	9	14	6	111	10
Habitual	-	18	16	21	12	20	16	18	8	3	132	7

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

The major factors taken into account by the respondents before buying ready to cook foods have been studied by arranging and ranking them on the basis of their importance. 10 factors have been considered for analysis and composite index numbers have been calculated. From the table it is clear that most important factor considered by the respondents before buying RTC food is the convenience with 252 points. Respondents give 2nd preference to taste and give 3rd rank for influence of children. Respondents give 4th position to hectic lifestyle. And 5th position for cost saving. Quality is given as 6th factor, while 7th rank is given to habitual. Advertisement is given as 8th rank while buying RTC food and 9th rank given to nutrition value of RTC food. Lack of cooking skill factor get last position with 111 points.

8. Opinion on Ready to Cook Food

INTERPRETATION

a) RTC foods saves a lot of time &effort: 36 out of 60 respondents have strong agreement to this statement. The computed value as per the Likert’s scaling technique is 274 and score in the 5 point scale is 4.57, which is very closer to the value assigned to the statement agreed. Hence we can conclude that most of the statement that RTC foods saves a lot of time &effort.

Table.3 Table showing computation by using LIKERT’S scale

b) RTC food pack has sufficient quantity:26 out of 60 respondents agree to the statement. The computed value as per the Likert’s scaling technique is 184 and score in the 5 point scale 3.07.Hence the respondents agree to the statement that RTC food pack has sufficient quantity.

Sl. No	Opinion	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Average score
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
a)	Saves lot of time &effort	180	88	6	-	-	274	4.57
b)	Pack has sufficient Quantity	20	104	18	36	6	184	3.07
c)	Easily available in the market	10	176	42	-	-	228	3.8
d)	RTC pack is value for Money	10	64	78	32	-	184	3.07
e)	No health problem due to consumption of RTC food	-	16	36	52	18	122	2.03
f)	RTC food is not as tasty/ fresh	60	32	72	16	8	188	3.13
g)	Keep best quality Standards	20	64	72	20	6	182	3.03
h)	RTC foods are nutritious	-	40	54	44	10	148	2.47

c) Easily available in the market: Majority i.e. 44 out of 60 respondents agree to this statement. The computed value as per the Likert’s scaling technique is 228 and score i.e. 3.8 since the score is above 3 it can be concluded that according to them it is easily available in the market.

d)RTC pack is value for money: Out of 60 respondents ,26 respondents have neutral opinion, while respondents have agree to the statement and another 16 respondents have disagree to the statement. The computed value as per Likert’s scaling technique is 184 and score is 3.07.So it is clear that respondents were neutrally agreed to the statement.

e) No health problem due to the consumption of RTC foods: Out of 60respondents, 26 respondents disagree to the statement, while 18 respondents strongly disagree to the statement. The computed value as per scaling technique is 122 and score is 2.03. Hence we can conclude that a respondent says consumption of RTC food cause health problem.

f) RTC food is not as tasty /fresh: 24 out of 60 respondents have neutral opinion on this statement. The computed value as per Likert’s scaling technique is 188 and score is 3.13. So it is clear that most of the respondents were inefficient to the statement, they neutrally agree to the statement.

g) Keep best quality standards: Out of 60 respondents, 24 respondents have neutral opinion on the statement. While 19 respondents agree to the statement, 10 respondents disagree the statement, 6 respondents strongly disagree and 4 respondents strongly agree to the statement. The computed value as per Likert’s scaling technique is 182 and score is just 3.03, so it is clear that respondents were neutrally agreed to the statement.

h) RTC foods are nutritious: Out of 60 respondents, 22 respondents disagree to the statement while 18 respondents have neutral opinion. 10 respondents agree to the statement and remaining 10 respondents strongly disagree to the statement. The computed value as per Likert’s scaling technique is 148 and score is 2.47. It is clear that they slightly disagree to the statement.

9. Influence of celebrity endorsement with regard to RTC food

60% of respondents says that, celebrity endorsement sometimes influence the use of RTC food and 40% of respondents says that it never affects RTC food habit. No one agrees that always it affects with regard to RTC food.

10. Buyers preference regard offers

It is clear that 66.67% buyers sometimes prefer RTC foods with offers.16.66% always prefer and the remaining 16.67% never any preference regard offers.

11. Opinion on price of RTC foods

it is clear that 40% of respondents says that price of RTC food is reasonable.33.33% says that it’s price is high and 26.67% of the opinion that it’s price is fair.

12. Brand preference of respondents

That 17% of respondents prefer MTR, 6% prefer Pillsbury, 42% prefer Nestle, 17% prefer ITC, 8% prefer Bakers, 3% prefer Quaker, 5% prefer Double horse and only 2% prefer Knor.

13. Anti-factors in buying of RTC products

It is clear that 92.31% of respondents resist RTC foods due to fear of health hazards on consumption of RTC foods and remaining 7.69% resist due to price factor. Other factors mayn’t have influence on resist of RTC foods.

14. Overall satisfaction towards RTC foods

Reveals that, 46.67% of respondents shows a neutral satisfaction, 40% are satisfied, 10% are highly satisfied, and 3, 33% are highly dissatisfied.

IX. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no significant relationship between Income and Frequency of consumption of Ready to Cook (RTC) products.

H1: There is significant relationship between Income and Frequency of consumption of Ready to Cook (RTC) products.

Table.4 Table showing Chi-square Values of relationship between Monthly family income and Frequency of consumption of RTC products

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E	
0	5	.2666	2.9332	2.0668	
5		2.6666			4.27166
2		.8			1.45631

1	5	1.8666	6.3332	-1.3332	1.7774	.28064
0		2.4				
2		1.2666				
10		12.6666		-2.6666	7.11075	.56137
2	12	3.8	12.6666	-.6666	.44435	.03508
10		8.8666				
14		11.4				
0	8	.1333	7.6665	.3335	.11122	.014507
1		1.3333				
1		.4				
2		.9333				
0		1.2				
0		.3333				
4		3.3333				
1	6	1	6.3333	-.3333	.111088	.01754
1		2.3333				
4		3				
$\Sigma(O-E)^2/E$						2.958427

Source: Primary Data

Chi-Square = $\Sigma (O-E)^2/E = 2.958427$

Degree of freedom = (n-1-loss of cell due to pooling)

= (20-1-13)

= 6

Level of Significance = 5% ie, 0.05

Table value = 12.592

Calculated value (2.958427) is less than the table value therefore we accept null hypothesis (H₀). Therefore the result is there is no significant relationship between income and frequency of consumption of RTC products.

9.1 FINDINGS

- Majority of respondents belongs to the age group of above 45 with almost 30%.
- Majority of respondents are housewives with 43.33%.
- A major part of respondents are from semi-urban area of about 60% and only 3.33% from urban area.
- Around 33.33% of respondents are earning a monthly income between 20000 and 30000.
- Out of the respondents, 80% are stay away from home.
- Majority of respondents pick up a Ready To Cook (RTC) food with almost 66.67%.
- 63.33% of respondents buy RTC products weekly.
- All the respondents are aware about RTC products.
- Most of the respondents believe that RTC products are easily available in the market.
- Majority of respondents using RTC foods as snack.
- 46.67% of respondents are moderately affected with use of RTC foods and highly affects only 3.33%.

- 56.67% of respondents prefer Indian cuisine.
- Majority of respondent's usual place of consumption is at home with almost 73.33%.
- Convenience is the major factor influencing the purchase of RTC products.
- Majority of respondents said that RTC foods save a lot of time & effort.
- It is clear that celebrity endorsement sometimes influence the use of RTC foods.
- Majority of buyers sometimes prefer RTC foods with offers.
- Price of RTC food is reasonable.
- Most of the respondents compare prices of similar brands when they shop.
- Half of the respondents are brand cautious & remaining half are not.
- Majority of respondents go to other shop, if the preferred brand is not available.
- NESTLE is the most preferred brand in RTC food products.
- More than half of the respondents are interested to continue with RTC products.
- Out of 43.33% of respondents, majority of respondents resist RTC foods as they are health conscious.
- Majority of respondents shows a neutral satisfaction towards RTC foods with 46.67%.
- After testing hypothesis, it is found that there is no significant relationship between income and frequency of consumption of RTC products.

9.2 SUGGESTIONS

- Customers started to realize the health hazards due to the consumption of ready to cook / packaged food. So the health issues of the consumers should also be given importance by using natural ingredients and preservatives accordingly with unique taste.
- More promotional activities like sponsorship programmes & distribution of free samples should be carried upon by regional brands to create awareness among women consumers.
- Most of the respondents have felt that the price of the ready to cook food product is high and if the products are reasonably priced, sales would shoot up.
- Eating whole, unprocessed food is smart health advice that we are squarely behind, but cooking from scratch can be unrealistic. So having RTC food is fine, however the pros parameters could be unfortunately less. However, taken the convenience and frequency matters, RTC foods can have a look into.
- A proper survey of the tastes and needs of women of various groups should be done in order to focus on the product development & marketing.

X. CONCLUSION

Today ready to cook food products occupy a legitimate place in the kitchen shelves. The dual roles of women shift their cooking behavior towards the buying of RTC foods. The present study has been carried out to study the attitude of women towards RTC food products. The interesting result is that the convenience is the most important factor which influences the attitude of women towards such products. Convenience, ready availability and saving of time are the reasons for consuming ready to cook food products. It was found in the study that there is a complete awareness of RTC food products among women and Nestle is the most preferred brand among RTC food products. Working women don't have enough time to prepare a meal by following the traditional recipes and would prefer to buy RTC food products. The consumers relationship with food & other everyday goods has changed dramatically, not only in the way products are purchased, but also in the way they are consumed. An understanding of the RTC food

consumption and women's attitude towards RTC foods helps marketers in understanding their and accordingly manufacture and market such product.

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