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## Consumers purchase behaviour of ready-to-eat food products in Belgaum city of Karnataka state

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**Abstract**

Customer taste and preference is one of the major factors which determine the demand for the product. Product demand, in turn, determines the fate and success of any concern. The study was conducted to assess the consumer purchase behaviour of ready-to-eat food products. The major factors considered while purchasing biscuits were convenience to use as snacks (83.13 per cent), taste (78.13 per cent) and save the time of preparation (65.63 per cent). While in case of bread readily available (86.25 per cent) is the major factor, convenience for snacks (96.03 per cent) was the main reason for purchasing chips, while in case of pickles taste (94.70 per cent) was the main reason. In case of fruit jam (100.00 per cent) and kunda (96.71 per cent) readily available is the major factor. In case of fruit juice (94.67 per cent) and ice creams (98.01 per cent) it save the time of preparation was the major factor. The average monthly expenditure on ready-to-eat food products was found to be highest in case of high income group. Planned purchase was common among majority of the respondents for biscuits, bread, pickles and fruit jam. However, most of the respondents did impulsive buying for chips, fruit juice and ice creams. Majority of the products purchased by consumers from bakeries.

**Keywords:** ready-to-eat food products, purchase behaviour, consumers, taste and preference

**Introduction**

Over the past few decades, food consumption habits have changed immensely. In today's society, it is common for both spouses to work outside of the home. Consequently, rising average household incomes give consumers a broad range of choices for the basic food bundle. A health aware nation and a rising interest in maintaining and improving human life are just a few reasons why fruit and vegetable demand has risen. Campaigns such as "5 A Day" promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO) encourage people to consume five fruits or vegetables per day. The food industry has responded to this demand by developing fresh and nutritional products with conservation techniques that extend the shelf life of the product. Customer taste and preference is one of the major factors which determine the demand for the product. Product demand, in turn, determines the fate and success of any concern. Gone are the days when women used to sit at home and tend exclusively to household chores and needs of their families. Most women, these days go to work and usually not just the 9-5 routines. Women climb the corporate ladder just like men do and need to spend more hours at work. Long working hours during the weekdays and weekends that are always spent with kids, preferably outside the house gives them very little time to cook. These factors are a major cause to buy such products. To add to their good luck, not only are a variety of dishes available in the market, they also come in new, different flavors. Thus the researcher made a study to analyze the preference of customers towards the ready to eat food products (Pradeep and Kavitha, 2013) [3]. The study is intended to assess the purchase behaviour of ready-to-eat food products in Belgaum city of Karnataka state.

**Materials and Methods**

This study is undertaken in Belgaum city. Questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from 160 respondents. Convenience sampling method was adopted to collect the data from the selected respondents. The data was collected only from respondents those who are using ready to eat food products. Tabular analysis method was used to analyze the data collected.

**Income factor**

The respondents were post classified into different groups based on income. The respondents were post classified into three income groups based on their income by using the formula:

$$\text{Mean} \pm 0.425 \times \text{S.D.}$$

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Low income: Below Rs.12,259.62 per month.

Middle income: Between Rs.12,259.62 to Rs.17046.63 per month.

High income: Above Rs.17,046.63 per month.

## Results and Discussion

It could be inferred from the Table no.1 the major factors considered while purchasing biscuits were convenience to use as snacks (83.13 per cent), taste (78.13 per cent) and save the time of preparation (65.63 per cent). While in case of bread readily available (86.25 per cent) is the major factor, convenience for snacks (96.03 per cent) was the main reason for purchasing chips, while in case of pickles taste (94.70 per cent) was the main reason. In case of fruit jam (100.00 per cent) and kunda (96.71 per cent) readily available is the major factor. In case of fruit juice (94.67 per cent) and ice creams (98.01 per cent) it save the time of preparation was the major factor. In percentage terms, ice cream found the prominent place in the total consumption basket of ready-to-eat food products of Belgaum consumers. Ice cream is such a food product which is liked by young generation and all sections of the society.

It could be inferred from the Table no.2 The average monthly expenditure on ready-to-eat food products was found to be highest in case of high income group (Rs. 582.56), followed by middle income group (Rs. 502.31) and low income group (Rs.379.45).

It could be inferred from the Table no.3 There exist a positive relationship between monthly expenditure on selected ready-to-eat food products and monthly income. As the monthly income increased, the share of monthly expenditure on ready-to-eat food items also increased.

It could be inferred from the Table no.4 It was inferred that majority of the respondents purchased biscuits twice in a week (27.50 %). People use biscuits in snacks time so they need biscuits very frequently and the point is why they do not purchase the requirement at a time. While in case of bread majority of the consumers purchased twice in a week (31.88 %), Most of the respondents purchased chips (29.80 %), pickles (74.32 %), fruit juice (34.00 %), ice cream (31.79 %) and kunda (38.16%) whenever needed. These products are generally fun eat and also these are impulse purchase products, except in case of pickles because consumers purchased pickles whenever needed, reason is that people always prefer to have fresh products and if the product is fresh it will influence on its taste and quality.

It could be inferred from the Table no.5 Majority of the respondents purchased biscuits from retail outlet (43.75 %). Most of the respondents purchased bread from bakery(49.38 %), Most of the respondents purchased chips from bakeries(34.44 %), followed by department store (29.80 %), Majority of the consumers purchased pickles from retail outlet(48.65 %), fruit juice(33.33 %), ice creams (29.80 %) and kunda (82.24 %) majority of the consumers purchased from bakeries. because most of the consumers of chips are students, most of all the schools and colleges there is facility

of bakeries and department stores. Majority of the consumers purchased pickles from retail outlet (48.65 %), because they prefer particular brand, taste and quality. While in case of fruit jam most of the respondents purchased from retail outlet (35.62 %).

It could be inferred from the Table no.6 Among the total respondents majority of them are purchased chips (73.51 %) as unplanned, followed by fruit juice (76.00 %), and ice cream (80.79 %) and remaining 26.49 per cent of chips purchasers, 24.00 per cent of fruit juice purchasers and 19.21 per cent of ice cream purchasers purchasers did planned buying. In case of other products like biscuits, bread, pickles, fruit jam and kunda, maximum of the respondents (84.38 %, 86.25 %, 91.22 %, 95.89 % and 86.84% respectively) did go for planned buying. These results further support our earlier findings that biscuits are the common man tea time snack. Hence, they always find a place in the purchase list of the consumers. But chips, fruit juice, ice creams and kunda are generally impulse purchase products. Especially younger generations are more attracted by these products. The children, when they are out with elders usually demand for these products whenever they see the shops displaying them.

Influence of income on purchase decisions on ready-to-eat food products. It could be noticed from the table no.7 that majority of the respondents took self decision while purchasing biscuits (33.33, 52.38 % and 27.59 % of low, middle and high income groups respectively), In case of bread majority of the respondents took self decision (50.62, 38.10 % and 44.83 % of low, middle and high income groups respectively). In case of chips majority of the respondents took self decision while purchasing (41.89 %, 36.84 % and 44.83 % respectively). In case of pickles parents are major influencer for decision making (53.33 %, 47.06 % and 33.93 % respectively). In case of fruit juice majority of the respondents took self decision while purchasing (44.44 %, 40.00 % and 24.14 % respectively). In case of fruit jam majority of the respondents took self decision while purchasing (38.57 %, 52.63 % and 22.81 % respectively). In case of ice cream self decision is major influencer for decision making (47.95 %, 40.00 % and 43.10 % respectively). In case of kunda children is major influencer for decision making (47.95 %, 57.14 % and 43.10 % respectively).

Influence of income on purchase decisions on ready-to-eat food products showed that, in case of biscuits, bread, chips, fruit juice, fruit jam, ice cream and kunda majority of the respondents of all the three income groups took their self decision while purchasing the products. In case of ice creams, majority of the respondents of low, medium and high income groups took self decision this is because the purchasers have more faith and belief among themselves. But in case if pickles parents are major influencer for decision making (53.33 %, 47.06 % and 33.93 % respectively), this is because they are the most consuming age group of pickles. The findings of the study were in line with the results of Hirekenchanagoudar (2007) [1].

**Table 1:** Reasons for purchasing ready-to-eat food products by consumers in Belgaum city

Sl. No.	Particulars	Biscuits (n=160)	Bread (n=160)	Chips (n=151)	Pickles (n=148)	Fruit juice (n=150)	Fruit Jam (n=146)	Ice cream (n=151)	Kunda (n=152)
1	Readily available	94(58.75)	138(86.25)	136(90.07)	134(88.74)	126(84.00)	146(100.00)	143(94.70)	147(96.71)
2	Taste	125(78.13)	128(80.00)	125(82.78)	143(94.70)	136(90.67)	115(78.77)	147(97.35)	138(90.79)
3	Liked by family	76(47.50)	98(61.25)	114(75.50)	134(88.74)	94(62.67)	78(53.42)	141(93.38)	133(87.50)
4	Influence	60(37.50)	49(30.63)	95(62.91)	110(72.85)	113(75.33)	20(13.70)	7(4.64)	53(34.87)
5	Convenience	133(83.13)	28(17.50)	145(96.03)	4(2.65)	112(74.67)	24(16.44)	13(8.61)	27(17.76)
6	Satisfaction	92(57.50)	101(63.13)	134(88.74)	121(80.13)	81(54.00)	17(11.64)	137(90.73)	106(69.74)
7	Save time	105(65.63)	77(48.13)	113(74.83)	135(89.40)	142(94.67)	132(90.41)	148(98.01)	47(30.92)
8	Any other	72(45.00)	34(21.25)	99(65.56)	38(25.17)	14(9.33)	17(11.64)	12(7.95)	12(7.89)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to the total number of users of the respective product.

**Table 2:** Monthly expenditure of households on ready-to-eat food products (Rs./Month)

Sl. No.	Particulars	High Income(n=58)	Medium Income(n=21)	Low Income(n=81)	Average
1	Biscuits	65.77(11.28)	50.00(9.39)	47.77(12.58)	54.51(11.16)
2	Bread	65.25(11.20)	55.23(10.37)	53.20(14.02)	56.89(11.65)
3	Chips	77.16(13.24)	75.95(14.26)	50.12(13.20)	67.74(13.87)
4	Pickles	67.24(11.54)	64.28(12.07)	44.44(11.71)	58.65(12.01)
5	Fruit Juice	97.58(16.75)	83.76(15.73)	50.12(13.12)	77.15(15.80)
6	Fruit Jam	51.72(8.87)	43.57(8.18)	35.74(9.41)	43.47(8.90)
7	Ice cream	98.53(16.91)	83.33(15.65)	60.55(15.95)	80.80(16.55)
8	Kunda	59.31(10.18)	46.19(8.67)	37.51(9.88)	47.80(9.79)
	Total	582.56(100.00%)	502.31(100.00%)	379.45(100.00%)	488.10(100.00.)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

**Table 3:** Share of ready-to-eat food items in total expenditure on all food items (Rs./Month)

Sl. No.	Particulars	High Income	Medium Income	Low Income	Average
1	Ready-to-eat food products	582.56 (16.89)	502.31 (15.78)	379.45 (13.90)	488.10 (15.64)
2	Other household food products	2866.12 (83.11)	2679.57 (84.22)	2350.00 (86.10)	2631.89 (84.36)
	Total expenditure	3448.68 (100.00)	3181.88 (100.00)	2729.45 (100.00)	3119.99 (100.00)

**Table 4:** Frequency of purchase of ready-to-eat food products by the respondents

Sl. No.	Product	Daily	Twice in a week	Once in a week	Fortnightly	Whenever
1	Biscuits (n=160)	6(3.75)	44(27.50)	34(21.25)	39(24.38)	37(23.13)
2	Bread(n=160)	0(0.00)	51(31.88)	39(24.38)	36(22.50)	34(21.25)
3	Chips(n=151)	1(0.66)	37(24.50)	40(26.49)	28(18.54)	45(29.80)
4	Pickles(n=148)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	8(5.41)	30(20.27)	110(74.32)
5	Fruit juice(n=150)	2 (1.33)	17(11.33)	35(23.33)	45(30.00)	51(34.00)
6	Fruit Jam(n=146)	0(0.00)	10(6.85)	28(19.18)	69(47.26)	39(26.71)
7	Ice cream(n=151)	0 (0.00)	21(13.91)	42(27.81)	40(26.49)	48(31.79)
8	Kunda(n=152)	0 (0.00)	9(5.92)	31(20.39)	54(35.53)	58(38.16)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to the total number of users of the respective product.

**Table 5:** Place of purchase of ready to-eat- food products by the respondents in Belgaum city

Sl. No.	Particulars	Retail outlet	Department store	Bakery	Ice Parlour
1	Biscuits (n=160)	70 (43.75)	56 (35.00)	24 (15.00)	10 (6.25)
2	Bread (n=160)	35 (21.88)	35 (21.88)	79 (49.38)	11 (6.88)
3	Chips (n=151)	45 (29.80)	45 (29.80)	52 (34.44)	9 (5.96)
4	Pickles (n=148)	72 (48.65)	54 (36.49)	22 (14.86)	0 (0.00)
5	Fruit juice (n=150)	30 (20.00)	40 (26.67)	50 (33.33)	30 (20.00)
6	Fruit Jam (n=146)	52 (35.62)	40 (27.40)	43 (29.45)	11 (7.53)
7	Ice cream (n=151)	31 (20.53)	35 (23.18)	45 (29.80)	40 (26.49)
8	Kunda (n=152)	13 (8.55)	9 (5.92)	125 (82.24)	5 (3.29)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to the total number of users of the respective product.

**Table 6:** Nature of purchase decision ready –to- eat food products among the respondents

Sl. No.	Particulars	Planned	Unplanned
1	Biscuits (n=160)	135 (84.38)	25 (15.63)
2	Bread (n=160)	138 (86.25)	22 (13.75)
3	Chips (n=151)	40 (26.49)	111 (73.51)
4	Pickles (n=148)	135 (91.22)	13 (8.78)
5	Fruit juice (n=150)	36 (24.00)	114 (76.00)
6	Fruit Jam (n=146)	140 (95.89)	6 (4.11)
7	Ice cream (n=151)	29 (19.21)	122 (80.79)
8	Kunda (n=152)	132 (86.84)	19 (12.50)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to the total number of users of the respective product.

**Table 7:** Influence of income on purchase decisions of respondents on ready-to-eat food products

Sl. No.	Particulars	Income groups	Parents	Children	Friends	Neighbour	Shopkeeper	Self decision
1	Biscuits (n=160)	High (n=58)	7 (12.07)	14 (24.14)	8 (13.79)	4 (6.90)	9 (15.52)	16 (27.59)
		Medium (n=21)	2 (9.52)	3 (14.29)	2 (9.52)	2 (9.52)	1 (4.76)	11 (52.38)
		Low (n=81)	10 (12.35)	15 (18.52)	12 (14.81)	5 (6.17)	12 (14.81)	27 (33.33)
2	Bread (n=160)	High(n=58)	9 (15.52)	10 (17.24)	6 (10.34)	3 (5.17)	4 (6.90)	26 (44.83)
		Medium(n=21)	2 (9.52)	4 (19.05)	1 (4.76)	2 (9.52)	4 (19.05)	8 (38.10)
		Low (n=81)	8 (9.88)	10 (12.35)	6 (7.41)	6 (7.41)	10 (12.35)	41 (50.62)
3	Chips (n=151)	High (n=58)	9 (15.52)	10 (17.24)	6 (10.34)	3 (5.17)	4 (6.90)	26 (44.83)
		Medium (n=19)	3 (15.79)	3 (15.79)	3 (15.79)	2 (10.53)	1 (5.26)	7 (36.84)
		Low (n=74)	5 (6.76)	15 (20.27)	8 (10.81)	6 (8.11)	9 (12.16)	31 (41.89)
4	Pickles (n=148)	High (n=56)	19 (33.93)	6 (10.71)	6 (10.71)	8 (14.29)	7 (12.50)	10 (17.86)
		Medium (n=17)	8 (47.06)	1 (5.88)	2 (11.76)	2 (11.76)	1 (5.88)	3 (17.65)
		Low (n=75)	40 (53.33)	4 (5.33)	9 (12.00)	6 (8.00)	4 (5.33)	12 (16.00)
5	Fruit Juice (n=150)	High (n=58)	6 (10.34)	22 (37.93)	5 (8.62)	4 (6.90)	7 (12.07)	14 (24.14)
		Medium (n=20)	2 (10.00)	4 (20.00)	3 (15.00)	2 (10.00)	1 (5.00)	8 (40.00)
		Low (n=72)	4 (5.56)	21 (29.17)	8 (11.11)	5 (6.94)	2 (2.78)	32 (44.44)
6	Fruit Jam (n=146)	High (n=57)	4 (7.02)	17 (29.82)	8 (14.04)	4 (7.02)	11 (19.30)	13 (22.81)
		Medium (n=19)	5 (26.32)	2 (10.53)	1 (5.26)	1 (5.26)	0 (0.00)	10 (52.63)
		Low (n=70)	20 (28.57)	17 (24.29)	3 (4.29)	2 (2.86)	1 (1.43)	27 (38.57)
7	Ice cream (n=151)	High (n=58)	4 (6.90)	16 (27.59)	6 (10.34)	4 (6.90)	3 (5.17)	25 (43.10)
		Medium (n=20)	0 (0.00)	6 (30.00)	2 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (20.00)	8 (40.00)
		Low (n=73)	2 (2.74)	22 (30.14)	7 (9.59)	2 (2.74)	5 (6.85)	35 (47.95)
8	Kunda (n=152)	High (n=58)	14 (24.14)	16 (27.59)	2 (3.45)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.72)	25 (43.10)
		Medium (n=21)	3 (14.29)	4 (19.05)	2 (9.52)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	12 (57.14)
		Low (n=73)	10 (13.70)	18 (24.66)	5 (6.85)	3 (4.11)	2 (2.74)	35 (47.95)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to the total number of users in each income group.

## Conclusion

Majority of the residents in Belgaum city purchased ready-to-eat products viz., biscuits, bread, chips, pickles, fruit juice, fruit jam, ice creams and kunda. This indicates that there is a wide scope for all the intermediaries who are involved in this business. Since all these product manufacturing firms come under small and medium enterprises, there is encouragement from government side also. There is ample scope for this type of business.

Ready-to-eat food products are impulse purchase products and generally fun eat foods. Consumer buys such products only if it catches his eye at the outlet. So players/manufacturers need to stress on attractive packaging and sales promotion. Further, study also indicated that those firms which resorted to advertisements through mass media, particularly television and newspapers could get better share in the market. This calls for the attention of other competing firms in the business to improve their sales promotion activities by making use of such mass media to improve their business.

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