Dhanya. K *et al*, International Journal of Advances in Agricultural Science and Technology,
Vol.5 Issue.7, July- 2018, pg. 109-123
ISSN: 2348-1358
Impact Factor: 6.057
NAAS Rating: 3.77

AN OVERVIEW OF CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR TOWARDS AROMA MILK PRODUCTS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

India is the largest producer and consumer of milk and milk products in the world. The production and consumption pattern has been showing a tremendous increase over these 40 years. Despite the availability of loose milk and traditional method of milk products, large number of people especially in urban areas, still prefer to go for packaged milk products available in the marketplace. This paper is a result of research work conducted to determine the buying behavior of Aroma Milk products. The research was conducted in Coimbatore district with the sample size of 120 respondents' selected using stratified simple random sampling methodology. Primary data was collected through well-structured, pre-tested interview schedule. Analysis of data, using SPSS software, revealed that most of the Aroma consumers are satisfied with the product and consider quality as the most important criteria for making purchase decisions. Further, it was found that marital status, age, education status influences the purchasing behavior of consumers. As per the findings, suggestions are given to the company to take initiation to fulfill the consumer needs.

***Keywords*:** Consumer Awareness, Buying Behavior, Preference, Attitude and Expectations.

Introduction

Milk products occupy an important role in people's diet in society like India where milk production and consumption plays a pivotal role in the functioning of Indian economy. With the largest number of cattle population in the world, India ranks first in the annual milk production with the total milk output of 165 million tonnes (during the Financial Year 2016-17) contributing 16% to the World's total milk production. Of this, Uttar Pradesh is the massive contributor of 17.6% and Tamil Nadu clenches ninth position by contributing 5.03%. The Indian GDP exhibits a decline phase in agriculture and livestock sector from 34.2 percent and 4.82 percent in 1980-81 to 17.46 percent and 4.43 percent in 2015-16 (National Dairy Development Board), whereas the share of livestock has been subscribing an increase in Indian agricultural GDP from 13.88 percent in 1980-81 to 27.25 percent in 2012-13 (National Accounts Division). The consumption of dairy products' has been exponentially growing due to its rich nutritional qualities in the country, and in regards with the facts and figures, India's milk production will further grow at a CAGR of around 14% between 2015-16 and 2021-22. Backed via strong domestic demand for milk, India's per capita availability leans at 289.4 grams in FY2017 (National Dairy Development Board). The Indian

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economy's sustained growth and a consequent rise in purchasing power over the last two decades resulted in the emergence of end number of dairy plants with the ability to afford fluid milk and diversified dairy products. As the consumer's taste and preferences are changing day by day, the market scenario is also changing day by day. Our country's consumption pattern for dairy products is quite unique as some of the Western Countries which are growing over the years due to increased income levels, migration to urban areas and changes in demographic characteristics.

Now, every corner in India demands quality and affordable dairy produce. The Dairy industries are stepping ahead for better quality products with acquired technologies with some quite innovations for their products and better marching in the market. Production of milk is confined only to rural areas, but the demand is found in all areas. Hence, to harmonize a biased supply, fluid milk and value added milk products have been initiated by the dairy. About 45% of the entire nation's milk production is ingested as liquid milk and the other 47%is further processed as varied traditional products as curd, cheese, butter, butter milk, ghee, khoa (partially dehydrated condensed milk), paneer, chhana (Cottage Cheese) and ice creams. Only 8% of the milk is used in the production of western products like milk powders, processed cheese and processed butter. These products are further branded and supplied throughout the nation to meet the consumer demands.

Problem focus

Milk is an essential commodity in life of every Indian consumer. They prefer healthy and energy drinks for consumption. Milk and Dairy products are easily available and offered by number of milk brands. The main challenge for marketers is to create the consumer loyalty by quality, freshness, aroma and taste. Marketers are necessary to know the consumers response towards their own brand milk and milk products of its availability, acceptability and affordability.

Objectives

- To assess the awareness level of Aroma milk products among the consumers.
- To study the consumers' buying behavior towards Aroma dairy products.

Limitations

- The research finding was applied only in Coimbatore district.
- Time was the major constraint in collecting the data.

Review of literature

Kariyawasam *et al.* (2006) studied consumer attitude and perception towards a milk product in Sri Lanka. The results indicated that consumers tended to purchase tetra-pack considering the attributes included in value and package subsets mainly, including purity, appearance, size, convenience and informational labeling etc. However, consumers did not believe that it enhanced those attributes included in 'food safety' and 'nutritional' subsets. The statistical outcome showed that age, gender, level of education and income had a significant impact on this behavior.

ISSN: 2348-1358
Impact Factor: 6.057
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Rangasamy and Dhaka (2008) made a comparative study on marketing efficiency of Dairy Products for Co-operative and Private Dairy Plants in Tamil Nadu and the study aimed at comparing the marketing of milk and milk products by dairy plants of co-operative and private sectors in Tamil Nadu. This resulted that the marketing cost for toned milk was same in both sectors whereas, it was higher for other milk in the co-operative dairy plant. All the dairy products earn more marketing margins in the private than cooperative dairy plant, except for toned milk. Hence, the marketing efficiency of cooperative dairy for all dairy products has been observed relatively less than that of private dairy plant, except toned milk. The study also found that value addition in dairy products should be done without compromising quality and consumer-oriented market research and development should be accorded greater attention.

Akbay and Tiryaki (2009) analyzed unpacked and packed milk preferences in Samsun province of Turkey. The results indicated that better educated household head, higher income households, younger and female household head and people who agreed with 'unpacked milk is not healthy' consumed more packed fluid milk than did others. Moreover, consumers who agreed with statement 'price of packed milk is expensive compare to unpacked milk' were less likely to consume packed fluid milk than did others.

Rubaina (2010) conducted a research on the customer preference towards dairy products. The study made an attempt to identify the customer's preference towards dairy products and to know about the factors which influence the selection of different brands of dairy products. The study revealed that the company should make survey to know the expectations of the consumers and produce that product in the manner so as to attract more customers towards their brand and advertisement can be done through mass media to increase sales and to educate customers about the product.

Jothi Mary.C (2013) conducted a study on consumer behavior of Aavin. The study focused on consumer behavior is a subset of consumer behaviors, which is concerned with decisions that lead up to the act of purchase. It could be the influence of the variable price brand image, quality of the product, regularity of service. The study attempts to bring out the factors leading to the purchase behavior and perception of consumers in buying Aavin milk. The consumers are satisfied with quality of Aavin brand compared to other brands.

Ahmed and Amin (2014) conducted a research to assess the impact of packaging on product purchase. According to the finding of the research study, it was observed that the packaging was the most important factor. It was further concluded that the packaging elements like its color, packaging material, design of wrapper and innovation were more important factors when consumers making any buying decision. Finally, it has also been concluded that the Packaging is one of the most important and powerful factor, which influences consumer's purchase decision.

Elangovan.N and Gomatheeswaran.M (2015) focused on consumer behavior towards various brands of milk and milk products. Consumers' lifestyles are influenced by number of factors. Like culture, subculture, values, demographic factors, social status, reference groups, household and also the internal makeup of the consumer, which

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are emotions, personality motives of buying, perception and learning. The study was examining the differences in consumer's behavior with socio and economic characteristics towards brand selection.

Research Methodology

a. **Research Design:** Stratified simple random sampling was used for data collection and in total 120 respondents was selected out of which 75 were Aroma product buyers and 45 were non-buyers.

b. **Method of Data Collection:** Primary data was collected through well-structured interview schedule regarding socio-economic characteristics, buying behavior and constraints faced by the consumers. Secondary data related to production of milk, demography were collected from various websites, publishes and unpublished sources.

c. **Tools used for analysis:** The following statistical tools were used for analysis and interpretation of the data.

   i. **Descriptive Statistics:** This is used to describe the basic features of the data such as simple percentage analysis, percentage change and averages to interpret the data related to socio-economic characteristics for assessing the awareness level and buying behavior.

   ii. **Z Test:** It is used for comparing the mean of a sample to some hypothesized mean for population, in case of large sample or when population variance is known.

$$Z = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu_0}{\sigma / \sqrt{n}}$$

   iii. **Likert Scaling:** It is a psychological measurement device to gauge the attitude, values and opinions. It functions by having a person complete a questionnaire requiring them to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements.

   iv. **Garrett's Ranking Technique:** The sample respondents will be asked to rank the constraints faced during the procurement of the products. These ranks will be converted into percent position by using formula,

$$\text{Percent Position} = 100 \times \frac{R_{ij} - 0.5}{N_j}$$

Where, R_{ij} – Rank given to the i^{th} factor by the j^{th} individual

N_j - Number of factors ranked by the j^{th} individual

Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the sample respondents were analyzed in accordance with objectives of the study and results are presented and discussed in the following sections.

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1. General Characteristics of the Sample Repondents

a. Gender of the Sample Respondents

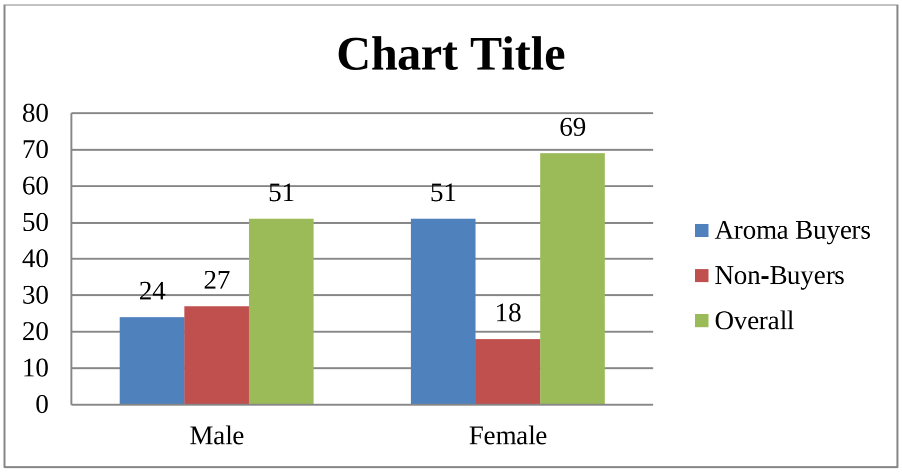

Figure 1. Gender of the Sample Respondents

It is evident from the figure 1 that, female are more involved in purchasing milk products both in overall category and also for Aroma products.

b. Age of the Sample Respondents

Table 1. Age of the Sample Respondents

S.No	Age (in years)	Aroma Buyers	Non Buyers	Overall
1.	18 – 25	8 (10.66)	12 (26.67)	20 (16.67)
2.	26 – 35	29 (38.67)	4 (8.89)	33 (27.50)
3.	36 – 45	24 (32.00)	18 (40.00)	42 (35.00)
4.	> 45	14 (18.67)	11 (24.44)	25 (20.83)
TOTAL		**75 (100.00)**	**45 (100.00)**	**120 (100.00)**

(Figures in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

It could be inferred from the above table that, 35 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group 36-45 years, followed by 27.50 percent of the respondents belonging to the age group 26-35 years. The trend differs in case of separating the respondents as Aroma Milk product buyers and non-buyers. The age group between 26-35 years (38.67) is mostly involved in purchasing Aroma Milk products, whereas among the non-buyers, the age group between 36-45 years (40 percent) accounted for major buying.

c. Educational Status of the Sample Respondents

The educational level of the sample respondents are categorized as illiterate, SSLC, HSC, Graduate and Post Graduate. In case of Aroma buyers, 37.33 percent of the sample respondents completed graduation while 16 percent of the sample respondents are post graduated and 25.33 percent and 18.67 percent of the respondents were completed SSLC and HSC. And, the reaming respondents of about 2.67 percent are illiterate. In regard with the non-buyers, 40 percent were graduated and 11.67 percent were completed post-graduation. Illiterate respondents accounted for about 8.89 percent among the non-buyers.

d. Occupational Status of the Sample Respondents

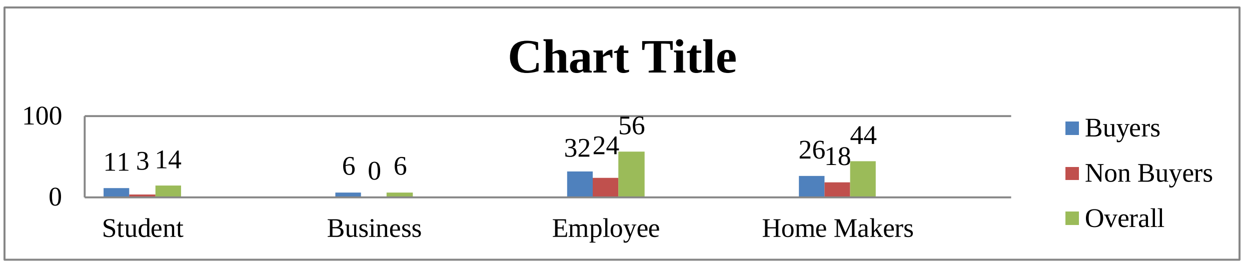

Figure 2. Occupational Status of the Sample Respondents

It can be concluded from the figure that, 46.67 percent of the respondents were employed in varied private organizations and Government organizations. Whereas, 36.67 percent were Home Makers that also includes senior citizens, who are more concerned about day-to-day life. Only 5 percent of the respondents had their own business and the remaining respondents were Students (11.67 percent).

e. Family Size of the Sample Respondents

Regarding the family size, 41.67 percent of the sample size was belonging to 3-4 members on overall category, followed by 27.50 percent of the respondents holding 5-6 members in their family. Only 16.67 percent have about 1-2 members in their family. In case of Aroma buyers, majority of the respondents (34.67%) hold 3-4 members in their family and the same trend lies with the non-buyers with 41.67 percent.

f. Monthly Income of the Sample Respondents

On accounting the monthly income of the respondents, in case of Aroma buyers, the income lies between Rs. 25,001 - Rs. 50,000 with a percent of 41.33, followed by 24% having less than Rs. 25,000. Whereas with non-buyers, the monthly income lies less then Rs. 25,000 with the percent of 60 among the respondents and 17.78 percent having monthly income between Rs. 50,001 - Rs.75,000.

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g. Earning Members in the Households of the Sample Respondents

In case of Aroma milk products buyers, 57.33 percent of the sample respondents hold earning members in their family as 2 or below 2 members, and 42.67 percent were more than 2 earning members in their family. Whereas among non-buyers, 53.33 percent were earning members more than 2 in their households and 46.67 percent were less than 2 earning members in their family.

h. Working Women in the Household of the Sample Respondents

Table 2. Working Women in the Household of the Sample Respondents

S.No	Particulars	Buyers	Non Buyers	Overall
1.	Working Women	45 (60.00)	14 (31.11)	59 (49.17)
2.	Home – maker	30 (40.00)	31 (68.89)	61 (50.83)
	TOTAL	**75 (100.00)**	**45 (100.00)**	**120 (100.00)**

(Figures in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

The results clearly indicated that the major share of the households with working women mostly preferred to buy Aroma Milk products as they easy to procure, and also affordable.

2. Awareness about the Aroma Milk Products among the Sample Respondents

The awareness of the sample respondents with respect to Aroma Milk products was analyzed considering the awareness about these milk products and source of awareness. The results of the analysis are presented and discussed in this section.

a. Awareness about the Aroma Milk Products among the Sample Respondents

Table 3. Awareness about the Aroma Milk Products

S.No	Awareness about Aroma Milk Products	Aroma Buyers	Non Buyers	Overall
1.	Aware	75 (100.00)	33 (73.33)	108 (90.00)
2.	Unaware	0 (0.00)	12 (26.67)	12 (10.00)
	TOTAL	**75 (100.00)**	**45 (100.00)**	**120 (100.00)**

(Figures in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

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It could be inferred from the above table that, 90 percent of the total respondents were aware about Aroma Milk products. However, all the respondents those who purchased Aroma Milk products were aware about these products. Among the respondents who did not prefer to buy Aroma milk products, 26.67 percent were not aware about Aroma milk products.

b. Source of Awareness about Aroma Milk Products among the Sample Respondents

Table 4. Source of Awareness

S.No	Source of Awareness	Aroma Buyers	Non Buyers
1.	Friends and Relatives	17 (22.67)	11 (33.33)
2.	Media	32 (42.67)	13 (39.40)
3.	Retail Store	26 (34.66)	9 (27.27)
	TOTAL	**75 (100.00)**	**33 (100.00)**

(Figures in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

Thus the results clearly indicates that mass media plays a vital role to create awareness about Aroma Milk products. Retail stores should take initiatives to create awareness about Aroma products among the non-buyers.

3. Buying Behavior of Aroma Milk Products among the Sample Respondents

Buying behavior of consumers with reference to Aroma Milk products was analyzed considering various aspects such as whether purchased Aroma Milk products, requirement of Aroma Milk products, source of purchase and expenditure on Aroma Milk product purchase. The results of the analysis are presented and discussed in this section.

a. Purchasing Behavior of Aroma Milk Products among the Sample Respondents

Table 5. Purchasing Behavior of the Respondents

S.No	Ever Purchased Aroma Products	Aroma Buyers	Non-buyers	Overall
1.	Yes	75 (100.00)	12 (26.67)	87 (72.50)
2.	No	0 (0.00)	33 (73.33)	33 (27.50)
	TOTAL	**75 (100.00)**	**45 (100.00)**	**120 (100.00)**

(Figure in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

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Hence, it was inferred from the above table that respondents those who are satisfied with Aroma milk products continue to prefer the same. And, those who purchased already and restricted to purchase later had faced some constraints towards the product.

b. Products Preferred by the Sample Respondents

Table 6. Products Preferred by the Respondents

S.No	Products	Aroma Buyers (n=75)	Non-Buyers (n=12)	Overall (n=87)
1.	Milk	58 (77.33)	8 (66.67)	66 (75.86)
2.	Butter	7 (9.33)	0 (0.00)	7 (8.04)
3.	Panneer	39 (52.00)	0 (0.00)	39 (44.82)
4.	Ghee	72 (96.00)	10 (83.33)	82 (94.25)
5.	Curd	13 (17.33)	0 (0.00)	12 (13.79)
6.	Butter	21 (28.00)	0 (0.00)	21 (24.13)

(Figure in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

It can be concluded from the above table that, 94.25 percent of the total respondents are much interested to purchase Aroma Ghee than other products, due to its consistency and aroma. 75.86 percent of the total respondents are attracted towards Aroma fluid milk. In case of Aroma buyers, 96 percent of the respondents are Aroma ghee consumers, followed by 77.33 percent of consumers preferring Aroma milk due to its thickness and consistency. Only 9.33 percent of the consumers prefer to buy Aroma butter and also the percentage level of consumers purchasing Aroma curd is also low (17.33%).

c. Procurement of Milk (in litres) by the Sample Respondents

Table 7. Procurement of Milk (in litres)

S.No	Milk Purchased (in litres)	Aroma Buyers
1.	Upto 1	29 (38.67)
2.	1 – 2	33 (44.00)
3.	Above 2	13 (17.33)
	TOTAL	**75** **(100.00)**

(Figure in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

It can be inferred from the table that, 44 percent of the sample respondents are purchasing about 1 - 2 liters per day, followed by 38.67 percent of the respondents procuring upto 1 litre of milk. Only 17.33 percent of the sample respondents are purchasing more than 2 litres of milk per day due to high price and large family size.

d. Preference towards Aroma Milk by the Sample Respondents

Table 8. Reason for Preference towards Aroma Milk Products

S.No	Reason for Preference	Aroma Buyers
1.	Quality	28 (37.34)
2.	Thickness	33 (44.00)
3.	Shelf-life	7 (9.33)
4.	Easy Procurement	7 (9.33)
	TOTAL	**75** **(100.00)**

(Figure in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

Hence, it could be concluded from the table that, the industry must come forward to increase the shelf-life of the product and also measures to be taken to increase the availability of the product.

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e. Source of Procurement for Aroma Milk Products

Table 9. Source of Procurement by the Respondents

S.No	Place for Procurement	Aroma Buyers
1.	Aroma Retail Outlets	42 (56.00)
2.	Local Shops	13 (17.33)
3.	Super Markets	20 (26.67)
	TOTAL	**75 (100.00)**

(Figure in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

It can be concluded from the above given table that, 56 percent of the sample respondents chosen Aroma retail outlets, followed by 17.33 percent of the consumers preferring to buy with their local available shops. Only 26.67 percent of the consumers are procuring from the super markets. Hence, it can be resulted that Aroma retail outlets are attracting more customers towards their product purchase.

f. Motivational Factor for Purchase of Aroma Products

Table 10. Source of Motivation towards Purchase

S.No	Source of Motivation	Aroma Buyers (n=75)
1.	Friends and Relatives	31 (41.33)
2.	Advertisement	13 (17.33)
3.	Self-realization	17 (22.67)
4.	Others	14 18.67)
	TOTAL	**75 (100.00)**

(Figure in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

This shows that the advertisement level of the industry is much low and measure should be taken to increase the knowledge about the product.

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g. Average Expenditure of the Sample Respondents towards Aroma Milk Products

Table 11. Average Expenditure made by the Sample Respondents

S.No	Average Expenditure (in Rs.)	Aroma Buyers (n=75)
1.	< 300	15 (20.00)
2.	300 - 350	46 (61.33)
3.	350 - 400	9 (12.00)
4.	> 400	5 (6.67)
	TOTAL	**75 (100.00)**

(Figure in the parentheses indicates percentage to the total)

It can be concluded that 61.33 percent of the total respondents spend about Rs. 300 - Rs. 350 per week for purchasing Aroma milk products, followed by 20 percent of the respondents spending less than Rs. 300 per week. Only 6.67 percent of the respondents are spending more than Rs. 400 in a week for Aroma Milk products. Hence, the retailers must bring more awareness about Aroma Milk products.

h. Perception about Purchase of Aroma Milk Products by the Sample Respondents

Table 12. Perception towards Aroma Milk Products (n=120)

S.No	Statement for Perception	Aroma Buyers	Non Buyers
		Mean Score	Mean Score
1.	Better quality	4.9	3.9
2.	Delicious in taste	3.6	3.1
3.	Reasonable pricing	4.0	1.7
4.	No adulteration	4.2	3.5
5.	Nutritional Content	3.9	3.5
6.	Perfect milk consistency	3.8	2.9
7.	Effective Advertisement	2.5	1.5

8.	Aroma products are high priced	1.5	4.3
9.	Packed milk products are bad for health	1.7	4.8

Hence, it is concluded from the study that Aroma milk product buyers are getting what they expect and regarding the non-buyers, they are not sure about their product's quality as well as they felt they are high priced. Though the Aroma milk products are better quality and are good for health, the respondents those who buy Aroma products still feel that they are highly priced. So, the perception of non-buyer towards Aroma Milk products states that these milk products are not up to the mark for them.

i. Attitude of the Sample Respondents towards Aroma Milk Products

Table 13. Attitude of the Sample Respondents

S. No.	Attitude (Aroma Buyers)	Buyers (n=75) Mean Score
1.	We should always read the label before buying any milk products	4.3
2.	Milk products should be purchased only from trusted outlets	4.1
3.	I personally think milk products should be a part of daily food.	4.0
4.	When I like something, I buy it without too much deliberation.	3.4
5.	Price doesn't matter when it comes to quality.	4.6
6.	It's good when the products are ready to eat or cook.	4.5
7.	I always try something new and unique.	3.2
8.	I often get influenced by advertisements of new products.	2.8

Thus, it is concluded from the results that the sample respondents were ready to spend extra money if they get good quality as well as ready to use products. But, they are also conscious of the stores as well as the product manufacturer.

j. Expectation of the Sample Respondents towards the Aroma Milk Products

Table 14. Expectations by the Consumers

S.No	Expectations (Aroma Milk Buyers)	Score (n=75)
1.	Reasonable pricing	4.7
2.	Improvement in labeling	4.4
3.	Maintain the quality of Milk Products	4.8
4.	Improvement in packaging	3.7
5.	Increase in quantity per packet	4.5
6.	Websites for new recipes for milk products	3.0
7.	Longer shelf life	4.7
8.	Provision of home delivery	4.5

It was shown from the table that, "maintaining the quality of Aroma Milk products" was ranked 1st with a mean score (4.8) followed by reasonable pricing and longer shelf life with 2nd and 3rd rank respectively. So, this thing should be considered by the retailers with utmost priority as it will directly affect the sales of Aroma Milk products.

k. Constraints Faced by the Sample Respondents towards Aroma Milk Products

Table 15. Constraints Faced by the Consumers

S.No	Aroma Milk Buyers	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Non Availability of products	29.40	9
2.	Higher price	77.88	2
3.	Lower shelf life	86.94	1
4.	Need to travel longer distance	56.71	4
5.	Lack of information (Expiry date, Nutritional information)	37.80	7
6.	Poor packaging	54.89	5
7.	Unsuitable quantity	76.38	3
8.	Non availability of door delivery	50.84	6
9.	Poor customer service	36.59	8

It has been proved from the Table 5.35 that "lower shelf life" is the major constraints faced by the sample respondents ranked 1st with the mean score of 86.94. Consumers feel that their products are high priced, which they categorized as 2nd position (Mean Score - 77.88), followed by the unsuitable quantity and required variation in packaging with 76.38 mean score as 3rd rank. The least ranked constraint is "non-availability of products" with a mean score of 29.40 and consumers expect door delivery across urban areas which ranked 6th locale (50.84 mean score).

Conclusion

Aroma milk has a good reputation among the customers, so it can be extended supplying products towards the customer demand for and availability in markets must maintained for the consumer to say in the same Aroma brand. Based on the findings of the study, there are still a large portion of consumers not satisfied with Aroma brand. Industry can target that segment and use it as an opportunity to expand their sales by satisfying those consumers also by retaining the existing consumers. For that they have to make their quality and availability their utmost importance than any other factors.

ISSN: 2348-1358
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