

Purchasing practice of the consumers towards ready to eat food products

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Recent trends in final food demand show that the concept of food has undergone a radical transformation in recent years. The diversification of food away from traditional products and in convergence with western style is responsible for changes in the whole food system. This paper aims to provide comprehensive approach to the consumer purchasing behaviour towards processed ready to eat and ready to cook food products. It thus focused on knowing the perception of the consumers towards Ready-to-Eat and ready to cook food and the impact of factors on their purchase intention. There existed an ambiguity of what Ready-to-Food is, as different sources provided with different meanings. In order to derive a niche expertise of derived findings, the research was restricted to only branded ready to eat and ready to cook food products and to Consumers who were aware about these food products. A sample of 110 respondents has been taken under convenient sampling technique in Bhubaneswar city, Odisha. The study reveals that majority of the respondents have planned decision in purchasing instant food products. Television plays a major role in providing information about instant food products.

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There is no sincere love than the love of food”- George Bernard Shaw. For a country like India, which is defined by its food across the world, this quote has always rang true. However, with rising industrialisation and urbanisation the average Indian's food choice has undergone dramatic change. Sixty four years after independence, Indian lifestyle has undergone many changes. Food and taste habits are no exception to this. Over the years there has been witnessed change in the pattern of consumption, from raw to cook to Ready-to-Eat food. Indian households today welcome food with convenience in cooking and purchase. India

is the world's second largest producer of food next to china and has the potential of being the biggest with the food and agricultural sector (26). The food processing industry is one of the largest industries in India – it is ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption export and expected growth. The processed food market accounts for 32 per cent of the total food market. It accounts for US \$29.4 billion, in a total estimated market of US \$ 91.66 billion. Food accounts for the largest share of consumer spending. Food and food products account for about 53 per cent of the value of final private consumption. This share is significantly higher than in

developed economies, where food and food products account for about 20 per cent of consumer spending (Baskar *et al.*, 2013).

Westernization lifestyle got followed up in the major cities across India and people started emulating western country lifestyle (Ali *et al.*, 2010). Changes in consumer mindset leads to many Multi National corporations find new space to fit their product sales in the Indian people mindset. Due to change over in the lifestyle and evolution of nuclear family, people started preferring packed foods to find ease in cooking. Among 70 per cent of the Indian family are nuclear in nature and women want to spend less time in cooking. Increase in dual income of the family is also one of the reason to go for purchasing packed branded food products (Kathuria and Gill, 2013).

There is an growing demand for the ready-to-eat food category. The food product will get vary from ready-to-consume to easy-to-cook and consumers prefer any such kind of food, if they are aware of it (Lampila and Lahteenmäki, 2007). Changes in lifestyle was considered as major factor in going for packed food purchase as well as demand for Convenience and hygienic food products busy life-style and equal participation of women in workforce (Prasad and Aryasri, 2008).

Consumer behaviour is defined as activities people under take when over taking, consuming and disposing of product and services (Engle *et al.*, 1973 and Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). The study of consumer behaviour does not only include reason for buying but also the consumption process of the consumer at large. In the entire process of buying consumer get driven by influences such as felling, motivation, income, lifestyle, opinion, culture, personality etc.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001), consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of the individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption. Consumers around the world are different in various factors such as age, income, education level and preferences which may affect the way they avail of goods and services.

Shivkumar (2004) showed that the consumer, irrespective of income groups, was mainly influenced by the opinions of their family members to purchase. Consumers were also influenced by the dealers'

recommendation, followed by advertisement.

Ready-to-eat food is food that is offered or exposed for sale without additional cooking or preparation, which is packaged on the premises where they are being sold and are ready for consumption. Canned foods, convenience foods, fast foods, frozen foods, instant products, dried foods, preserved foods, etc. all come under Ready-to-Eat foods (Selvaraj, 2012).

Demographic variables and socio-economic characteristics of the consumers are also important variables, which decide the consumption pattern of food products in the family. Factors influencing the consumers choice of RTE food are flavour, texture, appearance, advertising, a reduction in traditional cooking, fragmentation of family Other factors positively influencing Ready to Eat food demand are rising income level, influence of western countries, more global trade, travelling, convenience in preparation due to lack of time and cost effectiveness (Selvaraj, 2012).

Non-preference for Ready-to-eat food was due to various reasons like low cost of home preparation, differences in taste, non-preference of Ready-to-eat food by other family members, higher prices, lack of awareness of the products that are available in the market and non-availability of Ready-to-eat food (Karuppusamy and Arjunan, 2012).

Difference in taste between homemade food and purchased Ready-to-eat product was found to be one of the most important reasons for not using Ready-to-eat food. Whereas, the reasons for not purchasing Ready-to-eat food products were the lack of awareness of the products, disliking towards the products, relatively high price and health consciousness of the people (Selvaraj, 2012).

■ RESEARCH METHODS

Objectives :

The purpose of this study was to explore the determinants (demographics and psychographics) impacting consumers food choice towards Processed ready to eat Food and reasons for shifting towards processed Food. The present study was an attempt to meet the following objectives:

- To study the present consumer behaviour in buying the processed food products
- To find the determinants factors of the respondent for their purchasing decision.

Research design :

The study was conducted in the city of Bhubaneswar, Odisha in between 2nd November, 2014 to 31st January, 2015. 110 respondents from both genders were randomly selected as the sample for the study. Retail outlets were visited in morning, afternoon to ensure better coverage of all types of consumers. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data. The survey tool for this study was a structured survey questionnaire method through face-to-face interview by the investigator.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 depicts the personal profile of the respondents who fall under different category of age

groups, educational qualification, occupation, marital status, number of family members, type of family and family monthly income.

Table 2 portrays the duration of usage of Instant Packaged food products. With regard to ready to eat food products, 51.82 per cent of them were consuming instant packaged food products for 5 - 10 years, 30.91 per cent had been using of them it for less than 5 years, 10.91 per cent of them had been using it for 10 to 15 years and 6.36 per cent of them were using it for more than 15 years. With regard to ready to cook food products, 28.18 per cent of them were consuming it for less than 5 years, 39.10 per cent of them had been using it for 5 - 10 years, 22.72 per cent of them had been using it for 10 - 15 years and 10 per cent of them were using it for more

Table 1 : Demographic profile of the respondents			(n=110)
Personal factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Between 21-30 years	34	30.90
	Between 31-40 years	65	59.07
	Above 40 years	11	10.03
	Total	110	100
Educational Qualification	School level	12	10.90
	Under Graduate	37	33.63
	Post Graduate	26	23.66
	Technically qualified	35	31.81
	Total	110	100
Occupational status	Private Employee	41	37.27
	Govt. Employee	11	10
	Business	22	20
	Student	13	11.82
	Others	23	20.91
	Total	110	100
Marital status	Married	81	73.63
	Unmarried	29	26.36
	Total	110	100
No. of family members	2 - 3 members	62	56.38
	4 - 5 members	34	30.90
	Above 5 members	14	12.72
	Total	110	100
Type of family	Joint Family	13	11.81
	Nuclear Family	97	88.19
	Total	110	100
Family Monthly Income	Upto Rs.15,000	34	30.90
	Rs.15,001-Rs.30,000	39	35.45
	Rs.30,001-Rs45,000	25	22.72
	Above Rs.45,000	12	10.9
	Total	110	100

than 15 years.

Table 3 states the purchase decision of the respondents. With regard to ready to eat food products, 43.64 per cent of them had planned purchase, 30.91 per cent of them followed impulsive buying and 25.45 per cent of them decided their purchase based on the situation/ force. With regard to ready to cook food products, 56.36 per cent of them had planned purchase, 31.82 per cent of them followed impulsive buying and 11.82 per cent of them decide their purchase according to situation/ force.

Table 4 outlines the respondent's frequency of purchase of the ready to eat or cook food products. From the table it is clearly shown that 31.81 per cent of them

purchase the ready to eat food products once in a week, 21.81 per cent of the respondents purchase the ready to eat food products twice in a week, 14.54 per cent of the respondents purchase ready to eat food products every day, 12.72 per cent of them purchase the ready to eat food products once in a month, 9.09 per cent of the respondents purchase ready to eat food products for fortnightly and 10.03 per cent of them purchase the ready to eat food products whenever required. 33.64 per cent of the respondents purchase the ready to cook food products once in a week, 20.91 per cent of the respondents purchase the ready to cook food products fortnightly, 16.36 per cent of them purchase the ready to cook food products twice in a week, 11.82 per cent of

Food products	Percentage	Less than 5 years	5 – 10 years	10 -15 years	Above 15 years	Total
Ready to eat	Frequency	34	57	12	7	110
	%	30.91	51.82	10.91	6.36	100
Ready to cook	Frequency	31	43	25	11	110
	%	28.18	39.1	22.72	10	100

Food products	Percentage	Planned purchase	Impulsive buying	Forced/Situational	Total
Ready to eat	Frequency	48	34	28	110
	%	43.64	30.91	25.45	100
Ready to cook	Frequency	62	35	13	110
	%	56.36	31.82	11.82	100

Food products	Percentage	Daily	Twice in a week	Once in a week	Fortnightly	Once in a month	Whenever required	Total
Ready to eat	Frequency	16	24	35	10	14	11	110
	%	14.54	21.81	31.81	9.09	12.72	10.03	100
Ready to cook	Frequency	13	18	37	23	12	07	110
	%	11.82	16.36	33.64	20.91	10.91	6.36	100

Food products	Percentage	Parents	Spouse	Children	Friends	Shopkeeper	Self	Total
Ready to eat	Frequency	27	19	32	15	5	12	110
	%	24.55	17.27	29.09	13.64	4.55	10.9	100
Ready to cook	Frequency	23	07	17	20	14	29	110
	%	20.9	6.4	15.45	18.18	12.72	26.36	100

Food products	Percentage	Television	Radio	Newspaper	Magazines	Friends/ Relatives	Shopkeeper/Retailer	Total
Ready to eat	Frequency	78	16	08	06	07	05	110
	%	70.9	14.54	7.27	5.45	6.4	4.54	100
Ready to cook	Frequency	58	07	15	06	17	07	110
	%	52.73	6.36	13.64	5.45	15.46	6.36	100

them purchase the ready to cook food products daily, 10.91 per cent of them purchase the ready to cook food products once in a month and 6.36 per cent of them purchase the ready to cook food products whenever required.

Table 5 describes about the source of influence for using packaged instant food products. With regard to ready to eat food products, 29.09 per cent of the respondents are influenced to use ready to eat food products through their children, 24.55 per cent of them are influenced to use ready to eat food products through their parents, 17.27 per cent are influenced to use ready to eat food products through their spouse, 13.64 per cent of the respondents are influenced to use ready to eat food products through their friends, 10.9 per cent of the respondents are self-influenced to use ready to eat food products, and 4.55 per cent of them are influenced to use ready to eat food products through shop keeper.

With regard to ready to cook food products, 26.36 per cent of the respondents are self-influenced to use ready to cook food products, 22.9 per cent of them are influenced by their parents, 18.18 per cent are influenced to use ready to cook food products through their friends, 15.45 per cent of the respondents are influenced through their children, 12.72 per cent of them are influenced to use ready to cook food products through shop keepers and 6.4 per cent of the respondents are influenced by their spouse to use ready to cook food products.

Table 6 describes about the source of information regarding ready to eat food and ready to cook food products. With regard to ready to eat food products, it was found that 70.9 per cent of the respondents were getting information about the products through television, 14.54 per cent of the respondents through radio, 7.27 per cent of the respondents through newspapers. Friends/relatives, magazines and shopkeepers served as the source of information about the ready to eat food products for 6.4 per cent, 5.45 per cent and 4.54 per cent of respondents, respectively. With regard to ready to cook food products, it was found that 52.73 per cent of the respondents were getting information about the ready to cook food products through television, 15.46 per cent through friends and relatives, and 13.64 per cent through the newspaper. Percentage of the respondents getting information about the ready to cook food products through radio and shopkeepers were the same that is 6.36 per cent and magazines acted as source of information about ready

to cook food products for 5.45 per cent of respondents.

Conclusion:

The study results revealed a positive outlook towards the instant or Ready to eat food products and Ready to cook food products and the demand has also increased. The participants had extensive awareness of the product, and suitable information sources of the product. The frequency of consuming ready to eat or ready to cook processed food has been rising with relative importance of convenience, time saving and a relative decline in traditional food and eating habits. This trend was more visible in young consumers. The study revealed that majority of the respondents had planned decision in purchasing instant food products. Television played a major role in providing information about instant food products.

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