



## **TO STUDY THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CONSUMERS OF DURABLE PRODUCTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

India has one of the lowest consumer durable penetration rates, and there is obviously a huge untapped market there. In order to achieve significant and lucrative business growth, producers and merchants would be driven to investigate every imaginable way to increase operational efficiencies. Since the liberalization process was started in 1991, the Indian market for consumer durables has seen a significant upheaval. Market size, product penetration, product diversity, and product technology have all increased dramatically. The market growth rate has reached dizzying heights as a result of increasing product choice, real price declines, and rising consumer incomes. Today, brands are the most valuable assets that companies can own. The obstacles that marketers face are numerous, including how to differentiate themselves in a way that customers will value. In this sense, brands are champions of the new economy. The wealth of the twenty-first century is created through brands. While brands are differentiated in the minds of consumers, products are not distinguished in factories. Products can become objects of desire thanks to strong brands. As a result, the quantity and variety of brands a company has affect its market worth. The issue at hand in today's competitive market is the company's ability to survive. The answer is branding, which helps businesses survive. For the purpose of achieving revenue, sales, quality, and market share, the correct branding planning approach is required. A successful strategy sets one company's brand apart from those of its rivals.

***KEY WORDS: liberalization, branding, economy, companies, Market size***

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

India is the world's second-largest consumer market. In terms of education, income, occupation, reference group, and media habits, the Indian consumer profile has altered. With the rise of contemporary technology, customer brand preferences for durable goods have



changed during the previous ten years. With acculturation, consumer purchasing habits are shifting quickly in favour of high-end technological products. Due to changing lifestyles and rising income levels, goods that were once thought of as luxury things have evolved into necessities. The demand for high-end goods like televisions, washing machines, refrigerators, and air conditioners has grown significantly along with increases in disposable income. Additionally, the ease of obtaining financing and the frequency of nuclear households make it easier. Value for money continues to be highly valued by Indian consumers, as seen by the market's rising demand for consumer durables and falling prices. The consumer is brand-aware but not necessarily brand-loyal; if a reputable private label delivers good price and quality values, they may even choose it.

Numerous factors make the study of consumer purchasing behaviour extremely important. First of all, consumer behaviour might affect a company's financial health. Customers will have preferences when making product purchases. The "survival of the fittest" principle is used in the selection of businesses. Thus, customer behaviour can reveal which businesses will flourish, which goods will succeed, and whether an industry will survive. Second, businesses can create marketing strategies that are appropriate for the needs of the customers by understanding why customers purchase products and their purchasing patterns. Pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase are the three phases that make up the purchasing process. Each stage is equally crucial, and any one of them can influence a consumer's purchasing choice. After choosing a product, consumers may need to consider their own needs, read product information, choose which to buy and where to buy it, decide whether to buy from the same retailer again, select a payment method, express satisfaction with the services or product quality, and finally be brand loyal. These emphasise the complexity of the purchasing process and the possible influence a brand may have on it. Consumer behaviour dynamics are changing; luxury and durable goods are now seen as necessity since people have more money to spend on lifestyle goods. Consumer preference has clearly shifted in favour of higher-end, technologically advanced branded products, driven by growing consumer awareness of and preference for branded goods. This movement can also be attributed to consumers' shifting mindsets toward branded goods, which is on the rise.

One of the most valuable assets a company may have is its brand equity, and brand equity evaluation and management are still key topics of study in both academia and business. The majority of brand equity research has examined the issue from either the firm's perspective

or from a consumer's perspective. Typically, surveys or experiments are used to gather data on consumer mindset measures of brand equity from the consumer, and the data is then used to assess the consumer's perceptions, feelings, and attitudes towards the brand. Additionally, it might entail gathering information on consumers' revealed preference patterns utilising self-reported or real purchase data in order to evaluate the incremental impact that the brand name has on consumers' utility and the ensuing choice patterns. Strong brand equity is now a crucial aspect that affects how people behave toward a brand. Understanding and effectively maintaining brand equity are essential for brand management success in order to create powerful traits that will impact consumers' decisions.

Consumers' perspectives on brand equity are helpful because they highlight topics for research that can support managerial decision-making as well as specific instructions for marketing plans and methods.

For the target audience, a brand must make the product meaningful and relevant. It must improve the product beyond the most fundamental general level. An item that leaves an assembly line is typically only a physical thing. But ultimate product satisfaction is what clients seek. Given that buyers frequently possess both intellectual and emotional components, the product must also be liked in order to be considered complete. It must accurately reflect the customer as a whole. Manufacturing results in tangible products, whereas branding results in tangible and symbolic products. By fusing what a product is and what a consumer is into one composite whole, branding elevates the object into a perceptual realm and increases its significance to the consumer. Customers are motivated to purchase and use a product by branding. As customers interact with companies they identify with, it serves as a connecting tool.

The brand has expanded much beyond the limitations of the product's physical features. To the owner, a Rolex is not a watch. The brand is focused on customer perception, status, and luxury. It is not a service that keeps time. It serves as a means of classifying people into Rolex users—a separate category—and others. A brand is a collection of value propositions that are utilitarian or rational. It also serves as a means of providing psychological fulfillment based on emotions. A brand gives consumers reasons to purchase it, either through elements of the product, psychological aspects, or both.

## **1.2 CONSUMERS' DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR BRAND**

The customer advances to the following stage of the market after doing mental calculations regarding the product selection. To truly choose a brand, a customer must navigate a hierarchy of tiers of choice. The decisions marketers make about the brand to use are crucial. The emphasis on the customer forces marketers to take a customer-focused tack. Understanding how people select particular brands is crucial from the perspective of brand development. The brand needs to meet difficulties and roles that are represented in the decision-making process. According to the cognitive viewpoint of a customer, individuals actively process their surroundings through the use of their cognitions, affects, knowledge, beliefs, and meanings. To interpret new information, one uses perception and information processing skills. The process of integrating the examination of options and the selection of one is at the heart of decision-making. Choice is the result of this process.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The current study uses a sample survey approach. First-hand information gathered through a questionnaire on the field. This kind of information frequently aids in providing pertinent responses to study queries. Primary and secondary data on consumer behaviour and brand equity are used in the study. A pilot survey was conducted, and the questionnaire was revised in light of the results. Because it was impossible to count the population of durable consumer products, practical sampling procedures were used. Additionally, the study relied on secondary data. The secondary data were gathered from authoritative journals, published records, records, reports, and websites as well as standard textbooks on related topics.

### **2.1 SELECTION OF SAMPLE**

All three areas—urban, semiurban, and rural—borrowed from New Delhi. The study's samples are chosen using a practical sampling technique, and the respondents include both genders and members of different income classes. 400 samples in total were chosen from each of the three regions.

### **2.2 PILOT STUDY**

To determine whether the questionnaire is able to collect the necessary data information as

requested by the research objectives, a pre-test of the questionnaire is undertaken with 70 respondents. A pilot research was undertaken primarily to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, if it was simple to grasp, and whether it contained any ambiguous or perplexing questions. The questionnaire's format and content were negotiated with the supervisor before being developed. It should be noted that we initially created a questionnaire on our own, which we then completely revised after consulting with the supervisor. In the researcher's presence, five students were invited to complete the questionnaire. There were no complaints from any of the respondents about the questions, and the reliability test value was 0.789. However, the respondent did make the overall observation that several of the questions were a little wordy and lengthy. The researcher accordingly made the appropriate adjustments.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of an analysis of the socioeconomic traits of consumers of durable goods are given below.

#### **3.1 GENDER OF CONSUMERS**

In any particular Indian market scenario, gender is a significant aspect that is frequently influenced by consumer or market behaviour. As a result, the study's investigation into the variable gender. The analysis of the gender distribution of consumers of durable goods is shown in Table 1.

**TABLE-1 DISTRIBUTION OF GENDER OF CONSUMERS OF DURABLE GOODS**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	261	65.25
Female	139	34.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

According to the findings, men make up around 65.25 percent of durable goods customers, while women make up the remaining 34.75 percent.

### 3.2 AGE OF CONSUMERS

One of the most crucial factors in determining the respondents' perspectives on a certain issue is their age. Since age generally signifies a person's level of maturity, age becomes more crucial when analysing an answer. The analysis of the age distribution of consumers of durable goods is shown in Table 2.

**TABLE- 2 DISTRIBUTION OF AGE OF CONSUMERS OF DURABLE GOODS**

Age(Years)	No. of Consumers	Percentage
<20	21	5.25
21-30	116	29.00
31-40	160	40.00
41-50	41	10.25
>50	62	15.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

The findings show that the age group of 31–40 years accounts for 40.00 percent of consumers of durable products, followed by the age groups of 41–50 years (10.25 percent), 21–30 years (29.00 percent), more than 50 years (15.5 percent), and less than 20 years (5.25 per cent).

### 3.3 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF CONSUMERS

One of the most significant factors that might impact a person's behaviour, perspective, and understanding of a particular brand is education. In a sense, a person's reaction is likely to be influenced by their educational position, hence it is crucial to understand the respondents' educational backgrounds. The analysis of the distribution of educational attainment among consumers of durable goods is shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3 DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF CONSUMERS OF DURABLE GOODS**

<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>No. of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
School Level	139	34.75
Graduate Level	127	31.75
Post Graduate Level	84	21.00
Professional	50	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

The following chart shows that 31.75 % of consumers of durable goods are educated up to the graduate level, followed by the undergraduate level (34.75 %), postgraduate level (21.00 %), and professional level of education (12.5 per cent).

### **3.4 OCCUPATION OF CONSUMERS**

A person's profession does have an impact on their personality, as well as how they approach problems. The type of work a person does and the money he makes from it both affect that person's quality of life. A person's occupation also socialised them in a specific way, which in turn reflects their pattern of actions and their level of comprehension of specific phenomena. The analysis of the occupation distribution of consumers of durable goods is shown in Table 4.

**TABLE 4 DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATION OF CONSUMERS OF DURABLE GOODS**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>No. of Consumers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Salaried	125	31.25
Self-Employed	149	37.25
Housewife	62	15.5
Student	28	7.00
Professional	36	9.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Primary Data*



The findings show that salaried consumers of durable goods make up 31.25 % of all consumers, followed by self-employed consumers (37.25 %), housewives (15.5 %), professionals (9.00 %), and students (7.00 per cent).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Brands are evolving into the most valuable assets that companies may own in the current, emerging business environment. How to differentiate the values of the clients is one of the many issues that marketers face. In this sense, brands are champions of the new economy. In the twenty first century, brands create riches. when brands are distinguished in the minds of buyers but products are not differentiated in the factories Products can become objects of desire thanks to strong brands. As a result, the quantity and variety of brands a company has affect its market worth. Gaining a competitive edge and ensuring long-term profitability for products, services, businesses, and organizations requires the development and management of strong brands. As a result, marketers should be well-versed in marketing, customer behaviour, and brand management.

The research on the effects of consumer behaviour and brand equity on durable goods is a contribution to society. Research examines consumer brand preference and purchase knowledge for long-lasting goods. The findings of this study aid in understanding customer behaviour, brand equity, and how these factors affect consumer durable goods.

Evaluation, selection, and purchase are somewhat and positively connected with the information. The evaluation has a moderately positive and beneficial impact on decision-making and spending. Additionally, there is a relatively positive correlation between selection and purchase. Age, educational level, monthly income, marital status, and family size are demographic indicators that have a beneficial impact on consumers' decisions to buy durable goods.

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