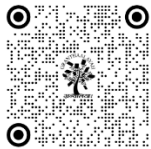


# CONSUMER BUYING PATTERNS FOR PERSONAL CARE FMCG PRODUCTS: A CASE STUDY OF SALEM TOWN

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## ABSTRACT

In today's competitive marketplace, consumers hold a dominant position as key decision-makers. The buying behaviour of Indian consumers has significantly evolved, especially in the context of the organized retail sector. Rapid shifts in consumer preferences are being driven by occupational changes, greater media exposure, and increased urbanization. Modern consumers prefer shopping, dining, and entertainment to be integrated under one roof, reflecting a desire for convenience and a holistic experience. With rising disposable incomes, consumers now face an abundance of choices across new product categories and shopping formats. They actively seek information before making purchases, aiming for informed decisions. Shopping has transformed from a routine task into an enjoyable and engaging activity. As consumer expectations rise, the Indian retail landscape is undergoing a dynamic transformation, requiring retailers to adapt by developing effective strategies that add value to the consumer experience. Retailers must assess both the driving forces and barriers in the marketplace. This includes identifying key growth drivers, understanding consumer demographics and expectations, and analysing the competitive environment. As a result, studying consumer behaviour has become a priority for retailers aiming to better meet the needs of their target audiences. This study specifically examines consumer behaviour towards select Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) in Erode town, with a focus on personal care products. Given the increasing number of companies and the growing variety of products available, it is essential for FMCG firms to closely study consumer behaviour. The research aims to understand consumer actions and attitudes at different stages—before, during, and after purchase—and to identify the key factors influencing their buying decisions in the personal care segment.

**Keywords:** Consumer Behaviour, FMCG Products, Personal Care, Retail Sector, and Purchase Decision



## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive market, consumers are the kings. They are the decision makers. The behaviour pattern of the Indian consumer has undergone a major change in the organized retail sector. The consumer landscape is changing very fast. Occupational changes and penetration of media have caused a significant change in the way the consumer spends his money. The consumer now wants to shop, eat and get entertained under the same roof. Consumers today see an exciting explosion of choices, new categories and new shopping options and have increasing disposable income to fulfil their aspirations. They are seeking more information to make these choices. Consumers are increasingly seeking convenience in shopping and want the shopping experience to be enjoyable. Shopping is no longer seen a mundane chore,

but it is now more exciting and keeps the prospect engaged. Consumer dynamics in India is changing, and the retailers need to take note of this and formulate their strategies and tactics to deliver value to the consumer. Therefore, each retailer needs to evaluate the enablers and deterrents in the retail marketplace. This primarily involves identifying the key drivers of growth, the consumer's profile and consumer's expectations. It also means evaluating the nature of competition and challenges in the marketplace. All these have led the retail sector to pay more attention to analyse the consumer behaviour in order to satisfy the target market's needs more effectively than its competitors.

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is one of the booming sectors of the Indian economy which has experienced outstanding growth in the past decade. This sector comprises of three main segments, which include personal care, household care, food and beverages. Personal care comprises of oral care, hair care, toiletries, soaps and cosmetics; household care comprises of fabric wash and household cleaners; and food and beverages include health beverages, soft drinks, cereals, dairy products, bakery products, chocolates etc., FMCG sector is an important contributor to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is also the fourth largest sector in the Indian economy, responsible for providing employment. This sector also creates employment for around three million people in downstream activities, which are generally carried out in smaller towns and rural India.

## **2. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

Consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals, groups and organizations. Select, buy and dispose of goods, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants. Consumer behaviour may be defined as the decision process and physical activity individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services. Several aspects of this statement need emphasis and elaboration so that their meaning can be more fully appreciated.

It is the process by which individuals search, select, purchase, use and dispose of goods and services in satisfaction of their needs and wants. Management is the youngest of sciences and oldest of arts and consumer behaviour in management is a very young discipline. Various scholars and academicians concentrated on it at a much later stage. It was during the 1950s, that marketing concept developed, and thus the need to study the behaviour of consumers was recognised. Marketing starts with the needs of the customer and ends with his satisfaction. When everything revolves round the customer, then the study of consumer behaviour becomes a necessity. It starts with the buying of goods. Goods can be bought individually, or in groups. Goods can be bought under stress (to satisfy an immediate need), for comfort and luxury in small quantities or in bulk. For all this, exchange is required. This exchange is usually between the seller and the buyer. It can also be between consumers.

In simple words, consumer behaviour can be defined as the set of activities and actions of consumer in purchasing and using goods and services. However, it involves a study of buying motives in order to examine the selection criteria of the consumers for the products they choose and what motivates them to behave as they do in the marketplaces. It focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources like time, money and effort on consumption related items. The manner in which the buyer will react to the marketer's strategy is what is known as buyer behaviour.

## **3. FMCG INDUSTRY**

Products which have a quick turnover, and relatively low cost are known as Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). FMCG products are those that get replaced within a year. FMCG generally includes wide range of frequently purchased consumer products such as toiletries, soap, cosmetics, tooth cleaning products, shaving products and detergents, as well as other non-durables such as glassware, bulbs, batteries, paper products, and plastic goods. FMCG also include pharmaceuticals, consumer electronics, packaged food products, soft drinks, tissue paper, and chocolate bars. Fast moving consumer goods are also known as Consumer-Packaged Goods (CPG).

## **4. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study focuses mainly on the consumer behaviour towards select Fast Moving Consumer Goods in Salem town, but with the prevailing trend, it is necessary to focus on the essence and emergence of vibrant in marketing efforts from the FMCG companies. Thus, with more number of companies entering into the rural and urban market, with a variety of products, it is a must for the companies to study the rural and urban consumer behaviour, on FMCG. This study will

highlight the consumer behaviour before purchase, at the time of purchase, post- purchase and factors influences the consumer behaviour towards purchase of FMCG products in particularly personal care products.

## 5. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), are products that are sold quickly at relatively low cost. The profit from these products is relatively very small and the selling is in large quantities, so the cumulative profit on such products can be large. The productions of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods companies have massive competition, and they are forced to find new ways of making money. They did this by learning the consumer common needs and buying motives, and to developing the solution. This is very difficult because of the consumers has different needs, different expectations and also a sea changes in the standard of living and lifestyles. At present, the consumers are more dynamic, their taste, preferences are also changing. The consumers are also looking product differentiation and the convenience offered. The consumer has certain expectation from branded items in terms of its quality, price and packaging. The money spent on advertisement makes the consumer aware of the latest brands in the market. The markets conditions in do does not assume an organized functioning pattern. The status of marketing needs to be understood in view of social dynamics and various economic and operational gap theories. Thus, appropriate planning for market in terms of trade for channel infrastructure, technology and behavioural dimensions needs greater emphasis for achieving better economic efficiency. The consumers are finding various problems in selecting their fast-moving consumer goods in particularly personal care products. In order to fulfil their expectation to know the consumer behaviour in the purchase decision of the personal care products. In this backdrop, it is identified that there is a need for research work in the field of consumer behaviour in purchase of personal care products in Salem town. At this juncture, the researcher was probed the following questions.

- What are the factors that are highly influence the purchase behaviour in the purchase decision of personal care products?
- What are the factors that are highly influence the consumer behaviour in the purchase decision of personal care products?
- What extent the FMCG consumers are satisfied in utilizing personal care products in Salem town?
- What are the problems faced by the consumers in utilizing FMCG personal care products?

## 6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives framed for the study:

- To analyse the consumer purchase behaviour towards personal care products in the study area.
- To determine the consumer behaviour towards purchase of personal care products in Salem town.
- To examine the consumer satisfaction towards FMCG personal care products in the study area.
- To find out the problems faced by the consumers while utilizing FMCG products in Salem town.
- To offer valuable suggestions and recommendations to FMCG companies as well as consumers to overcome the problems in utilizing personal care products from the research findings.

## 7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has been confined to Salem town, focusing exclusively on consumers residing in this area. To collect relevant information, both primary and secondary data were utilized. Primary data were gathered directly from respondents through structured questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained from books, journals, reports, and online sources to support and supplement the primary findings. The statistical technique employed for data analysis is the simple percentage method, which helps in understanding the distribution and trends among the collected responses in a clear and concise manner. A total of 150 respondents were selected as the sample size for this study. The sampling design adopted is convenience sampling, wherein respondents were chosen based on their availability and the ease of access for the researcher. The universe for the study consisted of consumers who use personal care products in Salem town, and the selection was made considering both the willingness of the respondents and the feasibility for the researcher.

## 8. FINDINGS

### 8.1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The demographic profile of the respondents was obtained by using five parameters namely gender, age, marital status, occupation and monthly income. The same is presented in the below Table.

### 8.2. GENDER

Out of the total 150 respondents, 95 (63%) are female and 55 (37%) are male. This indicates that a majority of the consumers using personal care products in Salem town are women, highlighting a greater inclination or involvement of females in personal care product usage.

### 8.3. AGE (IN YEARS)

The age distribution shows that the highest proportion of respondents, 55 (37%), falls in the 26–30 years category, followed by 39 (26%) in the 21–25 years category and 35 (23%) who are up to 20 years of age. Only 21 respondents (14%) are above 30 years.

This implies that personal care product consumption is more prominent among the younger population, particularly those between 21 and 30 years, suggesting that youth are more conscious about personal grooming and self-care.

### 8.4. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

**Table 1**

Factor	Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	55	37
	Female	95	63
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Age (in years)	Upto 20 years	35	23
	21 - 25 years	39	26
	26-30 years	55	37
	Above 30 years	21	14
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital Status	Married	82	55
	Single	68	45
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Occupation	Housewife and Agriculturist	22	15
	Business	10	7
	Private Employee	42	28
	Govt. Employee	25	17
	Student	51	33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Monthly Income (in Rs.)	Upto Rs.10000	36	24
	Rs.10001-15000	41	27
	Rs.15001-20000	54	36
	Above Rs.20000	19	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Primary Data

### 8.5. MARITAL STATUS

Among the respondents, 82 (55%) are married while 68 (45%) are single. The slight majority of married consumers indicates that both marital groups are actively involved in purchasing and using personal care products, though married individuals have a marginally higher representation.

## 8.6. OCCUPATION

In terms of occupation, students form the largest group with 51 respondents (33%), followed by private employees (28%) and government employees (17%). Housewives and agriculturists make up 15%, while businesspersons constitute the smallest group at 7%. This distribution suggests that students and working individuals are the major consumers, possibly due to a higher awareness and interest in personal care and grooming.

## 8.7. MONTHLY INCOME

With regard to income, the majority of respondents, 54 (36%), have a monthly income in the range of Rs. 15,001–20,000, followed by 41 (27%) earning Rs. 10,001–15,000. 36 respondents (24%) earn up to Rs. 10,000, and only 19 (13%) earn above Rs. 20,000. This indicates that personal care products are primarily consumed by middle-income groups, showing that affordability and accessibility play an important role in purchasing behaviour.

The study brings out that the key demographic trends among the 150 respondents, with a notable majority being female (63%) compared to male (37%). Most participants fall within the 26-30 age group (37%), followed by 21-25-year-olds (26%), indicating a strong representation of young adults. A slight majority are married (55%), while 45% are single. Occupation-wise, students form the largest segment (33%), followed by private employees (28%), suggesting that the survey may have been conducted in an academic or urban professional setting. Income levels are predominantly middle-range, with 36% earning between Rs.15,001-20,000 per month, while only 13% earn above Rs.20,000. This distribution suggests that the respondents are largely young, middle-income individuals, possibly from urban or semi-urban areas, with a significant portion being students and working professionals. These insights could be valuable for tailoring policies, marketing strategies, or social programs to this demographic.

## 9. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

- The gender wise analysis proved that female respondents have maximum level of satisfaction in using personal care products than the male respondents. Hence, it is suggested that the male respondents should be motivated by providing different products of their choice.
- The present study resulted that the respondents belong to above 30 years age category have satisfied towards personal care products because the particular age category respondents have awareness of products. Hence, the companies should give awareness of personal care products for young age respondents.
- From the analysis it is learnt that the respondents earning upto Rs.10000 as their monthly income are highly satisfied in purchasing personal care products than other category of the respondents.

The present study concluded that, successes of personal care products firm depend on their ability to create and retaining the consumers. Brand image provides companies strong and competitive arms to fight with competitors in the market. The good quality, promotional offers, competitive price, social status and service after sales are important that companies must give it sufficient consideration before they plan and implement their marketing strategies. Companies should focus the influencing factors for increase purchasing personal care products like “low price, warranty period, festival offer, discount, more varieties and availability of products”. The FMCGs sector is a very dynamic sector in Salem town. A major goal is to satisfy the needs and wants of consumer and their target markets more effectively and efficiently. Hence the researcher hopes that the information provided in this study will assist companies in shaping their marketing strategies and better serving their consumers.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None .

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