

A STUDY ON EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN FOOD BUYING AND COOKING BEHAVIOUR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COCHIN

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Abstract—Food and grocery are the second-largest segment of the retail industry and the potential for new entrants in this segment is enormous, particularly in the urban markets where the lifestyle is undergoing tremendous changes. Growing at the rate of 30%, the Indian food retail is going to be the major driving force for the retail industry. The food industry is on a roller coaster ride as Indians continue to have a feast. Fuelled by— large disposable incomes and less availability of time – the food sector is witnessing a remarkable change in consumption pattern. Being the largest producer in fruits, milk, cashew nuts, coconuts and tea, and the second largest producer of wheat, vegetables, sugar and fish, and the third largest producer of tobacco and rice, now it's time to provide better infrastructure and facilities for the food processing industries to serve good quality and safest processed food. This industry is on a growing stage and understanding the market as well as customers demand is very important for a marketer in this field. The proposed study on the consumer attitude of working women towards food buying and cooking behaviour will surely provide many valuable insights for both the existing players and new entrants and also those firms which are planning to make its foot step in the field.

Keywords—Buying Behaviour, Demand, Occupational Status, Retail Industry, Working Women.

INTRODUCTION

For today's business change is the only constant. Firms need to always keep in track with the changing business scenario. Firms which do not change their marketing activities and adjust themselves to the market trends will go out of business in no time. Hence the marketing function of a business organization plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the firm. In a business organization, marketing department generates the revenues, essential for the survival and growth of the firm. The real challenge to marketers lies in generating those revenues profitably, by satisfying customers in a socially responsible manner. The post liberalization phase in India has gone through plenty of changes in the marketplace. This transition phase has not only spotted the massive inflow of brands coming from various countries all around the globe but also has observed the changing consumers and evolving trends in consumer behaviour. Thus, the transition phase has created the concept of "Holistic Marketing" in the contemporary times. Quality advancements, media revolution, technological advancements service culture, and healthy competition among firms to satisfy the consumers have educated the customers like never. Food is something that people consume daily. With more disposable income in their pockets, people are more interested in new products and their propensity to try and taste different things increases. Brands for Food and beverages grow due to the regular nature of their use and consumption. Undoubtedly food accounts for the largest share of consumer spending. The percentage of income spent in the households will drive a change in the food market. This change happening in the eating pattern of households is nothing short of a revolution. The time-starved working Indian consumer who is in no mood to spend an hour in the kitchen preparing food, is adopting a new eating habit to suit her lifestyle. She is stocking up on packaged and Ready-To-Eat / Cook products that not only serve the purpose of a tasty meal but also save the time. Thus, taste and convenience become major requirements. This is the result of the busier lifestyle of the modern consumer with both partners working and lesser time available for shopping as well

as preparing food at home. With time at a premium and Indians getting busier, the demand is more for “ONTHE-GO” products. By the next decade Indian consumers will be demanding convenience, not just of products but of availability too. The change in the family structure – disintegration of joint family and emergence of nuclear units, rise in single person household, migration of educated persons to cities, engagement of more women to their career goals, etc has increased the spread of more On-The-Go products.

TABLE 1: SHARE OF FOOD IN TOTAL CONSUMER EXPENDITURE

Year	Rural	Urban
1987-88	64.0	56.4
1993-94	63.2	24.7
1999-00	59.4	48
2004-05	55.0	42.5
2009-2010	53.6	40.7

Source: 66th round survey by *National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO)*

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. According to Madhukar Sab Navis, Ogilvy and Mather, the average age of the India in 2020 will be 29, while the average age in both China and the US will be 37 and in Europe 45. The modern consumer will be a “Spoilt for Choice” one, exposed to plenty of brands and options. They would tend to be more consumptive borrowing from future income for purchasing luxuries.
2. According to a report published by market research firm RNCOS in April 2010, titled “Indian Food and drinks Market: Emerging opportunities” the Indian food and beverage market is expanding rapidly and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 7.5% during 2009-2013 and would touch US\$ 330 Billion by 2013.
3. The study “Flavours of Incredible India-Opportunities in the Food Industry” carried on by FICCI –Ernst &Young notes that the Indian Food industry is a significant part of the Indian Economy with food constituting about 30% of the consumer wallet.
4. Martinez (1998) contends food is much the same as living things which includes changes and modernization through industrialization and urbanization to majorly affect food (Cwiertka, 2000). Agreeing to Gillette (1997) some social movements are happening in the arrangement and utilization of food and this to a great extent connected with modernization. Indeed, even the creation, preparing, dissemination of food was broadly formed by modernization (Sobal et al., 1998 and Sobal, 1999). Jussaume (2001) placed that the modernization of food making, circulation just as utilization is supported by business and strategy creators.
5. Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist (2003) set that at the point when an individual encounter significant level of time lack, they are probably going to have certain methods of contemplating and utilizing of time that may fortify their experience of time lack, which may sway on thoughts regarding what establishes their comfort food and preparing and this convenient implies numerous things to numerous individuals.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Food and grocery are the second-largest segment of the retail industry and the potential for new entrants in this segment is enormous, particularly in the urban markets where the lifestyle is undergoing tremendous changes. Growing at the rate of 30%, the Indian food retail is going to be the major driving force for the retail industry. The food industry is on a roller coaster ride as Indians continue to have a feast. Fuelled by– large disposable incomes and less availability of time – the food sector is witnessing a remarkable change in consumption pattern.

Being the largest producer in fruits, milk, cashew nuts, coconuts and tea, and the second largest producer of wheat, vegetables, sugar and fish, and the third largest producer of tobacco and rice, now it’s time to provide better infrastructure and facilities for the food processing industries to serve good quality and safest processed food. This industry is on a growing stage and understanding the market as well as customers’ demand is very important for a marketer in this field.

The proposed study on the consumer attitude of working women towards food buying and cooking behaviour will surely provide many valuable insights for both the existing players and new entrants and also those firms which are planning to make its foot step in the field.

Thus, the study is very much relevant in the current scenario when the Food Industry is poised for a diverse take off.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the effects of occupational status on women food buying and cooking behaviour.
- To study the Impact of working schedule on cooking behaviours.
- To identify the Preferences of working women on buying pattern on regard to food.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Sampling and Instrument

A descriptive research design was used with self-reported and self-administered questionnaire. The sample population was among the full-time working women in the IT sector, age between 25 to 50 years old, had servant and at least having one or more child living in the household. However, owing to the large numbers of working women in Cochin therefore those working women who reside in Cochin city chosen as target population.

DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE 2: AGE OF THE RESPONDENT

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	15-19	6	5.4%
2	20-29	92	82.9%
3	30-39	7	6.3%
4	40 and above	6	5.4%
	Total	111	100%

The table reveals that 82.9% belongs to the age group between 20 – 29. Other age groups are of very smaller percentage. This is not surprising as the jobs mostly offered in Cochin are IT based and that often demands youngsters.

TABLE 3: WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR LEVEL OF EDUCATION

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	SSLC	4	3.7%
2	Under Graduate	55	50.9%
3	Post Graduate	38	35.2%
4	Other	11	10.2%
	Total	104	100%

Among the respondents , as depicted in table, 50.9% belongs to the under graduates and 35.2% belongs to post graduates. This itself depicts the educational level of Keralites. In a place like Kerala which is considered as the most literate state, this depiction is not something unexpected.

TABLE 4: WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Employed full-time	33	31.4%
2	Employed part-time	19	18.1%

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3	Homemaker	10	9.5%
4	Not employed, seeking a job	42	40%
5	Retired	1	1%
	Total	105	100%

As per the above table 40% of the respondents are not employed. The survey was done when corona had stricken the world, as a result many lost their jobs. There is another 31.4% who are full time employed and 18.1% part-time employed. Only a 9.5% comes under homemaker group.

TABLE 5: DO YOU OWN OR RENT YOUR HOME

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Own	82	77.4%
2	Rent	24	22.6%
	Total	106	100%

According to the above table, around 77.4% owns a house. 22.6% of the respondents live in rental homes.

TABLE 6: HOW MANY CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 LIVE IN YOUR HOME

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	0	73	69.5%
2	1	16	15.2%
3	2	14	13.3%
4	3 or more	2	2%
	Total	105	100%

Around 69.5% has no children living in their homes. A very less number has children in their homes.

TABLE 7: WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR RELATIONSHIP STATUS? (PLEASE NOTE: CHILDREN HERE REFERS TO CHILDREN BELOW 18 YEARS)

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Married or cohabitating, no children at home	15	14.6%
2	Married or cohabitating with children at home	17	16.5%
3	Single, no children at home	59	57.3%
4	Single with children at home	11	10.7%
5	Divorced, no children at home	0	0
6	Divorced with children at home	0	0
7	Widow, no children at home	0	0
8	Widow with children at home	1	1%
	Total	103	100%

Accordingly

- Around 59 respondents belong to the single's group with no children at home.
- Around 16.5% belongs to the married or cohabitating group with children at home.

- Around 14.6% belongs to the married or cohabitating group with no children at home.
- Around 10.7% belongs to the group of singles with children at home.
- Fewer belong to other groups like widowed or divorced.

TABLE 8: ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? PLEASE USE THE BELOW SCALE

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	1- extremely unhappy	1	1%
2	2	12	11.8%
3	3	37	36.3%
4	4	29	28.4%
5	5- extremely happy	23	22.5%
	Total	102	100%

As shown in the above table, around 36.3% are said to be moderately happy. 22.5% being extremely happy and another 28.4% are happy on the rate of 4/5.

TABLE 9: HOW BUSY DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR LIFE

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	1- not at all busy	8	7.9%
2	2	14	13.9%
3	3	44	43.6%
4	4	27	26.7%
5	5- extremely busy	8	7.9%
	Total	101	100%

Around 80% of respondents are extremely busy or moderate busy. Only a very few states that they are not so busy.

TABLE 10: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL LEVEL OF STRESS? PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	5- extremely stressed	8	7.8%
2	4	15	14.7%
3	3	46	45.1%
4	2	24	23.5%
5	1	9	8.8%
	Total	102	100%

The pie table shows that around 60% are stressed and this is not something unexpected. IT field is a sector which takes lot of time and mental work that it in some way makes the employees life stressful. Especially when women has to take care of the household chores, family and children and son.

TABLE 11: WHERE YOU FALL ON THE FOLLOWING SCALE. COMPLETE THE SENTENCE; I AM...

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	5- a total foodie	22	21.8%
2	4	24	23.8%
3	3	47	46.5%
4	2	5	5%
5	1- not at all into food	3	3%
	Total	101	100%

A majority of respondents are addicted to food moderately or fully. A very few belongs o the category of people who are not so interested in food. This shows the relevance of food industry in the era.

TABLE 12: WHERE YOU FALL ON THE FOLLOWING SCALE. COMPLETE THE SENTENCE; FOOD IS A(AN)___ PART OF MY LIFE

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	1- inconsequential	5	4.9%
2	2	14	13.6%
3	3	38	36.9%
4	4	24	23.3%
5	5	22	21.4%
	Total	103	100%

36.9% believes that food is moderately significant in their lives. Around 40% are on the view that food is very significant. Only a very few, around 13.6% believes that it is not so significant.

TABLE 13: WHERE YOU FALL ON THE FOLLOWING SCALE. COMPLETE THE SENTENCE; I CONSIDER MYSELF ___ WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	1- very conservative	5	5%
2	2	9	9%
3	3	53	53%
4	4	15	15%
5	5- highly experimental	18	18%
	Total	103	100%

Around 18% of the respondents are highly experimental when it comes to food. Around 70% stand near to this opinion. Only a very few is very conservative.

TABLE 14: AMONG THE FOLLOWING WHAT DO YOU PREFER MORE

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Cooking from scratch	29	27.6%
2	Ready to eat foods	35	33.3%
3	Online food delivery	31	29.5%

4	Dining out	10	9.5%
	Total	105	100%

- 33.3% prefers ready to eat foods
- 29.5% prefers online food delivery
- 27.6% prefers cooking from scratch
- 9.5% prefers dining out

HOW OFTEN DO YOU EAT BY

- In case of cooking from scratch, A good majority cooks food once daily or more. Only a few depends on other ways for food
- In case of ready to eat foods; the dependence is on an appreciable amount. More people are inclined towards depending on them atleast on weekly basis
- In case of online food deliveries, people have variant opinion on this regard. Many are dependent on regular basis while many uses this option when needed. There is none who does not at all depend on these
- In case of dining out, this has got a very low graph. Not many depends on this on regular basis. The work schedule, traffic of Cochin demands this result of course.

TABLE 15: IS THERE ANY MAID OR COOK IN YOUR HOME

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Yes	32	30.5%
2	No	73	69.5%
	Total	105	100%

Accordingly, 69.5% have not hired any maids in their home at present. Only 30.5% have maids in their homes.

TABLE 16: HOW WILL YOU RATE THE SAFETY OF FOOD FROM OUTSIDE

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	1	28	26.9%
2	2	35	33.7%
3	3	37	35.6%
4	More than 3	4	3.8%
	Total	104	100%

The majority group i.e. around 35.6% believes food from outside are safer. Around the same percentage believes that the are not that safe. This is something which is very much dependent on their experience. And it always varies.

CONCLUSION

In an era where food industry has good scopes to prove their excellence, this study was something mandatory. The place selected for the study being Cochin, a typical example for urbanised culture, the need for the development of food sector is made very much clear. The study emphasises on the lifestyle of working women, the hurdles they face and thus making the relevance of food sector development more evident.

In this survey a study on dependence of working women on cooking, ready to eat foods, online food deliveries and dining out was taken note. The study paves way for the growing food sectors to concentrate on the need of the city. The merit and demerit here are the same. It is the busy life of this place and that could be made a merit by taking use of the food options. It becomes the demerit when the traffic, lack of space for cultivation etc. are not taken care. The speciality of a well-educated working group like the one taken for our survey is that the people here are broad minded to accept new

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innovations on the food industry. They are more attracted to convenient methods. Their busy and stressful working schedules have created this change.

People being well educated about healthy food habits; diet kitchens are all very much followed. Suppliers should concentrate more on the quality and being transparent about the ingredients to gain faith of the consumers.

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