

## **WOMEN'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS BABY FOOD WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ERODE TOWN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Food is an important component of health care for infants, For this parents always try to give their baby nutritious food. Due to lack of time, home-prepared foods cannot be given to the children always by the parents. So they go for tinned foods available in the markets. The parents prefer tinned food not only for quality but also for some additional nutrients provided by the manufacturers. Hence at this point, it is essential to study the consumer's behavior towards baby food and the factors determining their satisfaction.

Several firms' had been engaging in production and marketing of instant food products. Hence, the consumers had greater options to choose from. Understanding the consumer behaviour would help the firms in formulating strategies to cater to the needs of the consumer and thereby increase their market share. Consumer's taste and preference were found to change rapidly, especially in a dynamic environment. In this context, a study on consumer behaviour was deemed to be important to understand the buying behavior and preferences of different consumers.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Food is the basic need of a man. It provides adequately for the baby" s growth and maintenance. Food furnishes the body with the energy required for all human activities. It provides materials required for the building and renewal of body tissues and substances that act to regulate body processes. The changing food environment is the reason for increasing variety of food forms available for purchase. Nutrition is one of the most important aspect a parent must consider during early stages of baby's life. Four to twelve months old is a period of intense change, requiring specific need and protection for babies. So, the use of processed foods in the feeding of infants is also on the increase in different parts of the world.

In the changing scenario, the "baby's health" is the top priority for the parents. Every father and mother wants to make their baby very strong and healthy. For this, parents always try to give their baby, nutritious food. As Indian are also going in for the nuclear family structure, the grandmother's care has reduced considerably. Also due to lack of time, they cannot always give their baby home prepared food. Parents are in search of readymade food for the baby without much annoyance. Hence, they purchase different types of baby food, which are available in the market to fulfill these requirements of baby food.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Food is an important component of health care for infants, For this parents always try to give their baby nutritious food. Due to lack of time, home-prepared foods cannot be given to the children always by the parents. So they go for tinned foods available in the markets. The parents prefer tinned food not only for quality but also for some additional nutrients provided by the manufacturers. Hence at this point, it is essential to study the consumer's behavior towards baby food and the factors determining their satisfaction.

Several firms' had been engaging in production and marketing of instant food products. Hence, the consumers had greater options to choose from. Understanding the consumer behaviour would help the firms in formulating strategies to cater to the needs of the consumer and thereby increase their market share. Consumer's taste and preference were found to change rapidly, especially in a dynamic environment. In this context, a study on consumer behaviour was deemed to be important to understand the buying behavior and preferences of different consumers.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives duly formulated for the study are as follows:

- To study the need and desire of consumers regarding the consumption of baby food.
- To study the reasons for selecting the particular brand by the respondents and to find out major brands available in the market.
- To identify the factors determining the satisfaction and measure their level of satisfaction.
- To find out the motivational factors to buy baby food and to find out the marketing tools and' techniques used by. the companies to capture the market.

## METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS

The study is confined to Erode town. The present study used both primary as well as secondary data. Field survey technique was employed to collect the primary data from the 250 selected sample respondents through direct interview method at Erode Town. For analyzing the data, simple statistical tools like Percentage analysis, Chi-square analysis, ANOVA, Mean, Mode, Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient, Regression analysis and time series analysis were used.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The area of study is restricted to Erode town.
- The number of respondents in the study is limited to 250.
- The accuracy of the study depends on the data provided by the respondents.
- The respondents views and opinions may vary in future.
- This study was based on primary data collected from sample consumers by survey method.
- As many of the consumers furnished the required information from their memory and experience, the collected data would be subject to recall bias.
- The findings of the study may be considered appropriate for the situations similar to study area and extra care should be taken while generalizing the results.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Adys Sharma (2009)** in his study entitled "Rote and Influence of Children in Buying Children's Apparel" has revealed that the size of the family or the gender of children in family affect the buying behavior in any way.

**Debra Harker, Bishnu Sharma, Michael Harker and Karin Reinhard (2009)** in their study "Leaving Home: Food Choice Behaviour of Young German Adults" reported that health consciousness, weight concern and attitude towards healthy eating are the significant predictors of fruit consumption, however natural content, weight concern are the significant predictors of vegetable consumption.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Percentage Analysis (Table 1.1)

- Majority (40.8%) of the respondents belong to below 25 years age group.
- Majority (58.4%) of the respondents are graduates.
- Majority (37.2%) of the respondents are home makers.
- Majority (70.4%) of the respondents fall under the family monthly income of above Rs.15000
- Majority (50.4%) of the respondents spend between Rs.2,000 and Rs.4,000.
- Majority (65.6%) of the respondents belong to nuclear family.
- Majority (48.4%) of the respondents were found to have 3 to 5 members in the family.
- Majority (52.4%) of the respondents are residing in urban areas.
- Majority (20.8%) of the respondents use Cerelac.
- Majority (87.2%) of the respondents have taken doctor's advice before giving baby food to the child.
- Majority (31.6%) of the respondents give baby food from 6 to 8 months.
- Majority (55.2%) of the respondents feed baby food two times daily on an average.
- Majority (38.4%) of the respondents purchase baby food from medical shops.
- Majority (39.6%) of the respondents purchase baby food whenever required.
- Majority (33.6%) of the respondents usually purchase one pouch.
- Majority (34.4%) of the respondents prefer availability for purchasing the particular brand.
- Majority (40.0%) of the respondents were influenced by doctors.
- Majority (44.4%) of the respondents faced calcium problems while using baby food for their child.
- Majority (61.6%) of the respondents recommend the particular brand of baby food to their friends or relatives.
- Majority (38.4%) of the respondents expect inclusion of further vitamins and minerals.

### Chi - Square Analysis (Table 1.2)

There is no significant relationship between the age group of the respondents and their level of satisfaction on brands of baby food, educational qualification of the respondents and their level of satisfaction on brands of baby food, occupation of the respondents and their level of satisfaction on brands of baby food, family income of the respondents and their level of

satisfaction on brands of baby food, the family expenditure or the respondents and their level of satisfaction on brands of baby food, nature of family of the respondents and their level of satisfaction on brands of baby food, size of family of the respondents and their level of satisfaction on brands of baby food, place of residence of the respondents and their level of satisfaction on brands of baby food.

### **Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) (Table 1.3)**

There is a significant relationship between the age group of the respondents and sources of information influenced to select the particular brand, occupation of the respondents and sources of information influenced to select the particular brand, the monthly family income of the respondents and sources of information influenced to select the particular brand, the size of the family of the respondents and sources of information influenced to select the particular brand,

There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of the respondents and sources of information influenced to select the particular brand, the monthly family expenditure of the respondents and sources of information influenced to select the particular brand, the nature of the family of the respondents and sources of information influenced to select the particular brand, the place of residence of the respondents and sources of information influenced to select the particular brand.

### **Distribution Of Time Slots - Mean and Mode (Table 1.4)**

The study reveals that most of the respondents feed the baby food to their child at the age of 6 months.

### **Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (Table 1.5)**

The study reveals that there is a positive correlation between the family income and the purchasing frequency.

### **Regression Analysis (Table 1.6)**

The study reveals that regression analysis estimates the values of the dependent variables from the values of independent variables.

### **Time Series Analysis (Least Square Method) (Table 1.7 through Table 1.10)**

The study reveals that purchasing quantity is in a raising trend by 71.28 i.e. if income is high, purchasing quantity is also high. Further it is found that, Cerelac brand highly influential and First food brand is less influential and it has to go very long way to compete with other brands.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

The following are the suggestions offered by the researcher for the company for better performance in the future.

- The baby food manufacturing firms should conduct large scale market surveys on the needs of the customers and interpret their marketing strategies with regard to the customer preference.
- The firms may sell quality product at less cost hence people below economic level can also buy it.

- The Government may conduct awareness program in both urban and rural areas towards baby's health and baby food.
- People need baby food in new flavours so the manufacturers may introduce new flavours.
- Manufacturers can introduce baby food in convenient small pouch packages like 100 gms.
- Exaggerating advertisement should be avoided which divert the customer's motive away from the product.

## CONCLUSION

In today's world of rapidly changing technology, consumers taste, need and preferences are also characterized by fast change. But baby's health is the prime factor in the changing world. If the above stated suggestions are considered by the manufacturers, it would certainly help to preserve baby's health and also to boost their market.

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## Percentage Analysis

Table No. 1.1

	Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age Group	Below 25 Years	102	40.8
	25 to 30 Years	95	38.0
	30 to 35 Years	48	19.2
	Above 35 Years	5	2.0
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	15	6.0
	Upto Schooling	59	23.6
	Graduate	146	58.4
	Professional	23	9.2
	Others	7	2.8
Occupation	Home Maker	93	37.2
	Agricultural	46	18.4
	Businesss	50	20.0
	Professional	52	20.8
	Others	9	3.6

	Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Family Income	Below Rs.5000	6	2.4
	Rs.5000 to Rs.10000	22	8.8
	Rs.10000 to Rs.15000	46	18.4
	Above Rs.15000	176	70.4
Family Expenditure	Below Rs.2000	42	16.8
	Rs.2000 to Rs.4000	126	50.4
	Rs.4000 to Rs.7000	62	24.8
	Above Rs.7000	20	8.0
Nature of Family	Nuclear	164	65.6
	Joint	86	34.4
Size of Family	upto 3 Members	83	33.2
	3 to 5 Members	121	48.4
	Above 5 Members	46	18.4
Place of Residence	Urban	131	52.4
	Semi-Urban	119	47.6
Brands of Baby Food	Nestum Rice	36	14.4
	Cerelac	52	20.8
	Farex	40	16.0
	Manna's Healthmix	27	10.8
	Lactogen	32	12.8
	Ragitone	21	8.4
	First Food	20	8.0
	Others	22	8.8
Classification	Yes	218	87.2
	No	32	12.8
Distribution of Slots according to Baby's Age	From 2 to 4 Months	36	14.4
	4 to 6 Months	62	24.8
	6 to 8 Months	79	31.6
	Above 8 Months	73	29.2
Frequency of Feeding	1 Times	52	20.8
	2 Times	138	55.2
	More than 2 Times	60	24.0
Place of Purchase	Departmental Stores	68	27.2
	Near by Shops	34	13.6
	Retail Shops	22	8.8
	Medical Shops	96	38.4
	Others	30	12.0
Frequency of Purchase	Weekly	11	4.4
	Fortnightly	44	17.6
	Monthly	96	38.4
	Whenever Required	99	39.6

	Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Quatity	One Pouch	84	33.6
	One Tin	58	23.2
	More than One Pouch	66	26.4
	More than One Tin	42	16.8
Reasons	Quality	54	21.6
	Reasonabel Price	38	15.2
	Taste	72	28.8
	Availability	86	34.4
Source of Information	Advertisement	31	12.4
	Friends / Relatives	47	18.8
	Doctors	100	40.0
	Self Decision	72	28.8
Problem Faced	Lack of Calcium	111	44.4
	Discentry	24	9.6
	Difficult to Digest	37	14.8
	Vomiting Sense	44	17.6
	Others	34	13.6
Recommend of Brand	Recommended	218	87.2
	Not Recommended	32	12.8
Future Expectation	Price Reduction	20	8.0
	Safety Package	49	19.6
	Free Gifts	85	34.0
	Inclusion of Further Vitamins and Minerals	96	38.4

### Chi-Square Analysis

Table No. 1.2

Factor	Calculated Value of ( $\chi^2$ )	Table Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significant Level
Age Group	10.117	21.03	12	Not Significant
Educational Qualification	13.513	26.3	16	Not Significant
Occupation	11.449	26.3	16	Not Significant
Family Income	9.928	21.03	12	Not Significant
Family Expenditure	7.434	21.03	12	Significant
Nature of Family	3.082	9.49	4	Not Significant
Size of Family	5.272	15.51	8	Not Significant
Place of Residence	5.339	9.49	4	Not Significant

## ANOVA

Table No. 1.3

Factors	Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	F Critical
Age Group	Between Groups	3.898	3	1.299	2.019	0.112
	Within Groups	158.358	246	0.644		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>162.256</b>	<b>249</b>			
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	9.69E-02	3	3.23E-02	0.05	0.985
	Within Groups	159.087	246	0.647		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>159.18392</b>	<b>249</b>			
Occupation	Between Groups	8.932	3	2.977	1.868	0.136
	Within Groups	392.092	246	1.594		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>401.024</b>	<b>249</b>			
Family Income	Between Groups	2.270	3	0.757	1.338	0.262
	Within Groups	139.074	246	0.565		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>141.344</b>	<b>249</b>			
Family Expenditure	Between Groups	0.152	3	5.072E-02	0.074	0.974
	Within Groups	169.448	246	0.689		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>169.600</b>	<b>249</b>			
Nature of Family	Between Groups	0.291	3	9.688E-02	0.425	0.736
	Within Groups	56.125	246	0.228		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>56.416</b>	<b>249</b>			
Size of Family	Between Groups	1.093	3	0.364	0.732	0.534
	Within Groups	122.431	246	0.498		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>123.524</b>	<b>249</b>			
Place of Residence	Between Groups	0.279	3	9.312E-02	0.369	0.775
	Within Groups	62.077	246	0.252		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>62.356</b>	<b>249</b>			

## Distribution of Time Slots - Mean and Mode

Table No. 1.4

Months	Frequency F	Mid Point m	fm
2 - 4	36	3	108
4 - 6	62	5	310
6 - 8	79	7	553
8 - 10	73	9	657
	<b>N = 250</b>		<b>∑fm = 1628</b>
<b>Mean = 6.15</b>		<b>Mode = 6.89</b>	



**Spearman's Rank Correlation Co-efficient****Table No. 1.5**

S. No	Income	Rank	Purchasing Criteria	Rank	D	D <sup>2</sup>
1	6	4	54	3	1	1
2	22	3	38	4	-1	1
3	46	2	72	2	0	0
4	176	1	86	1	0	0
						$\Sigma D^2 = 2$
<b>R = 0.8</b>						

**Regression Analysis****Table No. 1.6**

S. No	Income	Purchasing frequency	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY	
1	6	11	36	121	66	
2	22	44	484	1936	968	
3	46	96	2116	9216	4416	
4	176	99	30976	9801	17424	
		$\Sigma X = 250$	$\Sigma Y = 250$	$\Sigma X^2 = 250$	$\Sigma Y^2 = 21074$	$\Sigma XY = 22874$

**Time Series Analysis****Table No. 1.7**

S. No	Income	Purchasing Quantity	x	xY	x <sup>2</sup>	
1	6	84	-16	-1344	256	
2	22	58	0	0	0	
3	46	66	24	1584	576	
4	176	42	154	6468	23716	
		N = 4	$\Sigma Y = 250$	$\Sigma x = 162$	$\Sigma xY = 6708$	$\Sigma x^2 = 24548$

**Table of Point Estimation****Table No. 1.8**

Points / Brand Names	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Nestum Rice	9	50	166	22	3	<b>250</b>
Cerelac	14	49	163	24	0	<b>250</b>
Ferex	22	38	156	31	3	<b>250</b>
Manna's Healthmix	15	46	140	44	5	<b>250</b>
Lactogen	13	34	167	32	4	<b>250</b>
Ragitone	16	35	156	36	7	<b>250</b>
First Food	19	30	155	41	5	<b>250</b>
Others	16	49	133	42	10	<b>250</b>

**Table of Analysis of Point Distribution****Table No. 1.9**

<b>Points / Brand Names</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
Nestum Rice	45	200	498	44	3	<b>790</b>
Cerelac	70	196	489	48	0	<b>803</b>
Ferex	110	152	468	62	3	<b>795</b>
Manna's Healthmix	75	184	420	88	5	<b>772</b>
Lactogen	65	136	501	64	4	<b>770</b>
Ragitone	80	140	468	72	7	<b>767</b>
First Food	95	117	461	82	5	<b>760</b>
Others	80	196	399	84	10	<b>769</b>

**Ranking****Table No. 10**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Brand Names</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1	Nestum Rice	3
2	Cerelac	1
3	Ferex	2
4	Manna's Healthmix	4
5	Lactogen	5
6	Ragitone	7
7	First Food	8
8	Others	6