

## **A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF FAMILY AND PEER GROUPS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS DAIRY PRODUCTS**

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### **.Abstract**

Marketers have to recognize to consumers where will operate in market for creating a difference against their competitors and bein successful in market. Family, references groups and roles and statues affect the buying behaviour significantly. The most influential groups in the consumption behaviour or decision-making pattern of an individual are the family group and peer group. In this study emphasizes on the impact of family and peer groups on consumer behaviour with respect to dairy products. The family influence on consumer behaviour was investigated based on the family roles, role dominance and decision maker profile in the family. Similarly, the peer group influence was examined to understand the respondents' nature of recommending particular brand or product or store to others.

**Key words: Consumer Behaviour, Impact of Family groups, Peer groups, Dairy Products**

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## Introduction

Consumer behaviour is the study of when, why, how, and where people do or do not buy a product. (Durmaz and Jablonski, 2013: 61). The study of consumer behaviour does not only include reasons for buying but also the consumption process of the consumer at large. In the entire process of buying, consumers get driven by influences such as feelings, motivation, income, lifestyle, opinions, culture, personality etc ( Srivastava, 2013: 786). Through the application of sociology, psychology and demographics, marketers can begin to understand why consumers form attitudes and make decisions to purchase. Consumer-behaviour studies inform marketers, advertisers and public agencies how product and service selection is influenced by personality, perception, values and beliefs. For marketing, these influences are studied in the context of demographics, which includes ethnicity, age, marital status, size of family, income, education and employment (Kirchheimer, 2013: 1). Factors affecting consumer behaviours are stated in the topics below (Durmaz, 2008: s.36):

- 1. Cultural Factors:** Cultural factors are categorized in 3 sub-topics, which are; Culture, subculture, social class.
- 2. Social Factors:** Social factors have 3 subcategories; reference groups/peer groups, family, roles and statuses.
- 3. Psychological Factors:** It's divided as; motivation, intuition, learning, perception, attitude, personality, belief and manners.
- 4. Personal Factors:** One of the most important factors affecting consumer behaviour is personal factors. Social factors, which is the main theme of this study and one of the topics of behavioural sciences.

## Literature on Role of Peer & Family Members

Many marketers recognised the role of peer groups and family members as most important aspect in explaining the consumer behaviour process. This is because of the influence of these groups on individuals' perception, attitude and personality, which in turn influences an individual's decision making. This section mainly reviews the studies that focused on the role of peer and family members in consumer behaviour. Even though, the influence of peer and family

members is an important aspect in the purchasing decisions, the studies that enlightened on this issue remain scarce.

**Hampel (1995)** in his study ‘Terms and effects of family role structure in house purchasing decision’, a sample of 206 households was selected and both husbands and wives were interviewed. The findings of the study revealed that the role structure in family house buying decisions was affected by household characteristics. There was variation in the relative importance of determinants across sex, culture, and role structure.

**Raju (1996)** studied the consumer behaviour with reference to dairy products in India. Data was collected by using a questionnaire survey on 500 respondents from Madras City (Chennai). Respondents were classified into two kinds of segments such as income and age for the purpose of the study. The study investigated on the consumer motivation, purchasing preferences and peer influence in purchasing dairy product. Results found significant relationship between age and purchasing behaviour whereas mixed result with the income variable.

**BabolianHendijani and AbKarim (2010)** studied the relationships between personal and environmental factors and beverage consumption preferences of primary school children in Malaysia. Consumption of milk relative to other beverages such as mineral water, Milo and fruit juice among children was relatively low; children preferred flavoured milk to plain milk. Individual positive attitudes about the sensory aspects of milk, social acceptability (e.g. having family and friends who regularly consumed milk), availability of milk at home and packaging were more likely to positively influence milk consumption among children than exposure to advertising or awareness of the health benefits. The study suggest that the most efficient way to increase milk intake of children is to focus on increasing the social acceptability of milk through marketing campaigns to increase consumers perceptions of the sensory aspects of milk.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Having reviewed relevant dairy marketing studies, by exploring the research gap in the research studies so far, the present study has made a broad objective to explore the consumer behaviour towards dairy products in Chittoor district, thereby to arrive at consensus on the marketing

strategies to be followed in the dairy market. Hence, the present study focuses mainly on the factors affecting family and peer group influence with respect to dairy products.

### **Research Design**

Research in this area is both exploratory and descriptive focusing on the consumer behaviour with respect to dairy products. Consumer Demographics such as gender, age, income, profession, family size etc. were considered in the present study based on studies such as Fuller et al. (2007), Hacer and Melike (2010) and Sandeep et al. (2007). The consumption patterns studied by various researchers such as Raju (1996); Sandeep et al. (2007); and Topcu and Uzundumlu (2012) was taken as base in framing hypothesis and questionnaire statements in the present study. The studies conducted by various researchers such as Natalie (1999), Chimboza and Edward (2007), Manafzadeh et al. (2012) acts as basis for consumer preferences. Further, the present study also considered consumer motivation or purpose and consumer food habits for better understand of consumer behaviour in dairy market.

There are many different types of dairy products available in the Indian dairy market such as milk, curd, butter milk, ghee, ice creams, yoghurt, flavoured milk and milk powder. But, the dairy firms located in Chittoor district such as Heritage, Dodla, and Mother (formerly Balaji) are producing milk, butter milk, curd and ghee in common. Thus, the present study has considered these four dairy products to study the consumer behaviour in Chittoor district by sampling a mixture of both urban and semi-urban consumers.

The sample comprised of three urban areas i.e., three revenue divisions of Chittoor district and three semi-urban areas from the same revenue divisions. A sample size of 100 was drawn from each revenue division and similarly a sample of 100 from each semi-urban area. The revenue divisions selected for the study are Tirupati, Chittoor and Madanapalli.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To study the impact of family members in buying of dairy products.
2. To study the impact of Peer groups in buying of dairy products.

## Family Roles

There are eight distinct roles in the family decision making process such as influencers, gate keepers, deciders, buyers, preparers, users, maintainers and disposers. The number and identity of the family members who play these roles vary from family to family and from product to product. In some cases, a single-family member may independently assume different roles; in other cases, a single role might be performed jointly by two or more family members.

In purchasing dairy products, the initiator plays a vital role. Table 1 portrays about the initiator role played by the family member in purchasing dairy products. These details are useful in finding the target customer profile for dairy products.

**Table 1 Family Role - Initiator in purchasing dairy products (N=600)**

Family Role	Groups	Milk	Butter Milk	Curd	Ghee
Initiator	Father/Husband	77 (12.8)	96 (16.0)	119 (19.8)	80 (13.3)
	Mother/Wife	321 (53.5)	286 (47.7)	252 (42.0)	281 (46.8)
	Both	132 (22.0)	157 (26.2)	163 (27.2)	178 (29.7)
	Children	58 (9.7)	35 (5.8)	40 (6.7)	39 (6.5)
	Others	12 (2.0)	26 (4.3)	26 (4.3)	22 (3.7)
	Total	600 (100)	600 (100)	600 (100)	600 (100)

*Note: Values in brackets represent percentages.*

From the table 1, it can be noted that for all the dairy products, females plays an important role in families. 321 respondents (53.5%), 286 respondents (47.7%), 252 respondents (42.0%) and 281 respondents (46.8%) made a note that mother or wife is the initiator in purchasing Milk, Butter Milk, Curd and Ghee respectively. The next major frequency was recorded for both i.e. both

husband and wife or both father and mother. The initiator role played by males in purchasing dairy products found to be watery. Children and others found to be weak in playing initiator role in influencing the purchase of dairy products.

Having observed the role dominance in initiation, it is proposed to examine the role of family members in each aspect of purchasing dairy products such as brand selection, quantity, frequency and shopping.

## 2. Role Dominance

Husband – Wife involvement varies widely by product category and by stage in the buying process. Traditionally, wife has been the main purchasing agent in the family, especially in the areas of food and household products. The growing population of working women and cultural inclination towards equality between husband and wife raises the question of role dominance in purchasing and decision making. Thus in the present study, the role dominance of wife, husband, children and other family members in the purchasing of dairy products has been examined.

**Table 2 Role Dominance in purchasing dairy products**

Role Dominance	Groups	Milk	Butter Milk	Curd	Ghee
Brand	Father/Husband	188(31.3)	163(27.2)	150(25.0)	157(26.2)
	Mother/Wife	319(53.2)	352(58.7)	365(60.8)	364(60.7)
	Both	65(10.8)	57(9.5)	69(11.5)	50(8.3)
	Children/others	28(4.7)	28(4.7)	16(2.7)	29(4.8)
	Total	600	600	600	600
Quantity	Father/Husband	126(21.0)	119(19.8)	135(22.5)	115(19.2)
	Mother/Wife	396(66.0)	393(65.5)	405(67.5)	414(69.0)
	Both	50(8.3)	52(8.7)	36(6.0)	30(5.0)
	Children/others	28(4.7)	36(6.0)	24(4.0)	41(6.8)
	Total	600	600	600	600
Frequency in Buying	Father/Husband	153(25.5)	153(25.5)	163(27.2)	153(25.5)
	Mother/Wife	328(54.7)	322(53.7)	318(53.0)	339(56.5)

	Both	98(16.3)	87(14.5)	99(16.5)	75(12.5)
	Children/others	21(3.5)	38(6.3)	20(3.3)	33(5.5)
	Total	600	600	600	600
Shopping	Father/Husband	255(42.5)	208(34.7)	232(38.7)	217(36.2)
	Mother/Wife	176(29.3)	237(39.5)	228(38.0)	256(42.7)
	Both	118(19.7)	94(15.7)	111(18.5)	91(15.2)
	Children/others	51(8.5)	61(10.2)	29(4.8)	36(6.0)
	Total	600	600	600	600

*Note: Values in brackets represent percentages.*

### *Brand Selection*

Table 6.2 displays the role dominance in purchasing dairy products with respect to the brand selection, quantity preference, frequency of buying and shopping (buyer). From the table, it is the role of wife that dominates husband in the brand selection related to Milk, Butter Milk, Curd and Ghee. 188 responses (31.3%) for Milk, 163 responses (27.2%) for Butter Milk, 150 responses (25.0%) for Curd and 157 responses (26.2%) for Ghee revealed that husband is making the decision about the brand. The two categories such as ‘husband and wife’, ‘children or others’ found to be weak in the table with a range of 2.7% to 11.5%. Hence, children’s or others have very little contribution in deciding the brand of dairy products.

### *Quantity*

Again, Wife plays a dominant role in deciding the quantity of pack to be purchased. 396 respondents (66%) revealed wife domination in case of Milk and 393 respondents (65.5%) accepted the role of mother or wife in deciding the quantity of the product. 405 respondents (67.5%) and 414 respondents (69%) revealed the dominance of wife or mother in deciding the quantity of Curd and Ghee to purchase respectively. Husband has a limited role with 21% in Milk, 19.8% in Butter Milk, 22.5% in Curd and 19.2% in Ghee. Children and others have negligible role in deciding the brand of dairy products.

### *Frequency in Buying*

In the same line, frequency of buying is also dominated by wife role with 54.7% in Milk, 53.7% in case of Butter Milk, 53% in case of Curd and 56.5% in Ghee. Approximately 25% of the respondents revealed that husband is having role dominance in deciding the frequency of purchasing dairy products. The children and others role in deciding on frequency of purchase found to be very weak with respect to dairy products.

### *Shopping*

Unlike the previous figures and inferences, shopping displayed a different picture. Husband plays an important role in shopping. 255 respondents (42.5%) revealed that husband is purchasing Milk. Whereas 237 respondents (39.5 %) agreed that wife is responsible for shopping Butter Milk. 232 respondents (38.7%) revealed husband is buying Curd and 256 respondents (42.7) agreed that wife is purchasing Ghee. The shopper's role in the family found to be mixed with respect to dairy products.

The role of wife/mother found to be strong in case of brand selection, quantity of pack and frequency in buying. Though the role of husband/father found to be strong in shopping, mother/wife role also found to be equally competent, which shows the gender equality in taking family responsibilities in the current generation.

### **3. Decision Maker**

Table 3 emphasizes about the decision maker profile for dairy products. It is observed that father is the decision maker in Milk (49.8%), whereas mother dominates as decision maker in other dairy product. Children or others found to be poor decision makers in all the four dairy products.

**Table 3 Decision maker profile in purchasing dairy products (N=600)**

<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Groups</b>	<b>Milk</b>	<b>Butter Milk</b>	<b>Curd</b>	<b>Ghee</b>
<b>Decision Maker ROLE</b>	Father/Husband	299(49.8)	187(31.2)	189(31.5)	210(35.0)
	Mother/Wife	271(45.2)	375(62.5)	376(62.7)	359(59.8)
	Children/others	30(5.0)	38(6.3)	35(5.8)	31(5.2)
	Total	600	600	600	600



<b>Decision Maker AGE</b> (in years)	< 25	90(15.0)	177(29.5)	180(30.0)	187(31.2)
	25 – 40	180(30.0)	214(35.7)	211(35.2)	195(32.5)
	> 40	330(55.0)	209(34.8)	209(34.8)	218(36.3)
	Total	600	600	600	600
<b>Decision Maker EDUCATION</b>	Below Graduation	428(71.3)	394(57.5)	391(65.2)	355(59.2)
	Graduation	69(11.5)	113(18.8)	124(20.7)	159(26.5)
	Post-Graduation	103(17.2)	93(15.5)	85(14.2)	86(14.3)
	Total	600	600	600	600
<b>Decision Maker OCCUPATION</b>	Housewife	115(19.2)	43(7.2)	41(6.8)	61(10.2)
	Employee	237(39.5)	345(57.5)	347(57.8)	341(56.8)
	Business/Professional	160(26.7)	157(26.2)	156(26.0)	140(23.3)
	Others	88(14.7)	55(9.2)	56(9.3)	58(9.7)
	Total	600	600	600	600

*Note: Values in brackets represent percentages.*

It is interesting that people with less education i.e. below graduation are deciding the purchase of dairy products. 428 respondents (71.3%) made it clear that the purchase of Milk decision is taken by the family member who are having less education. 394 respondents (57.5%) revealed that decision of purchasing Butter Milk is taken by the person having less education. In the same line, 391 respondents (65.2%) and 355 respondents (59.2%) expressed that the family members with ‘below graduation’ are acting as decision maker in case of Curd and Ghee respectively.

This indicates that wife or mother is taking the decisions in the family in buying dairy products. The other groups such as ‘graduates’ and ‘post-graduates’ found to be weak as a decision maker with respect to selected dairy products.

From the table 3, it is noted that either working women or employee is deciding the purchase of Milk (39.5%), Butter Milk (57.5%), Curd (57.8%) and Ghee (56.8%). The next major responses falls under the category ‘business/professionals’, indicating that the decision maker of dairy products are either employees or professionals, in other words, they are earners in the family. The other categories such as housewife and others (students) got little frequencies in the survey.

## PEER GROUP INFLUENCE

Peer group influence is the influence of a person or group of persons which significantly influence the behaviour of an individual. Peer groups are usually conformed by the social network of an individual: family members, friends and colleagues, and inspirational figures, and can be a source of brand associations that mould the mental representations a consumer has of himself (Escalas and Bettman, 2005).

The present study has considered four item statements based on the existing literature to measure the peer group influence on the consumers. These items cover information, initiation, influence on brand and store choice. Each item was given with five-point scale to record the respondents' level of agreement.

**Table 4. Peer group influence with respect to Milk (N=600)**

Peer Group Influence for Milk	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D.
Gathering information from others to purchase Milk	-	124(20.7)	234(39.0)	182(30.3)	60(10.0)	3.30	0.907
Initiation from others to purchase Milk	-	110(18.3)	248(41.3)	175(29.2)	67(11.2)	3.33	0.902
Recommendation of others to choose Brand of Milk	7(1.2)	117(19.5)	234(39.0)	182(30.3)	60(10.0)	3.29	0.930
Recommendation of others in choosing Store for purchasing Milk	-	89(14.8)	269(44.8)	175(29.2)	67(11.2)	3.37	0.868
Overall Peer Group Influence for Milk						3.32	0.887

Notes: Values in brackets represent percentages.

‘-’ represent no response.

Table 4 displays the recorded frequencies, its mean and standard deviation for each item with respect to Milk. From the table, highest mean was observed for the influence of peer group on choosing a store to purchase Milk (Mean=3.37), followed by initiation from others (Mean=3.33). Respondents revealed that they are using peer groups to gather information (Mean=3.30) and to decide the brand of Milk to purchase (Mean=3.29). The overall mean of peer group influence with respect to purchase of Milk was 3.32, which shows there the influence of others while purchasing Milk was not too strong.

**Table 5 Peer group influence with respect to Butter Milk (N=600)**

<b>Peer Group Influence for Butter Milk</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
Gathering information from others to purchase Butter Milk	72 (12.0)	161 (26.8)	201 (33.5)	97 (16.2)	69 (11.5)	2.88	1.166
Initiation from others to purchase Butter Milk	84 (14.0)	88 (14.7)	114 (19.0)	195 (32.5)	119 (19.8)	3.30	1.319
Recommendation of others to choose Brand of Butter Milk	105 (17.5)	95 (15.8)	110 (18.3)	157 (26.2)	133 (22.2)	3.20	1.404
Recommendation of others in choosing Store for purchasing Butter Milk	71 (11.8)	174 (29.0)	124 (20.7)	117 (19.5)	114 (19.0)	3.05	1.311
Overall Peer Group Influence for Butter Milk						3.10	0.629

Notes: Values in brackets represent percentages.

‘-’ represent no response.

Table 5 shows the peer group influences with respect to purchase of Butter Milk. From the table, the highest mean was observed for the initiation (Mean=3.30), followed by influence of others on choosing brand (Mean=3.20). The table reveals weak influence of peer group in gathering

information (Mean=2.88) and choosing store to purchase Butter Milk (Mean=3.05). The overall mean score of peer group influence with respect to Butter Milk (Mean=3.10) was found to be low when compared to the peer group influence with respect to Milk (Mean=3.32).

**Table 6 Peer group influence with respect to Curd (N=600)**

Peer Group Influence for Curd	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D.
Gathering information from others to purchase Curd	34 (5.7)	68 (11.3)	281 (46.8)	141 (23.5)	76 (12.7)	3.26	1.007
Initiation from others to purchase Curd	41 (6.8)	161 (26.8)	164 (27.3)	146 (24.3)	88 (14.7)	3.13	1.165
Recommendation of others to choose Brand of Curd	81 (13.5)	93 (15.5)	175 (29.2)	182 (30.3)	69 (11.5)	3.11	1.204
Recommendation of others in choosing Store for purchasing Curd	35 (5.8)	107 (17.8)	229 (38.2)	147 (24.5)	82 (13.7)	3.22	1.075
Overall Peer Group Influence for Curd						3.18	0.899

Notes: Values in brackets represent percentages.

‘-’ represent no response.

Table 6 displays the peer group influences with respect to purchase of Curd. From the table, the highest mean was observed for the information gathering from others (Mean=3.26), followed by influence of others on choosing store to purchase Curd (Mean=3.22). The table reveals weak influence of peer group with respect to initiation (Mean=3.13) and choosing brand of Curd (Mean=3.22). The overall mean score of peer group influence with respect to Curd (Mean=3.18) was found to be moderate.

**Table 7 Peer group influence with respect to Ghee (N=600)**

<b>Peer Group Influence for Ghee</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
Gathering information from others to purchase Ghee	137 (22.8)	144 (24.0)	153 (25.5)	116 (19.3)	50 (8.3)	2.66	1.253
Initiation from others to purchase Ghee	52 (8.7)	156 (26.0)	154 (25.7)	123 (20.5)	115 (19.2)	3.16	1.248
Recommendation of others to choose Brand of Ghee	78 (13.0)	141 (23.5)	180 (30.0)	125 (20.8)	76 (12.7)	2.97	1.213
Recommendation of others in choosing Store for purchasing Ghee	66 (11.0)	108 (18.0)	162 (27.0)	128 (21.3)	136 (22.7)	3.27	1.293
Overall Peer Group Influence for Ghee						3.01	0.953

*Notes: Values in brackets represent percentages.*

*‘-’ represent no response.*

Table 7 shows the peer group influences with respect to purchase of Ghee. From the table, the highest mean was observed for the influence of others on choosing store to purchase Ghee (Mean=3.27), followed by initiation from others (Mean=3.16). The table reveals weak influence of peer group with respect to gathering information (Mean=2.66) and choosing brand of Ghee (Mean=2.97). The overall mean score of peer group influence with respect to Ghee (Mean=3.01) was found to be low when compared with other dairy products considered in the present study.

**Table 8 Summary table of Peer group influence with respect to dairy products**

Peer Group Influence	Milk		Butter Milk		Curd		Ghee	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Gathering information from others to purchase dairy products	3.30	0.907	2.88	1.166	3.26	1.007	2.66	1.253
Initiation from others to purchase dairy products	3.33	0.902	3.30	1.319	3.13	1.165	3.16	1.248
Recommendation of others to choose Brand of dairy products	3.29	0.930	3.20	1.404	3.11	1.204	2.97	1.213
Recommendation of others in choosing Store for purchasing dairy products	3.37	0.868	3.05	1.311	3.22	1.075	3.27	1.293
Overall Peer Group Influence	3.32	0.887	3.10	0.629	3.18	0.899	3.01	0.953

Table 8 portrays the summary of recorded responses for peer group influence with respect to dairy products. From the table, it can be noted that the informational influence of peer group was high in Milk (Mean=3.30) and Curd (Mean=3.26). The respondents exhibited high mean of peer group initiation to purchase Milk (Mean=3.33) and Butter Milk (Mean=3.30). The respondents revealed that peer group influence on choosing brand was strong in case of Milk (Mean=3.29) and Butter Milk (Mean=3.20). Store selection based on peer group influence was high for Milk (Mean=3.37) and Ghee (Mean=3.27).

Looking into the overall mean of peer group influence with respect to the selected dairy products, Milk found to be having high peer group influence (Mean=3.32) followed by Curd

(Mean=3.18) and Butter Milk (Mean=3.10). Ghee found to having low peer group influence (Mean=3.01).

### **Conclusion**

This article mainly focused on the Peer group influence on Consumer purchasing patterns and consumer motivation with respect to dairy products. A detailed descriptive analysis was given for family and peer group influence.

The present study, to examine the influence of these variables on the selected parameters of consumer behaviour, Pearson correlation was employed.

Hence, it can be concluded that the dairy products are perceived as same by all the respondents irrespective of their demographic profile and food habits with very few exceptions.

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