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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS VARIOUS TYPES OF SUNFEAST (ITC) BISCUITS IN KOVILPATTI- A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Every organization envisioned at maximizing the productivity and the profit. The company never fails to show immense interest on knowing their customer requirements. Fulfilling the needs and satisfying the customers becomes very much essential, hence a satisfied customer is an unpaid advertiser for the company. It is equally important to satisfy the dealers and retailers if the company is in the business of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGS). The consumer behaviour varies from brand to brand on the basis of quality, quantity, price, taste, advertisement etc. In India the biscuit industry was started in the middle of the 19 century. In 1887, the first Biscuits bakery was set up in India. This research paper is a study on consumer buying behavior on Sunfeast (ITC) biscuits in Kovilpatti Area. The instrument used to collect data for the study was the structured interview schedule.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview of Indian Biscuit Industry

In India the biscuit industry was started in the middle of the 19 century. In 1887, the first bakery was set up in India. There were four factories during Second World War. The Second World War helped the industry to prosper with an increases need for its products both for military and civilian consumption. After Second World War the biscuit production in India increased rapidly. The total production of biscuit in India is estimated to be around 50 lakhs Metric Ton Now there are more than 31 units in the organized sectors but also there are many small-scale industries involved in biscuits productions. Biscuit making is made adaptable to small-scale units because of the simple manufacturing process, easy availability of raw materials and the low cost involved in its production. The ingredients that go in its production are wheat, flour, leaving ageing, permitted, emulsifier, and flavor and dough conditioners. India is ranked third after USA and China amongst the global biscuits producers.

SWOT Analysis for Indian Biscuit Industry

Strength

- Abundant availability of raw Material
- Vast network of manufacturing facilities all over the country
- Vast domestic market and urbanizations

Weakness

- Low availability of adequate infrastructure
- Lack of adequate quality control and testing methods as per the International standards

- Inefficient supply chain due to large number of intermediates and
- High requirements of working capital

Opportunity

- Rising Income levels and changing consumption patterns
- Favourable demographic profiles and changing life styles
- Integrating of development in contemporary technologies such as electronics and material sciences, bio technology etc.
- Offer vast scope for rapid improvement and progress and
- Opening of global markets

Weakness

- Affordable and cultural preferences for fresh food
- High Inventory Carrying Cost
- High Packing Cost
- High Taxation
- Competition between national and regional players

About ITC

ITC was formed on August 24, 1910 under the name Imperial Tobacco Company of India Limited. Later the name of the Company was changed from Imperial Tobacco Company of India Limited to India Tobacco Company Limited in 1970 and then to I.T.C. Limited in 1974. ITC contains a wide range of businesses - Cigarettes & Tobacco, Hotels, Information Technology, Packaging, Paperboards & Specialty Papers, Agri-business, Foods, Lifestyle Retailing, Education & Stationery and Personal Care. Finally the company changed its name to 'ITC Limited' on September 18, 2001. ITC's foray into the Foods business is an outstanding example of successfully blending multiple internal competencies to create a new driver of business growth.

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It began in August 2001 with the introduction of 'Kitchens of India' ready-to-eat Indian gourmet dishes. In 2002, ITC entered the confectionery and staples segments with the launch of the brands mint-o and Candyman confectionery and Aashirvaad Atta (wheat flour). ITC's entered the fast growing branded snacks category with Bingo! in 2007. In just over a decade, the Foods business has grown to a significant size with over 200 differentiated products under six distinctive brands, with an enviable distribution reach, a rapidly growing market share and a solid market standing. In July 2003, ITC forayed into the Biscuits market with the Sunfeast range of Glucose, Marie and Cream Biscuits. Sun feast's brand essence connotes happiness, contentment, satisfaction and pleasure. In a span of 9 years, Sunfeast has well-established presence in almost all categories of biscuits and is also a key player in the pasta and instant noodles segments.

Need for the Study

The term consumer behaviour refers to the behaviour that consumer's display in searching, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect, will satisfy their needs. Consumers are highly complex individuals, subject to a variety of psychological and sociological needs apart from their survival needs. Needs and priorities of different consumers segment differ drastically. In this competitive era, a large number of biscuits brands are available to consumers and the study examines how they prefer to buy from the quantum.

Major Brands

The well known companies which produce biscuits are:

Auro Foods (True), Bakeman's, Britannia Industries Limited, Kellogg's, Kwality, Nutrine(Sara Lee), Parle, Sunfeast (ITC) and Smithkline Beecham.

Statement of the Problem

The topic deals with the study of consumer behaviour towards Sunfeast Biscuits. The consumer behaviour varies from brand to brand on the basis of quality, quantity, price, taste, advertisement etc. The complications had undergone to identify consumers' reaction. Therefore being interested to know, the degree to which consumer behaviour varies with income, age, sex or other characteristics induced the selection of this study.

Scope of the Study

The study is conducted to know the consumers' preferable taste, awareness about various brands, about the choice and their frequency of preference, satisfaction of Sunfeast Biscuit.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the consumer behaviour of Sunfeast biscuits
- To identify the awareness about Sunfeast biscuits available in the market
- To identify the factors influencing the buyer
- To study the satisfaction level of the various types of Sunfeast biscuits

METHODOLOGY

For the present study, a questionnaire was used for data collection. A random sampling technique was adapted on consumers who used different types of Sunfeast Biscuits in Kovilpatti, Thoothukudi District. The researcher has prepared well structured questionnaire for collecting the primary data from the consumers. Questionnaires were

received from 110 consumers only out of 150 consumers after which were filled by them. This constitutes 73 percent of the total response.

Limitations of the Study

The study has the following constraints:

The sample sizes are restricted to 110 customers due to time and financial constraints. Convenience sampling has its own limitations, being biased and unsatisfactory. 110 customers sample cannot be generalized to entire universe. The study is conducted considering the prevailing conditions which are subject to change in future.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected by different methods were analyzed and interpreted and same presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender Wise	No of Respondents	Percentage
Male	49	44.55
Female	61	55.45
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The Table 1 clearly indicates the categories of different gender respondents. Total 150 questionnaires were distributed and 49 questionnaires from male and 61 from females were received. The data indicates that sample is dominated by female respondents. (that's 55.45 Percentage)

Table 2. Respondents Purchase Pattern of Sunfeast Biscuits

Purchase Pattern	No of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	9	8.19
Weekly	18	16.36
Fortnight	24	21.82
Monthly	42	38.18
Occasionally	17	15.45
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

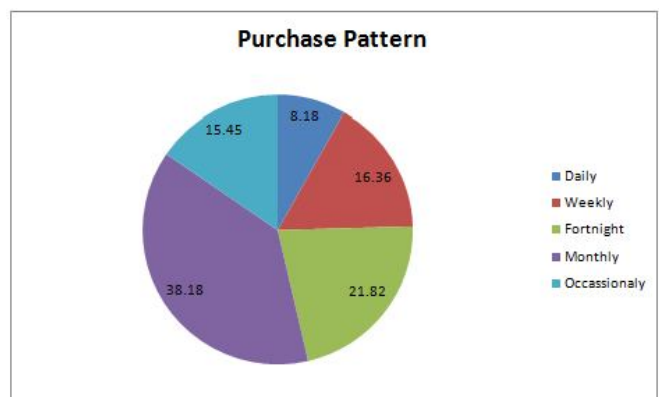


Chart 1. Purchase Pattern

The Table 2 and Chart 1 indicates that majority of the respondents (38 Percent) pattern of purchase of Sunfeast Biscuits once in a month and 22 percent of the respondents said the purchase of Sunfeast Biscuits once in a Fortnight. Followed by weekly and occasionally for 16 percentages and 15 percentage respectively.

Table 3. Respondents of Basis on Age

Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage
Up to 25	9	8.19
26-35	18	16.36
36-45	38	34.55
46-55	33	30.00
56 and above	12	10.90
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 clearly shows that most of the respondents are in the age group of 36 to 45 (35 Percentage) and 46 to 55 (30 Percentage).

Table 4. Classification of Occupation

Occupation	No of Respondents	Percentage
Students	30	27.27
Employee	22	20.00
Businessman	18	16.36
Housewives	40	36.36
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 discuss that, out of 110 respondents, 36 percent people are housewives, 27 percent people are students and 20 percent are employees, and remaining 16 percent respondents are businessman.

Table 5. Sources of Awareness about Sunfeast Biscuits

Sources of Awareness	No of Respondents	Percentage
Advertisement	37	33.64
Friends & Relatives	22	20.00
Shops	33	30.00
Children	18	16.36
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The Table 5 indicates the source of awareness of the respondents. Out of 110 respondents, 37 (34 Percentage) respondents said that, they got the awareness through advertisement and 33 (30 Percentage) respondents said they got the awareness through shops. 20 percentage of the respondents got the awareness through their friends and relatives.

Table 6. Consumption per Month for Sunfeast Biscuits

Pocket	No of Respondents	Percentage
Up to 2 Pocket	17	15.45
3-5 Pocket	36	32.73
6-8 Pocket	43	39.09
More than 9 Pocket	14	12.73
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 6 exhibits the distribution of respondents according to their monthly consumption. Among the total respondents, 17 respondents purchasing up to 2 pocket per month, 36 respondents purchasing 3-5 pockets per month, 43 respondents are purchasing 6-8 pockets per month and the remaining 14 respondents are purchasing more than 9 pockets per month.

Table 7. Reason for buying Sunfeast Biscuits

Reason	No of Respondents	Percentage
Quality	39	35.45
Price	28	25.45
Taste	23	20.91
Package	12	10.91
Free Gifts	8	7.27
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

From the above Table, clearly indicates that, the reason for buying Sunfeast Biscuits is mostly for its quality and while few of them prefer it for its low prices. 39 respondents are consuming for its quality, 28 respondents prefer for its price, 23 respondents are consuming for taste, and 12 respondents are preferring for its packages and remaining 8 respondents are preferring for the free offers given with the product.

Table 8. Opinion about Price of the Biscuits

Opinion	No of Respondents	Percentage
Reasonable	87	79.09
Costly	23	20.91
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from Table 8 that, most of the respondents feel that the price is reasonable, while some of them feel that the price is costly.

Table 9. Availability of the Biscuits in Market

Availability	No of Respondents	Percentage
Easily Available	101	91.82
Not available	9	8.18
Total	110	100.00

Source: Primary Data

From the above Table it is seen that most of the respondents feel that it is easily available in the market while few of them feel it is not available in the market.

Suggestions

- The company may provide the biscuits at reduced / concessional price to the customers in Kovilpatti provided at round off price say Rs.1 or Rs.2
- The company may advertise by television, newspaper & hoardings etc.
- The company may advertise to create awareness regarding the nutrients included in the biscuits
- The company may provide samples to the customers
- The company may provide some consumer offer to the customer
- The company may introduce new products which would help the customers for their taste
- Mostly respondents suggested for reduction of prices
- Give different shapes, which will be new & will be attractive for children
- Introduce new products, which can be meant for occasions
- Improving the taste and also giving more flavors can attract more customers

Conclusions

The market study on biscuits at Kovilpatti city has helped to know the status of biscuits. It has revealed the requirements of the retailers, the profile, characteristics, and taste of the consumer of biscuits. Sunfeast biscuits have a good market share in Kovilpatti city.

Carrying out relevant sales promotional activities can increase biscuits demand in Kovilpatti city with regard to various brand of biscuits. This study has helped the researcher to gain good experience and more information about the biscuit market.

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