BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS

(A STUDY DONE AT HYDERABAD CITY OF ANDHRA PRADESH STATE, INDIA)

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Abstract

The present study made an attempt to analyze the existing buying behaviour of Instant Food Products by individual households and to predict the demand for Instant Food Products of Hyderabad city in Andra Padesh .All the respondents were aware of pickles and Sambar masala but only 56.67 per cent of respondents were aware of Dosa/Idli mix.

About 96.11 per cent consumers of Dosa/Idli mix and more than half of consumers of pickles and Sambar masala prepared their own. Low cost of home preparation and differences in tastes were the major reasons for non consumption, whereas ready availability and save time of preparation were the reasons for consuming Instant Food Products. Retail shops are the major source of information and source of purchase of Instant Food Products.

The average monthly expenditure on Instant Food Products was found to be highest in higher income groups. The average per capita purchase and per capita expenditure on Instant food Products had a positive relationship with income of households.High price and poor taste were the reasons for not purchasing particular brand whereas best quality, retailers influence and ready availability were considered for preferring particular brand of products by the consumers.

Key words: Consumer, Instant foods, product mix, Households, Buying Behavior, Product Attributes, Shopping malls, market.

1. INTRODUCTION

The word 'food' refers to the chemical substances taken into the body in order to keep the body in a healthy and active condition. The body requires food for growth, repair and replacement of its worn-out tissues. Hence, food has to provide the required raw material, energy and other regulating substances, like vitamins and for the smooth functioning of the body, besides meeting the calorific requirements like carbohydrates, proteins, fats, etc., India is the world's second largest producer of food next to China and has the potential of being biggest industry with food and agricultural sector contributing 26 per cent to Indian GDP. It has the capacity of producing over 600 million tons of food products every year; it is likely to be doubled in next ten years. Food accounts for the largest share of consumer spending. Food and food products account for about 53 per cent of the value of final private consumption. This share is significantly higher than in developed economies, where food and food products account for about 20 per cent of consumer spending (www.tata.com). The average monthly per-capita consumer expenditure (MPCE) was Rs. 511 for rural India, which comprised of Rs.305 for food and Rs. 206 for non-food commodities. For urban population, it is Rs. 1060, which comprised of Rs.441 for food and Rs. 619 for non-food items. There was a decline in the share of food in total expenditure that is 54 per cent in rural areas compared to 64 per cent in 1987-88 and 42 per cent in urban areas compared to 56 percent during 1987-88 (National Sample Survey Organization, GOI).

In India, majority of food consumption is still at home. Nevertheless, out-of-home food consumption is increasing due to increase in urbanization, breaking up of the traditional joint family system, desire for quality, time which translates into an increased need for convenience, increasing number of working women, rise in per capita income, changing lifestyles and increasing level of affluence in the middle income group had brought about changes in food habits. In the last two decades, the share of urban population has increased from 23.3 per cent in 1981 to 27.8 percent in 2001. During the same period the female work participation rate had increased from 19.7 to 25.7 per cent. The per capita income increased from Rs.7, 328 in 1980-81 to Rs.10,306 in 2000-2001. The change in food habits was evident from the growth of food processing industries.

1.1.Indian Food Processing industry

The food processing industry in India is one of the largest in terms of production, consumption, export and growth prospects. Important sub sectors in food processing industries are fruit and vegetable processing, fish-processing, milk processing, meat and poultry processing, packaged/convenience foods, alcoholic beverages and soft drinks and grain processing.

According to Ministry of Food Processing Industries, the size of the food processing industry was about Rs.315,000 crores and included Rs.99,000 crore of value added products. About 300 million upper and middle class people consume processed food; 200 million more consumers are expected to shift to processed food by 2010. The food processing industry accounts for 13.5% of the country's industrial output. It generates 18% of gross domestic product and employs about 19% of the industrial labour at national level. Products like papad, pickle and spice mixes have been hugely successful in recent years. The size of this particular segment alone is estimated at about Rs 100 Crores. Rabo India Finance had projected that the Indian food processing industry would increase to Rs 11,500 billion by 2014-15. Processed products like 'chapaties', 'subzies' and portion packs of concentrated curries are fast becoming regular diets, especially for young couples. The product range includes foods like 'puri-bhaji' and 'dosa-vada'. Processed food products like pickles, chutneys, juices and curry powders had made their entry into the kitchens of most middleclass households a long time back. There are a whopping 15 crore middle class individuals, of which 60% are below 35 years — a segment that is increasingly depending on processed foods. This throws open an ideal opportunity for small entrepreneurs who are eyeing this segment for making a fortune.

Over the past five decades, India has taken giant steps in producing food grains, milk, fruits and vegetables. The production of raw food materials is estimated to worth over Rs 60,000 crore. After primary, secondary and tertiary processing, the total size of the industry is estimated to be as high as Rs 1,10,000 crore. This cost overrun reflects the opportunities that food-processing industry offers to the economy as a whole and entrepreneurs in individual. Products focused towards children and young adults and products catering to those who lead a fast modern-day life. Realizing the otential and in order to provide further boost, the government has exempted from excise duty for condensed milk, ice cream, preparations of meat, fish and poultry, pectins, pasta and yeast. Further, excise duty on certain ready-to-eat packaged foods is reduced to 8% from 16%.

The total exports of Indian food processing industry had increased by about three times to Rs.53,000 crores in 2003-04, from Rs.17, 600 crores in 2002-03. Considering the greater potential for food processing industry in India, government had committed to encourage various activities for the development of this sector. Indian government had been giving importance to the food-processing sector, by way of fiscal incentives to encourage commercialization and value addition of agricultural produce, for minimizing pre/post harvest wastage, generating employment and export growth. The government gave five-year tax holiday for new food processing units in fruits and vegetable processing. From 2000-01 to 2006-07 Government had also approved proposals for joint ventures; foreign collaboration, industrial licenses and 100 per cent export oriented units envisaging an investment of Rs.19,100 crores during 2002-03. Out of this, foreign investment was over Rs. 9100 crores.

2. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were;

i. To study the extent of awareness towards Instant Food Products,

ii. To analyze factors influencing the buying behaviour of Instant Food Products,

2.1 Limitation of the study

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 subjected to recall bias. The study area was limited to only in twin cities of Andhra Pradesh and the findings may not be applicable to other markets, as vast differences exist among the consumers with regard to demographic and psychographics characteristics. Hence, 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.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, research works done in the past regarding awareness, factors influencing the consumption of food products has been reviewed and resented as under.

2.1 Awareness of consumers

2.2 Factors influencing consumption

3.1 Awareness of consumers

[1] That the need for effective nutritional education for young consumers has become increasingly apparent, given their general food habits and behaviour, particularly during adolescence and analyzed that the interaction between young consumers' food preferences and their nutritional awareness behaviour,

within three environments (home, school and social). The results indicated that the perceived dominance of home, school and social interaction appears to be somewhat overshadowed by the young consumers, while developing an 'independence' trait, particularly during the adolescent years. The authors suggested that food preferences are often of a 'fast food' type and consequently the food habits of many young consumers may fuel the consumption of poorly nutritionally balanced meals. While young consumers were aware of healthy eating, their food preference behavior did not always appear to reflect such knowledge, particularly within the school and social environments.

[2] To create awareness of high fat content of pies, studied consumer and producer awareness about nutrition labeling on packaging. For this, seven leading pie brands were analyzed for fat content and are ranged from 7.1 to 19.2% fat. Potato topped or cottage pies had the lowest fat content (7.1-9.2% fat). Most pies did not display nutritional labeling on packaging. Over half of the consumers (52%) who responded to the survey (42% response rate) were aware of the campaign. The study was successful at raising consumer awareness about the high fat content of pies and influencing the food environment with a greater availability of lower fat pies. It is possible to produce acceptable lower fat pies and food companies should be encouraged to make small changes to the fat content of food products like pies. Potato topped pies are lower in fat and are widely available. Regular pie eaters could be encouraged to select these as a lower fat option.

[3]The buying behavior is vastly influenced by awareness and attitude towards the product. Commercial advertisements over television was said to be the most important source of information, followed by displays in retail outlets. Consumers do build opinion about a brand on the basis of which various product features play an important role in decision making process. A large number of respondents laid emphasis on quality and felt that price is an important factor while the others attached importance to image of manufacturer.

3.2 Factors influencing consumption

[4] There is complete agreement between ranking given by the housewives and working women regarding the reasons promoting them to buy Instant food products. Age, occupation, education, family size and annual income had much influence on the per capita expenditure of the Instant food products.

[5]The factors influencing adolescents' fish consumption in school. Fish consumption was assessed by observation on 4 occasions. Attitudes towards the fish, friends' behavior and perceived control were important predictors of the intention to eat fish and barriers for fish consumption were a negative attitude towards both smell and accompaniments and fear of finding bones. But the eaters of fish were more satisfied with the taste, texture and appearance of the fish and rated safety significantly higher than those who resisted. They also thought to a greater extent that the fish was healthy and prepared with care. The results suggested that, it is important to alter dishes so that they appeal to children and to pay attention to the whole meal, accompaniments included. Finally it was recommended to convey the pupils that the fish served would be healthy and prepared with care.

[6] A study on brand preference of soft drinks in rural Tamil Nadu, using Garrets ranking technique, to rank factors influencing the soft drinks preferred by rural consumer. They found that, the product quality was ranked as first, followed by retail price. Good quality and availability were the main factors, which influenced the rural consumers of a particular brand of a product.

[7] Buying behaviour is very much influenced by experience of their own and of neighbour consumers and his own family. The involvements of his own family members were exerting maximum influence on his purchases. Above all, the quality of the product and its easy availability were the primary and the vital determinants of his buying behaviour. Consumers were influenced by touch and feel aspect of any promotional activity.

[8]The change in consumption pattern was due to changes in food habits. If income and urbanization increase among consumers, the percentage of income spent on consumption increases. The urban consumers preferred mostly branded products compared to rural consumers. The most significant factors influencing buying decisions were accessibility, quality, regular supply, door delivery and themode of payment.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a comprehensive view of the methodology adopted for the present investigation undertaken to know the awareness of consumers about instant food products, factors influencing consumption of instant food products. This chapter covers the following aspects:

4.1 Description of study area
4.2 Sampling design and data collection
4.3 Analytical tools

4.1 Description of study area

Hyderabad city is the capital city and popular or major city in Andhra Pradesh. The major consumers in the study area are highly influenced by ever changing environment of the city. Hence, most of the consumers of the study area are adopting the consumption habits of the metropolitan consumers. In case of food products, the consumers are switching from traditional foods to instant food products. Even though, the indigenous instant food products like pickles, papads, sambar powder, chutney, masala, nudils, and instant tomato rice etc., are prepared at home since ages, due to the availability of wide range of instant food products in recent years, the consumers are more opted to use the products available in the market at convenient packages and reasonable rate. Most commonly available and used instant food products in the study area are puliogare, jamun mix, sambar masala, pickles, coriander powder, turmeric powder, chicken masala, bisibele bath mix, noodles, vermicelli including the other important products such as soft drinks, chips, jams and jellies and sauce to a larger extent. Therefore, considering the growing market and popularity of instant food products in the area, an attempt was made to study the buying behaviour of consumers towards Instant Food Products.

4.2 SAMPLING DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

4.2.1 Selection of instant food products

Based on less cost and frequent use of instant food products, the products such as dosa/idli mix, pickles and sambar masala were selected after discussion with the local consumers of the study area about the consumption of instant food products, which are either home made or purchased from the market and the marketers as well as about the brands available and preferred in the study area. The particular products were selected in such a way as to represent one product from each group like cereals, fruits and vegetable and spice based categories.

4.2.2 Sample Selection

To study the buying behavior of consumers towards instant food products, multistage random sampling technique was adopted. In the initial stage, Hyderabad city was selected to the researcher. In the second stage, three areas of the city were selected based on population as high, medium and low population. In the next stage, were selected major areas i.e. ammerpet, khairathabad and dilshuknar to collect information about buying behavior of the consumers in the urban markets. Finally, 60 consumers from each area were selected randomly totally accounting to 180 samples.

Classification of respondents

The respondents were post classified into four income groups based on their income. Respondents with monthly income of less than Rs. 10,000 were considered to belong to Income Group 1 (IG1), those with income group between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 15,000 were classified into Income Group 2 (IG2), those with income of Rs. 15,001 to Rs.20, 000 were grouped as Income Group 3 (IG3) and finally those with income of more than Rs. 20,000 were categorized as Income Group (IG4).

4.2.3 Collection of Data

To evaluate the objectives of the study, required data were collected from primary as well as secondary sources.

Primary data

The data required for the study were collected from the selected respondents by personal interview method using well-structured schedule. Information on the following aspects were collected from 180 households (60 respondents from each selected area).

1. General information from the individual respondents on their social, economical and demographic characteristics like age, educational status, occupation, annual income, family size and family type.
2. Monthly family expenditure on food and non-food items in general and instant food products in particular.
3. Information regarding the consumption pattern of instant food products and also regarding decision making relating to Instant Food Products.
4. Purchase pattern of instant food products and factors influencing the purchase.

Secondary data

The secondary data on location, demography and other details about the study area were collected from city statistical office and other records and journals.

5. ANALYSIS

Table 4.1 Income Wise Distributions of Households of Hyderabad city

Households Income/Month	Income Groups	Areas			Overall (n=180)
		Ameerpet (n=60)	Khairathabad (n=60)	Dilshuknagar (n=60)	
Below Rs.10,000	IG1	15 (25.00)	16 (26.67)	15 (25.00)	46 (25.56)
Rs.10,001 to 15,000	IG2	21 (35.00)	19 (31.67)	24 (40.00)	64 (35.56)
Rs.15,001 to 20,000	IG3	16 (26.67)	19 (31.67)	17 (28.33)	52 (28.89)
Above 20,000	IG4	8 (13.33)	6 (10.00)	4 (6.67)	18 (10.00)
Overall		60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60(100.00)	180(100.00)

Figure in parentheses indicate percentages to their respective income group totals

Income-wise distribution of sample households is presented in Table 4.1. Respondents with monthly income of less than Rs. 10,000 were considered to belong to Income Group 1 (IG1), those with income group between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 15,000 were classified into Income Group 2 (IG2), those with income of Rs. 15,001 to Rs.20,000 were grouped as Income Group 3 (IG3) and finally those with income of more than Rs. 20,000 were categorized as Income Group (IG4). Accordingly, the proportion of household respondents in IG1, IG2, IG3 and IG4 was 25 per cent, 35 per cent, 26.67 per cent and 13.33 per cent respectively, in Ameerpet area. In Khairathabad area, this proportion was 26.67 per cent, 31.67 per cent each and 10 per cent in IG1, IG2 and IG3 and IG4 respectively. Whereas in the case of Dilshuknagar, the proportion was 25 per cent in IG1, 40 per cent in IG2, 28.33 per cent in IG3 and 6.67 per cent in IG4. However, at an overall the proportion of respondents in IG1, IG2, IG3 and IG4 was 25.56 per cent (46 in number), 35.56 per cent (64 in number), 28.89 per cent (52 in number) and 10 per cent (18 in number), respectively.

Table 5.2 Awareness of Consumers about Instant Food Products

Products	Income group	Areas			
		Ameerpet (n=60)	Khairathabad (n=60)	Dilshuknagar (n=60)	Overall (n=180)
Dosa/ Idli mix	IG1	6 (40.00)	6 (10.00)	4 (6.67)	16 (8.89)
	IG2	14 (66.66)	8 (13.33)	9 (15.00)	31 (17.22)
	IG3	14 (87.5)	15 (25.00)	12 (20.00)	41 (22.78)
	IG4	6 (75.00)	5 (8.33)	3 (5.00)	14 (7.78)
	Total	40 (66.67)	34 (56.67)	28 (46.67)	102 (56.67)
Pickles	IG2	15 (100.00)	16 (100.00)	15 (100.00)	46 (100.00)
	IG2	21 (100.00)	19 (100.00)	24 (100.00)	64 (100.00)
	IG2	16 (100.00)	19 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	52 (100.00)
	IG2	8 (100.00)	6 (100.00)	4 (100.00)	18 (100.00)
	Total	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	180 (100.00)
Sambar masala	IG2	15 (100.00)	16 (100.00)	15 (100.00)	46 (100.00)
	IG2	21 (100.00)	19 (100.00)	24 (100.00)	64 (100.00)
	IG2	16 (100.00)	19 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	52 (100.00)
	IG2	8 (100.00)	6 (100.00)	4 (100.00)	18 (100.00)
	Total	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	180 (100.00)

Awareness of Consumers towards Instant Food Products

It was evident from Table 4.2 that the awareness of consumers about Instant food products across different income groups, about 66.67 per cent, 56.67 per cent and 46.67 per cent of the respondents of ameerpet, khairathabad and dilshuknagar areas were aware of the Dosa/Idli mix products availability in the market. However, on the overall, among different income groups, very small per cent of the respondents in IG3 (22.78 per cent) followed by 17.22 per cent in IG2, 8.89 per cent in IG1 and 7.78 per cent in IG4 were aware of this product availability in the market. It is because of the reason that in almost all the rural areas, the Dosa/Idli mix was prepared by their own, and the same reason may hold good in this area also. In case of pickles and sambar masala, cent per cent of the respondents in all the areas and across income groups were aware about these selected instant food products due to their common and traditional usage of these products.

5.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMPTION OF INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS

5.2.1 Factors influencing consumers in usage of Instant Food Products

Table 4.3 Factors considered for using Instant Food Products in Ameerpet area

(n=60)

Sl. No.	Factors	Products		
		Dosa/Idli mix (n=4)	Pickles (n=39)	Sambar masala (n=36)
1	Traditional usage	-	5 (12.82)	10 (27.77)
2	Liked by family members	3 (75.00)	25 (64.10)	-
3	Taste liked by family members	-	38 (97.43)	8 (22.22)
4	Readily available	4 (100.00)	35 (89.74)	30 (83.33)
5	Save time of preparation	4 (100.00)	38 (97.43)	35 (97.22)
6	Influence of friends or Relatives	3 (75.00)	15 (38.46)	15 (41.67)
7	Availability of products(IFPs) at reasonable price	-	25 (64.10)	25 (69.44)
8	Necessary ingredient for preparations	-	-	36 (100.00)
9	Availability of quality products	3 (75.00)	25 (64.10)	28 (77.78)
10	Habitual	-	30 (77.00)	15 (41.67)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to the number of users

Table 4.4 Factors considered for using Instant Food Products in khairathabad area

(n=60)

Sl. No.	Factors	Products		
		Dosa/Idli mix (n=2)	Pickles (n=24)	Sambar masala (n=24)
1	Traditional usage	-	6 (25.00)	10 (41.67)
2	Liked by family members	2 (100.00)	20 (83.33)	10 (41.67)
3	Taste liked by family members	-	22 (91.67)	9 (37.5)
4	Readily available	2 (100.00)	24 (100.00)	24 (100.00)
5	Save time of preparation	2 (100.00)	24 (100.00)	24 (100.00)
6	Influence of friends or relatives	-	10 (41.67)	15 (62.50)
7	Availability of products(IFPs) at reasonable price	2 (100.00)	16 (66.67)	20 (83.33)
8	Necessary ingredient for preparations			24 (100.00)
9	Availability of quality products	2 (100.00)	15 (62.50)	16 (66.67)
10	Habitual		18 (75.00)	18 (75.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to the number of users

Table 4.5 Factors considered for using Instant Food Products in Dilshuknar area

(n=60)

Sl. No.	Factors	Products		
		Dosa/Idli mix (n=1)	Pickles (n=4)	Sambar masala (n=13)
1	Traditional usage	-	5 (35.71)	10 (76.92)
2	Liked by family members	-	12 (85.71)	-
3	Taste liked by family members	-	-	5 (38.46)
4	Readily available	1 (100.00)	14 (100.00)	13 (100.00)
5	Save time of preparation	1 (100.00)	14 (100.00)	13 (100.00)
6	Influence of friends or relatives	-	8 (57.14)	8 (61.53)
7	Availability of products(IFPs) at reasonable price	-	10 (71.42)	8 (61.53)
8	Necessary ingredient for preparations	-	-	10 (76.92)
9	Availability of quality products	1 (100.00)	6 (42.85)	7 (53.84)
10	Habitual	-	8 (57.14)	6 (46.15)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to the number of users

Factors Considered for Purchasing Instant Food Products

It was noticed from the Table 4.3 to 4.5 that the major factors considered while purchasing Dosa/Idli mix were ready availability and save time of preparation by cent per cent users in Ameerpet, Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar areas respectively. The other factors considered while using Dosa/Idli mix were likeliness of their family members and availability of quality products by 75 per cent each and cent per cent each of the respondents in Ameerpet and Khairathabad areas. The factors considered for using pickles were tastes liked by family members and save time of preparation (97.43% each) in Ameerpet area and the same factor was considered by cent per cent of Khairathabad area and Dilshuknagar area consumers. Subsequently, habit of usage was also one of the factors considered by 77 per cent, 75 per cent and 57.14 per cent consumers of Ameerpet, Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar areas respectively, due to the conventional and routine usage of this product. The other factors such as traditional usage, tastes liked by family members, availability of products at reasonable price and availability of quality products were quoted by few respondents. In case of Sambar masala, cent per cent of Ameerpet, Khairathabad and 76.92 per cent of Dilshuknagar consumers used as it is necessary ingradient for preparations. The other factors such as ready availability and save time of preparation were considered by cent per cent of Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar and 83.33 per cent and 97.22 per cent of Ameerpet area consumers respectively. And availability of products at reasonable price was also considered by 69.44 per cent, 83.33 per cent and 61.53 per cent of Ameerpet, Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar areas consumers respectively. Similar to these results, the study conducted by Ragavan (1994) shows that quality, availability and price were the important factors, which had influenced purchase of vegetables by respondents from modern retail outlet.

Table 4.6 Reasons for not purchasing the Instant Food Products

(n=180)

Sl. No.	Reasons	Products		
		Dosa/Idli mix	Pickles	Sambar masala
1	Low cost of home preparation	120 (66.67)	85 (47.22)	100 (55.56)
2	Differences in tastes (between home prepared and purchased)	95 (52.78)	98 (54.44)	98 (54.44)
3	Dislike of purchased product by the family members	75 (41.67)	94 (52.22)	88 (48.89)
4	High price of market product	165 (91.67)	95 (52.78)	75 (41.67)
5	Lack of Awareness of products availability in the market	20 (11.11)	-	-
6	Non-availability of Instant food Products	35 (19.44)	20 (11.11)	35 (19.44)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to the number of respondents

Reasons for not Purchasing Instant Food Products

It was revealed from the Table 4.6 that 66.67 per cent, 47.22 per cent and 55.56 per cent of respondents of Dosa/Idli mix; Pickles and Sambar masala respectively were not purchased these products because of their low cost of preparation. Differences in taste between home made and purchased product was the reason for not using Dosa/Idli mix, pickles and sambar masala by 52.78 per cent and 54.44 per cent each of the consumers. About 41.67 per cent, 52.22 per cent and 48.89 per cent of respondents were not purchased these products because of disliking by their family members. High price was the reason for not consuming the same products by 91.67 per cent, 52.78 per cent and 41.67 per cent of respondents accordingly. Dosa/ idli mix, pickles and sambar masala were not purchased due to non-availability of these products by 19.44 per cent, 11.11 per cent and 19.44 per cent of the respondents, respectively. And only 11.11 per cent of consumers were not purchasing Dosa/Idli mix due to lack of awareness about the product availability in market.

6 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The important findings of the study are summarized and suitable conclusions aredrawn and presented below.

1. The general characteristics of the 180 households revealed that majority (35.56 per cent) of households belonged to income groups IG2, while IG3 comprised of 28.89 percent households followed by IG1 (25.56 per cent) and IG4 (10 per cent) in the study area.
2. The average family size varied from 3 to 6 members and the average age of the respondents varied from 30 years to 40 years and majority of the households were nuclear families, in selected areas of the Hyderabad city. Classification of households according to their food habit revealed that more than 80 per cent of IG1 and IG4 respondents and more than 75 per cent of IG2 and IG3 were non-vegetarians and remaining were vegetarians in of Ameerpet, Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar areas.
3. The awareness of consumers about Instant food products across different income groups in different areas of the Hyderabad city showed that, small proportion of the respondents in IG3 (22.78 per cent) were aware of Dosa/Idli mix product in the market followed by 17.22 per cent in IG2, 8.89 per cent in IG1 and 7.78 per cent in IG4. In case of pickles and Sambar masala, cent per cent of the respondents in all the areas were aware of these two instant food products.
4. The user categories of different Instant food products across different income groups in the study area presented that in case of Dosa/Idli mix, majority (96.11 per cent) of respondents prepared Dosa/Idli mix in their home only.
5. Reasons for not purchasing the Dosa/Idli mix, Pickles and Sambar masala by the respondents were low cost of preparation (66.67 per cent, 47.22 per cent and 55.56 per cent of respondents of respectively), Differences in tastes between homemade and purchased product (52.78 per cent of the consumers, whereas 54.44 per cent each), disliking of these products by their family members (41.67 per cent, 52.22 per cent and 48.89 per cent), High price (91.67 per cent, 52.78 per cent and 41.67 per cent) and non-availability of these products in the area (19.44 per cent, 11.11 per cent and 19.44 per cent).
6. The factors considered by the respondents for consumption of Dosa/Idli mix were ready availability and save time of preparation by Cent per cent consumers of

Ameerpet, Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar areas. And in case of both pickles and sambar masala same factors were considered by all the cent per cent consumers Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar areas but in Ameerpet they were considered by 89.74 per cent and 97.43 percent of consumers. In addition other factors were also considered such as availability of quality products, habit of using, necessary ingredient for preparations so on by most of the consumers in respective areas.

7. The sources of information about instant food products for the consumers in the study area showed that, for about 92.30 per cent, 79.16 per cent and 100 per cent of pickle buyers and 91.67 per cent each and 92.30 per cent of Sambar masala buyers of Ameerpet, Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar respectively, retail shop was the major source of information followed by TV/radio advertisements for 87.17 per cent, 87.50 per cent and 100 per cent of pickles and 58.33 per cent each and 61.53 per cent and of the Sambar masala consumers. In case of Dosa/Idli mix, Newspaper/magazine was the source for getting information by the 75 per cent, and 100 per cent each of the respondents in Ameerpet, Khairathabad and Dilshuknagar respectively.

8. The sources of purchase for selected instant food products in the study area were retail shops and departmental stores. Only higher income groups respondents preferred to purchase from departmental stores along with retail shops, rather all most all the IG1 and IG2 respondents purchased the selected products from retail shops.

9. Housewives were the major decision makers (56.41 per cent in Ameerpet, 86.67 per cent in Khairathabad and 71.42 per cent in Dilshuknagar) in all the income groups as the housewives set the consumption pattern of food products in the family.

10. Reasons for not preferring particular brand of the product by respondents was due to the factors such as high price followed by poor taste, poor quality and less keeping quality.

11. The factors that influenced brand preference of the selected instant food products were best quality followed by retailer's influence, ready availability and convenience.

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