

A study on homemakers' preference for ceramic surface cleansing agents in Ludhiana city

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Detergent cakes and washing powders have become an inseparable part of every homemaker's life (Vajpeyi, 1999). The market offers a variety of cleansing agents. A variety of cleansing agents such as synthetic cleaners, detergent powders, acidic and alkaline cleaners are available in the market. Different methods of cleaning are followed in each household and accordingly the preference for cleansing agents varies. The present study was conducted to know the consumption pattern of cleansing agents among respondents and problems experienced while using these. The study was conducted on sample of sixty respondents from two localities of Ludhiana city, selected by using simple random sampling technique. The data were collected through personal interview using interview schedule. The results of the survey revealed that commercial liquid cleansing agents were found to be the most popularly used cleansing agents for household cleaning. The average quantity of commercial liquid cleansers being used was 1.76 l / month and average monthly expenditure on these cleaners was Rs. 102. Floor tiles and toilet bowls were washed daily by more than 50 per cent of respondents. As high as 80 per cent of respondents faced the problem of dryness of skin by using detergent powder, around 22.0 per cent respondents reported breathing problems by using commercial liquid cleansing agents.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Cleansing agents, Consumption, Cleansing efficiency, Liquid cleansing agents

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Household cleaning is an every day activity. Cleaning is one of the major household tasks which involves considerable time and effort of the homemaker. The purpose of cleaning includes removal of offensive odour, dirt/contaminants and to provide sparkling clean looks to house.

Vajpeyi (1999) reported that detergent cakes and washing powders have become an inseparable part of every homemaker's life. The market offers a variety of washing detergents. These detergents however, exert a hidden but taxing cost on the environment and our health due to their environment damaging properties.

Today's modern home is loaded with toxic and polluting substances designed to make domestic life easier (Anonymous, 2010). The average person has been so bombarded with luring and reassuring advertisements for these products that he/she actually believes that cleaning is

impossible without them. Most of these commercial cleaners are poisonous to plants and cause domestic accidents through poisoning. Cleansing products contain many different chemicals which may cause irritation of skin, eyes, digestive disorders and breathing complications etc. It means the chemicals in cleansing products create hazardous waste; threaten human health and the natural environment. So, we should eliminate such toxic chemicals from home and substitute these with eco- friendly, health friendly and cost effective cleansing agents. The motto of eco-friendliness is to use less carbonic matter and to leave the environment as untouched as possible. By doing this, the balance of nature can be preserved for ever longer and perhaps a sustainable model of development and living can be reached in the near future. There is a need to determine that how many homemakers are aware of these facts and are using eco-

friendly cleanser. Keeping this in mind, the present study was conducted with the following specific objectives :

Objectives :

- To study the homemakers preference of cleansing agents for ceramic surfaces.
- To study the average monthly consumption / expenditure on different cleansing agents.
- To find out the factors affecting choice of cleansing agents.
- To know the problems experienced by selected respondents while using their prefer cleansers.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in urban area of Ludhiana district. A sample of sixty respondents from two localities of Ludhiana city was selected by using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected through personal interview with the help of interview schedule, informal discussion and observation. The data were analyzed for meaningful interpretation using Simple percentages, SD (Standard Deviation), mean scores and F test.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been presented under following heads :

Socio-personal traits of respondents :

The socio-personal profile of the respondents included age, education, type of family, family size, number of family members, family occupation, family income, and size of the house. It was observed that 43.3 per cent of the respondents belonged in the age group of 41-50 years, the proportion of respondents in the age group of 50 years and above was only 6.67 per cent. This showed that the homemakers of younger and middle age group were attending to the activity of cleaning the house. An analysis of the educational status of the respondents revealed that 46.6 per cent of respondents were graduate followed by 21.6 per cent who were matriculate while 5.00 per cent of the respondents were illiterate. About 82.0 per cent of the respondents lived in nuclear family as compared to joint family which was found to be only 18.3 per cent.

Regarding the size of the family, majority of the families (61.6 %) had members up to 4 while 36.6 per cent families had 5 to 8 members in their family; however 1.67 per cent families had more than 8 members in their family. Majority of the respondents were from business class families (61.6%) whereas 38.3 per cent belonged to service class families. Family income had been worked out by considering income from all sources that is income of head of the family and other members of the family. The maximum percentage of the respondents *i.e.* 40.00 per cent had monthly income above Rs. above 40,000 while 26.6 per cent of the respondents had family income up to Rs. 20,000 per month. Out of the total sample, 60.0 per cent respondents had a house of 100 – 200 sq. yd. while 26.6 per cent respondents owned a house of more than 200 sq. yd. however 13.33 per cent respondents had a small house of 100 sq. yd.

Consumption pattern of cleansing agents among respondents and problems experienced while using these :

The consumption pattern of cleansing agents by the respondents was studied in terms of respondent's preference for the type of cleansing agents for floor tile / toilet cleaning, factors affecting choice of cleansing agents, frequency of using different cleansing agents, their average monthly consumption and expenditure on cleansing agents.

It is clear from the data of Table 1 that the maximum percentage of respondents (96.6 %) preferred commercial liquid cleaners for floor tiles and toilet bowl cleaning. The possible reason for preferring commercial liquid cleaners may be high publicity of these, commercial sale offers by the manufacturers and non – availability of better alternatives. Average quantity of commercial liquid cleaners being used was 1.76 lit. / month and average monthly expenditure on these cleaners was Rs. 102.00. The second most preferred cleansing agent was detergent powders which were used by 16.6 per cent of the respondents. The average quantity of detergent powders used was 1.46 kg / month and the total amount spent on detergent powders came out to be Rs. 49.6 / month. Acid and soap solutions were less preferred cleansing agents among the respondents. Soap solution was a least preferred cleansing agent and was being used by only 5.00 per cent of the respondents; its average quantity used was only 0.14 lt. / month.

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents according to their preferences, consumption and expenditure on different cleansing agent for floor tiles/toilets (n=60)

Type of cleansing agents	Preference (f)	%	Average consumption/month	Price Rs. / kg. OR Rs. / Litre	Average expenditure Rs./month
Detergent powders	10	16.6	1.46 kg. / month	34	49.6
Soap solutions	3	5.00	0.14 litre / month	12	1.68
Acid	6	10.0	0.18 litre / month	18	3.24
Commercial liquid cleaners	58	96.6	1.76 litre / month	58	102.0

Multiple Responses f – frequency % - percentage

Factors affecting selection of cleansing agents :

A large number of brands of various types of cleansing agents are available in the market that calls for intelligent decision making on the part of the consumers, which in turn are influenced by the consumers' past experience, popularity of the product, price, cleansing efficiency, ingredients used, colour and odour of the product.

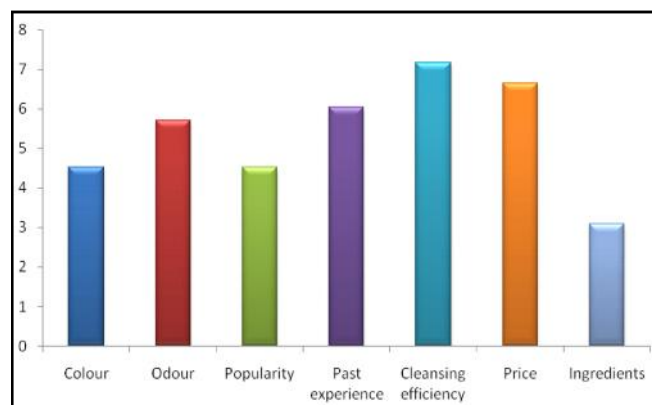


Fig. 1 : Distribution of respondents according to the factors considered while selecting cleansing agents

It is evident from Fig. 1 that the respondents considered various attributes while selecting the detergents.

'Cleansing efficiency' was ranked first (mean score-7.18) by the respondents followed by price of the product (mean score – 6.65) and past experience (mean score – 6.05) which obtained the second and third rank, respectively. The findings further indicated that ingredients of the product scored the last rank (mean score-3.10) indicating that the respondents were least bothered to know the contents of the product. The above observations are supported by the findings of Nehra *et al.* (2004) and Neelam *et al.* (2004) who also reported that most of their respondents gave first preference to the most economical cleansing agents followed by those having greater cleansing efficiency and earlier experience of the respondents.

Type of health problems experienced by the respondents :

As per literature, cleansing products contain many

different chemicals which may cause irritation of skin, eyes, digestive disorders and breathing complications etc. Keeping this in mind an enquiry was made to explore the problems experienced by the respondents while using different cleansers. Table 2 contains data with respect to various health problems experienced by respondents after using detergent powders, commercial liquid cleansing agents and acid. The number of users (respondents) for these was 10, 58 and 6, respectively. The percentages were thus worked out accordingly. The findings in Table 2 revealed that maximum percentage of the respondents (80.0%) faced the problem of dryness of skin after using detergent powders, followed by rashes on the skin (60.0%).

Table 2 further shows that 22.4 per cent respondents experienced rashes by using commercial liquid cleansing agents. An equal percentage of the respondents *i.e.* 30.0 per cent reported the problem of itching due to use of detergent powder and acid. These problems may be the result of harmful ingredients used in many of commercial cleaners available in the market. Apart from skin problems, the respondents also reported other health problems with the use of different cleansing agents. All the respondents using acid reported the problem of eye irritation, a small percentage of respondents *i.e.* 8.62 per cent reported the problem of asthma, giddiness, dryness and itching of the skin.

As far as detergent powders are concerned 60.00 per cent respondents experienced asthmatic problems, while 20.00 per cent reported eye irritation. Whereas in case of commercial liquid cleaners, 22.4 per cent faced the problem of asthma followed by eye irritation and headache 8.62 per cent. The above findings are supported by Mackenzie (2005) who found that Formaldehyde is a toxic substance, which is included in some of the household cleaners and even cosmetics. Fumes arising out of such cleaners can accumulate in poorly ventilated areas and thus cause headaches, nausea, watery eyes, sore throats, lung irritation, and serious respiratory damage.

Satisfaction of respondents with different cleansing agents :

Satisfaction is an important component which affects

Type of problem	Detergent powders		Commercial liquid cleansing agents		Acid	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Skin problems						
Itching	3	30.0	10	17.2	3	30.0
Dryness	8	80.0	12	20.7	1	16.6
Rashes	6	60.0	13	22.4	5	8.62
Other problems						
Eye irritation	2	20.00	5	8.62	6	100.0
Breathing problems	6	60.00	13	22.4	5	8.62
Giddiness	0	0.0	5	8.62	5	8.62

*Multiple responses

f-Frequency % – percentage

the preference and consumption of a cleansing agent. The respondents using a particular cleansing agent were requested to express the level of their satisfaction about the same.

The data presented in Fig. 2 show that maximum percentages of respondents (80%) were highly satisfied with the performance of detergent powders and commercial liquid cleansing agents.

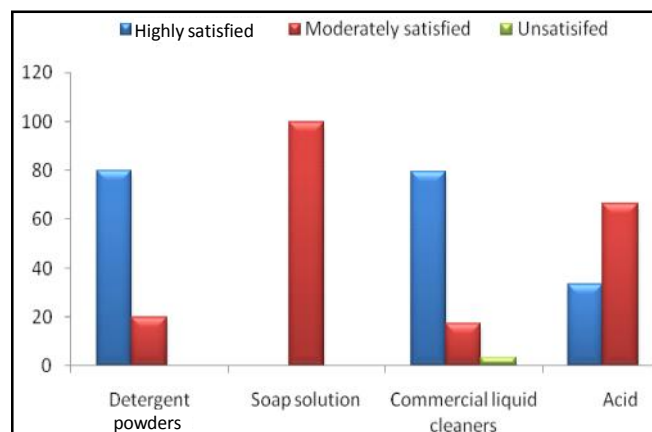


Fig. 2 : Distribution of respondents according to their level of satisfaction for different types of cleansing agents

Distribution of respondents according to their level of satisfaction for different types of cleansing agents :

As far as soap solution is concerned 100.0 per cent of the respondents were moderately satisfied. In case of acid, one third of the respondents were highly satisfied while rest of the respondents expressed moderate level of satisfaction. However only 3.45 per cent respondents were unsatisfied with the commercial liquid cleansing agents. The possible reason of dissatisfaction for commercial liquid cleansers might be the high cost of these.

Conclusion :

The findings of the present study revealed that the maximum percentage of respondents *i.e.* 96.6 per cent were using commercial liquid cleaners for the purpose of household cleansing, while 16.6 and 5.00 per cent respondents used detergent powder and soap solution for household cleansing, respectively. Only 10.0 per cent respondents were using acid

for household cleansing. The findings further revealed that the respondents considered various attributes while selecting the detergents. 'Cleansing efficiency' was ranked first with a mean score – 7.18 by the respondents followed by 'Low cost' mean score – 6.65 which obtained the second rank. Ingredients of cleansing agents with a mean score – 3.10 scored the last rank indicating that respondents did not consider the content of the product while making the selection. Which is one of the important criteria for wise selection of detergents.

The largest percentage of the respondents (80.0%) faced the problem of dryness of skin due to detergent powder. Minimum skin problem was reported in case of liquid detergents. Only 22.4 per cent respondents reported breathing problems by using liquid cleansing agents, which may be due to strong acid being used in commercial cleaners. A small percentage of the respondents (8.62%) had asthmatic problems by using acid. So, homemakers need to be educated about using of mild cleansing agents, such as borax, baking soda, vinegar and washing soda etc. which are safe alternatives for cleaning / disinfection of surfaces and are much cheaper than branded commercial cleaners.

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