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## A STUDY ON CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR IN HOMEOPATHY DRUGS MARKETING

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### **Abstract**

*India is a world's largest medicine based market, accounts for 22% of the world's retail volume sales of homeopathy drugs. The present study attempts to know the buyer behavior of homeopathy drugs. The basic purpose of this paper is to find out the influence of various factors on the buying decision of customers. It also attempts to determine the awareness level and loyalty status of customers of homeopathy drugs. To develop the conclusions exploratory and descriptive, research designs are used. Primary data is collected with the help of questionnaire method and data is analysed with the help of various statistical techniques.*

**Keywords:** *Consumer Preference, Satisfaction, Behaviour Change.*

### **Introduction**

Homeopathy drugs are consumed as a alternate medicines and its marketed as towards selected products, checking the level of satisfaction of consumers and knowing expectation of the consumers. This study reveals that consumer behavior is largely affected by place, product, price, promotional, psychological and people influences. The satisfaction level of consumers also depends on product specific and market wide factors. Consumers behavior will improve when their expectations are fulfilled by their distribution channels. Consumer behavior and attitude helps to determine effective technique and strategies by the markets for attaining great competition advantage in the market. Homeopathy, like similar alternative medicines, regularly fails this standard. For this reason, it is not really "alternative medicine" - it is not medicine at all. Instead, it is an alternative to medicine: it does not provide a physician's treatment, but some other kind of therapy. This "other" is a strange psychological quirk, but worth investigating. If the ill or infirm genuinely want the best physical treatment, medicine is usually the obvious choice. It might feel alienating or humiliating, but it is the best we have. When folks turn to the alternative, they are often seeking something closer to religion. In doing so, the homoeopathy gives the patient a feeling of power and control. The patient is introduced to an invisible world, which they can understand and manage. For example, homeopathy is partly based on metaphor: on likenesses between experiences - itching eyes and onion tears, for example. Obviously this has more to do with psychological and social context than medicine. Hence one homoeopath who reportedly used crushed pieces of the Berlin Wall to treat depression.

### **Review of Literature**

The literature on clinical research in allergic conditions treated with homeopathy includes a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials (RCT) for hay fever with positive conclusions and two positive RCTs in asthma. Cohort surveys using validated Quality of Life questionnaires have shown improvement in industry development. Economic surveys have shown positive

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results in development. Constitutional features. Repertories should be updated by including results of such clinical verifications of homeopathic prescribing symptoms.

### Objectives

1. To study the influence of various aspects on buying behavior.
2. To study the parameters of consumers.
3. To study the preference of consumers among various drugs ie.,
4. Allopathy, Siddha, Unani & Homeopathy drugs.
5. To study the consumers awareness of manufacturing.

### Scope of the Study

It is hoped that the findings of the study would be of much useful for the government and policy makers to formulate a suitable policies for the development of Homoeopathy medicine Industries. The main focus of the present study is to find out the strategy that could be adopted by Homoeopathy Medicine industry themselves in the light of the present environmental threats, to capitalize the opportunities and conduct themselves successfully. The main focus of the present study is given only to the managerial issues and the technical matters are not included. The outcome of the study will facilitate the promotional elements to the competitive sales by Medical units which are dealing mainly the Homoeopathy Medicines, indigenous producers and few units under small scale sectors. Determinants for the performance like managerial skill, efficient and effective production, marketing, financial viability are dealt, in this study. In a nutshell, the goal of this research study is to present a list of factors that influences the growth of Indian Medicine Industry. The aim of this study is to provide guidelines to decision makers in this industry. These guidelines in turn would be helpful in facing some of the challenges in formulating strategies. This study intends to add to the existing knowledge on the Indian Medicine industry and helps the players in careful application of this concept. Since, the empirical investigations were limited to the Tamil Nadu State, the inference drawn from them were not generalized in longer context. The study is based on the views expressed by producers and practitioners of Indian systems of medicines.

### Growth Status

It is found that sizeable patients in the state are embracing alternative system of medication, mainly due to the side effects and contra indications in allopathic medicines. Due to vast unbearable lands that are in Tamil Nadu and multi crop systems, there are abundance of medicinal plants and herbs. In 3 lakhs hectares of land in Tamil Nadu has been declared cultivable waste land. When compared to all other states, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the two states where all the three systems of Indian Medicine (Homeopathy, Siddha, Ayurveda & Unani) Practitioners are practicing. Haveli, Daman & Diu and Pondicherry. The other states having higher (Greater than 75%) proportion of GMP-compliant units were Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, whereas, the states / union territories having less than 25% GMP-compliance were Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, there had been a significant system wise variation in the proportion of GMP-

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compliant units, as there were 64.6%, 44.7%, 24.6% and 50.0% GMP-compliant drug manufacturing units under Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy systems respectively.

In Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Pondicherry were having 100% GMP-compliant drug manufacturing units under Ayurveda system. Other states which have higher (Greater than 75%) proportion of GMP-compliant units under Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. All units were GMP-compliant in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan and West Bengal. All Siddha drugs manufacturing units were GMP-compliant in the states of Kerala and Pondicherry, whereas, only 21.3% were GMP-compliant in the state of Tamil Nadu. Likewise, in the states of Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu & Uttar Pradesh were having Homoeopathic drug manufacturing units were GMP-compliant.

### Methodology

An intensive study has been made on the consumer preference to homeopathy medicine.

#### a. Reasons for choosing the topic:

People are becoming concerned about the adverse effects of chemical based drugs. There is an increasing interest among the people of Tamil Nadu to realize the importance of homeopathy medicine. Tamil Nadu has one of the richest plants medical traditions in India. There are estimated to be around 1200 effective plant-based formulations, used in folk medicine and known to rural communities in Tamil Nadu. When compared to all other states, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the two states where all the three systems of Indian Medicine Practitioners are practicing.

#### b. Method of Data Collection

This study fully depends upon both primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected from manufacturers of Indian medicine, experts and Homeopathy doctors, through well structured interview schedule and Questionnaire. Secondary data will be collected from text books, journals, magazines, news papers, Government Gazettes, Reports of the ITCOT & Internet etc.,

#### c. Sampling Technique

According to Directorate of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy, Tamil Nadu, there are 23 Homeopathy Industries in Tamil Nadu, out of which 20 units will be selected on the basis of Snow Ball Method of Sampling. Thus, sampling size would be 20. The data collected was analyzed with the help of statistical tools such as chi-square test, Correlation etc., Adopting convenience sampling technique, 100 respondents were chosen including users, deciders and buyers of homeopathy medicine.

#### d. Statistical Tools to be applied

1. To study the factors influencing the growth in Tami Nadu, Garrett's Ranking Technique will be used.
2. The Least Square Method of Correlation will be employed to forecast the export trend of the Indian Medicine Industry.
3. ANOVA, Chi- Square test will be used to measure the variables.

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4. In order to examine the opinion of the sample units, a five point rating scale will be adopted.
5. To identify the determinants of financial position of the sample units, log Multiple Linear Regression model will be estimated using the method of least square.
6. The instrument used in this investigation included personal interviews and structured Non-disguised questionnaire.
7. Interview schedule and questionnaire used in this study have been structured by the researcher in consultation with research guide and supervisor. The drafted schedule and questionnaire were circulated among few researchers for a critical review and they were redrafted on the light of the comments.
8. The researcher collected the primary data through both mail questionnaire and using the interview schedule.

#### e. Research Design

To analyse the buying behavior of consumers a descriptive research design was used. Primary data was collected with close ended questionnaire. The questionnaire includes personal background information of the consumers, preferences of consumers towards the particular medicine, consumption level, purchasing pattern, usage level, reason for consumption, manufacturing, expiry date etc.,

#### f. Limitations

The study is limited to the findings of the study cannot be generalized due to demographical differences. Among many medicines available in the market, only few medicines are considered for the study.

#### g. Interpretations

Among 100 respondents 66% of the respondents were male and rest of all females. These results were derived from respondents (customers) based on questionnaire obtained. About 78% of consumers accepted that they purchase the same drugs, which expresses their confidence towards the medicine.

#### Conclusion

At present, skeptics of homeopathy assert that the medicines are simply placebos. In the coming years when more research confirms that efficacy of homeopathic medicines, I predict that skeptics of homeopathy will take a new tact in their attack on the field. Instead of recognizing them as placebos, they will probably assert that they are indeed powerful medicines, but they are so powerful that consumers cannot and should not have access to them, except under the care of a physician. The skeptics efforts to make homeopathic medicines prescription drugs will probably be aided by conventional medical organizations, by certain medical professors (most likely those who are funded by major drug companies) and even by small factions of homeopathic doctors. I predict that there will be pressure for strong regulation on the sale and marketing of homeopathic medicines from conventional drug manufacturers. The drug companies will insist that homeopathic products are given preferential treatment and will demand greater proof of efficacy. Whether the FDA bows to such pressure or not will depend on the unity and organization of the homeopathic and natural products community.

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Needless to say, it is essential that the homeopathic and natural products community do all that is possible to resist the movement of homeopathic medicines from OTC drugs to prescription drugs. It is essential that the FDA recognize that homeopathic medicine cannot and should not be regulated in the same way as conventional drugs. At the same time, we must encourage the homeopathic industry to devote increasing monies to efforts to evaluate the safety and efficacy of its products.

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