



A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION WITH MASALA PRODUCTS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

K.Venkata Ashwath Reddy¹ and Kiranmayi Patel²

¹Student, Dept. of Marketing, Siva Sivani institute of management, Kompally, Secunderabad,

²Asst.Professor Dept. of Data science, Siva Sivani institute of management, Kompally, Secunderabad

¹Corresponding Author Email: -ashwathreddy2003@gmail.com

²Email: -ashwathreddy2003@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

The study explores consumer satisfaction with masala products in Andhra Pradesh, emphasizing the dynamics of purchasing behaviour and preferences for packaged and loose masalas. Employing a descriptive research design, it integrates primary data collected through structured questionnaires and secondary data from credible sources to identify key factors influencing consumer choices, such as taste, price, packaging, and availability. Statistical tools, including chi-square tests, were used to analyse the relationships between demographic variables and satisfaction levels. The findings underscore a dominant preference for packaged masalas due to their convenience, quality, and reliability, while local homemade variants hold significance among select consumer segments. The study's outcomes highlight the importance of aligning product innovation, quality assurance, and targeted marketing strategies to enhance consumer loyalty and satisfaction. This comprehensive analysis offers valuable insights into the evolving preferences of masala consumers, providing actionable recommendations for stakeholders in the food and spice industry.

Keywords: consumer satisfaction, Masala products, Packaged masalas, Loose masalas, Homemade/local variants, Targeted marketing, Food and spice industry trends.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Masalas have been integral to Indian cuisine for centuries, adding flavor and medicinal value while playing a crucial role in India's trade history. Derived from Hindi, "masala" signifies spice blends that enhance the aroma and taste of dishes, with regional variations like garam masala in North India, sambhar powder in South India, and Pancha Phoron in East India. Traditionally homemade, masalas are now widely available as pre-packaged blends due to urbanization and busy lifestyles. India leads global spice production, contributing 70% to the market, with exports primarily to the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Major brands like MDH and Everest cater to global demand while adhering to traditional recipes. Consumer trends favor organic, low-sodium, and preservative-free masalas, with e-commerce driving accessibility and convenience. Despite its growth, the industry faces challenges like quality control and ensuring consistency. Organic products are gaining traction due to rising health-consciousness. Packaging innovations and digital platforms have revolutionized the industry, making Indian masalas globally appreciated.

Importance of Consumer Satisfaction:

Consumer satisfaction reflects how well a product meets or exceeds a buyer's expectations, influencing both brand success and sustainability. Masala powder that fulfills these expectations leave a positive impression, encouraging repeat purchases. Satisfied customers often become brand ambassadors, sharing their experiences with others. This organic promotion fosters brand loyalty and serves as an effective marketing tool. Addressing quality, price, and user experience is key to achieving customer satisfaction.

Primary Determinants of Customer Satisfaction:

1. Product Quality: The product should deliver what it promises. For masala powders, freshness, aroma, and authentic taste are expected. Mediocre quality brings dissatisfaction and damage to the brand.

2. Price versus Value: Consumers assess the value they obtain in relation to the price expended. A combination of competitive pricing and high quality fosters a perception of value for money, thereby enhancing satisfaction.

Challenges to Achieve Consumer Satisfaction:

India's diverse regional tastes pose a significant challenge for masala brands to meet varied expectations. Market competition is intense, making differentiation essential to stand out. Maintaining consistent quality across batches and locations requires strict quality control. Customer feedback, gathered through surveys, online reviews, and focus groups, plays a key role in understanding satisfaction levels. Consumer satisfaction is vital for success in the competitive masala market, as it helps build long-term relationships while ensuring short-term profits and long-term sustainability. Meeting customer needs is the foundation of a thriving business.

Scope of the study:

The area of study is limited to the segment selected within Andhra Pradesh. This study is confined to the consumer satisfaction of masala Products in Andhra Pradesh during the study period of 3 months.

Review of Literature:

S Kavinkesinikethan & S Selvanayaki (2019) – Convenience and time constraints drive the shift from homemade spice powders to branded options. Longer shelf life and uniform quality enhance their appeal.

R Manikandan & SS Priya (2020) – Female consumers prefer branded masalas for hygiene and taste, but unbranded options are favoured for affordability. Convenience and time-saving benefits drive choices.

AS Murthy (2022) – Brand loyalty in masala selection is influenced by reputation, packaging, and Flavors consistency. Promotions and competitive pricing impact purchase decisions.

S Gopi & JP Paul (2022) – COVID-19 led to increased online masala purchases, with brands adapting via smaller packs and stable supply chains. Home cooking trends boosted demand.

PN Ahamed et al. (2023) – Affordability drives unbranded masala preference in rural areas, while urban consumers prefer branded products for quality and consistency. Advertising significantly influences buying behaviour.

Need of the Study:

Most of the companies want to know about the consumer satisfaction normally. They had made a huge amount of investment to make the product known to the consumers. Know the effectiveness of sales and customer satisfaction can be made through the survey. If the consumers are not satisfied, they would switch over to the other products it is difficult to bring back those consumers to make purchase and encourage them to make a word of mouth.

Statement of the Problem:

The rapid growth of masala product companies has increased the availability of ready-to-use spices, pickles, and convenience foods. Consumers in Andhra Pradesh rely on these products to save time and effort in daily cooking. Understanding consumer satisfaction with masala products is essential to gauge their preferences and expectations. In today's fast-paced world, the demand for processed spice products continues to rise. This study aims to analyse consumer awareness and satisfaction regarding masala products in Andhra Pradesh.

Objectives of the study:

This study examines the key factors influencing consumer purchasing behaviour for masala products in Andhra Pradesh, including taste, price, packaging, and availability. It compares packaged masalas with loose masalas, focusing on Flavors, health benefits, and convenience. Consumer satisfaction drivers such as brand reputation, affordability, and product innovation are analysed. The study explores demographic influences like age, gender, and income on masala product preferences. Challenges in the masala industry, such as quality consistency and food adulteration, are identified. Recommendations for improvement include using high-quality ingredients, eco-friendly packaging, and health-conscious branding. These insights aim to enhance consumer trust and satisfaction.

Hypotheses:

- **H1:** High-quality ingredients and superior flavour positively influence customer satisfaction.
- **H2:** Brand reputation and trust are critical determinants of repeat purchases and loyalty.
- **H3:** Branding significantly impacts customer satisfaction among younger demographics.

Research Methodology:

The researcher is using both types of data which are primary and secondary data which is collected from consumer of Masala Products in Andhra Pradesh. The primary data are gathered through well-structured Questionnaire. The secondary data have been collected from books, journals, magazines, newspaper, official web site of the masala Product, etc.

Research Design:

A descriptive research design was employed, allowing for a systematic analysis of the several factors influencing customer satisfaction. This design is particularly well-suited for studies that aim to describe and interpret existing phenomena. The approach includes:

- Identifying key satisfaction drivers such as taste, aroma, and packaging.

Statistical Tools:

The collected data is analysed and interpreted properly to find the result of the research work and statistical tools used for analysing the data like simple percentage and chi-square test with help of the SPSS the results is given through table forms.

Limitations of the Study:

The area of study is limited to the selected within Andhra Pradesh. This study is mainly confined to the consumer satisfaction of Masala product. The primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire cum interview schedule and the sample size has limited only 150 respondents.

Data Analysis:

Demographic Overview-

| | | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 94 | 62.67% |
| | Female | 56 | 37.33% |
| Age | 18-25 | 78 | 52.00% |
| | 26-35 | 43 | 28.67% |
| | 36-45 | 24 | 16.00% |
| | 45-56 | 5 | 3.33% |
| Income | Below 10,000 | 54 | 36.00% |
| | 10,000-30,000 | 25 | 16.67% |
| | 30,001-50,000 | 21 | 14.00% |
| | 50,001-1,00,000 | 41 | 27.33% |
| | Above 1,00,000 | 9 | 6.00% |
| Culinary Skill Level | Advanced | 22 | 14.67% |
| | Beginner | 79 | 52.67% |
| | Intermediate | 49 | 32.67% |

Gender: The majority of respondents are male (62.67%), while females make up 37.33%. This suggests a male-dominated respondent base.

Age: Most respondents (52%) are between 18-25 years old, followed by 26-35 years (28.67%). This indicates a younger audience, with a declining trend in older age groups.

Income: A significant portion (36%) earn below 10,000, suggesting a majority from lower-income groups. However, 27.33% fall within the 50,001-1,00,000 range, indicating a mix of financial backgrounds.

Culinary Skill Level: Over half (52.67%) identify as beginners, while 32.67% are at an intermediate level. Only 14.67% have advanced skills, implying that most respondents are still learning or developing their culinary abilities.

Masala Brand Preferences by Age:

| | | Masala Brand Preference by Age | | | | | Total |
|-------|---------|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Achi masalas | MTR masalas | Everest masalas | Local homemade masalas | No specific preferences | |
| Age | 18 - 25 | 14 | 23 | 24 | 11 | 6 | 78 |
| | 26 - 35 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 43 |
| | 36-45 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 2 | 24 |
| | 46-55 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Total | | 21 | 36 | 35 | 37 | 21 | 150 |

From the frequency distribution, Everest Masalas is the most preferred brand overall, with 37 respondents, particularly favored by the 36–45 and 46–55 age groups. Achi Masalas (21) and MTR Masalas (36) follow closely in preference, with the highest number of respondents in the 18–25 age group (78). Meanwhile, 21 individuals either prefer local homemade masalas or have no specific preference.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 35.301 ^a | 12 | <.001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 35.903 | 12 | <.001 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 16.706 | 1 | <.001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 35.301$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.001$) indicates a significant relationship between age and masala brand preferences, further supported by the Likelihood Ratio Test ($\chi^2 = 35.903$, $p < 0.001$) and the Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 16.706$, $p < 0.001$). Younger respondents (18–25) prefer Achi and MTR Masalas, while Everest Masalas is popular across all age groups, particularly among middle-aged individuals. Preference for local homemade masalas increases with age, peaking in the 36–55 age range. The 46–55 age group shows the least brand engagement. As 35% of expected counts are below 5, results should be interpreted cautiously. These findings highlight age-driven variations in consumer choices, useful for targeted marketing strategies.

Taste Satisfaction of Masala Products by Age:

| | | The Overall Taste of Your Masala Product | | | | | Total |
|-------|---------|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------|
| | | very dissatisfied | somewhat satisfied | neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | satisfied | very satisfied | |
| Age | 18 - 25 | 7 | 12 | 19 | 16 | 24 | 78 |
| | 26 - 35 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 17 | 16 | 43 |
| | 36-45 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 17 | 24 |
| | 46-55 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Total | | 9 | 17 | 26 | 38 | 60 | 150 |

The majority of respondents (60) were "very satisfied" with masala products, with the **18–25 age group** showing diverse opinions, including the highest dissatisfaction (7 "very dissatisfied"). Satisfaction increases with age, with the **36–45** and **46–55 age groups** showing stronger preference for "very satisfied," while the **46–55** group had minimal dissatisfaction.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 25.225 ^a | 12 | .014 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 29.009 | 12 | .004 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 13.719 | 1 | <.001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 25.225$, $df = 12$, $p = 0.014$) indicates a significant relationship between age and taste satisfaction. The Likelihood Ratio Test ($\chi^2 = 29.009$, $p = 0.004$) and Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 13.719$, $p < 0.001$) support this finding. The results show that younger age groups (18–25) have mixed satisfaction, while satisfaction increases with age. However, **55% of expected counts** are below 5.

Recommendation of Masala Brand to Others by Age:

| | | Recommend Your Masala Brand To Others | | | | | Total |
|-------|---------|---------------------------------------|----|-----------|-----|-----|-------|
| | | definitely no | no | sometimes | Yes | yes | |
| Age | 18 - 25 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 25 | 24 | 78 |
| | 26 - 35 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 24 | 43 |
| | 36-45 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 15 | 24 |
| | 46-55 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | | 7 | 16 | 26 | 33 | 68 | 150 |

A majority of respondents (68) would recommend their masala brand to others, with the **18–25 age group** showing the most varied responses, particularly leaning towards "Yes" (25) and "Yes" (24). The **26–35 group** predominantly chose "Yes" (24) and "Sometimes" (7). In the **36–45 age group**, 15 respondents would "Yes" recommend, while the **46–55 group** had only 5 respondents, all choosing "Yes."

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 22.497 ^a | 12 | .032 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 25.953 | 12 | .011 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 7.075 | 1 | .008 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 22.497$, $df = 12$, $p = 0.032$) indicates a significant relationship between age and the likelihood of recommending masala brands. The Likelihood Ratio Test ($\chi^2 = 25.953$, $p = 0.011$) and Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 7.075$, $p = 0.008$) further support this finding. The results suggest that younger individuals (18–25) show varied responses, with older groups (36–45) more inclined to recommend their brand.

Purchase Decision based on Age:

| | | Decision To Buy This Brand Of Masala Powders | | | | | | Total |
|-------|---------|--|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Quality and purity | Flavors and taste | price and affordability | brand reputation | availability | packing and convenience | |
| Age | 18 - 25 | 20 | 13 | 19 | 18 | 7 | 1 | 78 |
| | 26 - 35 | 12 | 13 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 43 |
| | 36-45 | 11 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 24 |
| | 46-55 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | | 45 | 32 | 34 | 23 | 13 | 3 | 150 |

The top factors influencing masala brand purchases are **quality and purity** (45) and **flavors and taste** (32), with the **18–25 age group** placing the highest importance on quality (20) and flavor (13). The **26–35 age group** also values **quality and purity** (12) but places less importance on other factors like price (9). The **36–45 age group** shows more varied responses, with less emphasis on any particular factor. The **46–55 group** has the least diversity in responses, with very low values across all factors.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 14.531 ^a | 15 | .486 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 15.744 | 15 | .399 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.511 | 1 | .034 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 14.531$, $df = 15$, $p = 0.486$) indicates no significant relationship between age and factors influencing the decision to buy masala brands. Both the Likelihood Ratio Test ($\chi^2 = 15.744$, $p = 0.399$) and Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 4.511$, $p = 0.034$) support this conclusion. Despite some variations in factors influencing purchases across age groups, the lack of significant results suggests that these

factors do not vary significantly with age. The low expected counts in many cells (50%) warrant cautious interpretation.

Preference of Masala Product by Gender:

| | | Preference of Masala Product Based on Age | | | | | Total |
|--------|--------|---|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Achi masalas | MTR masalas | Everest masalas | local homemade masalas | no specific preferences | |
| Gender | Male | 15 | 19 | 17 | 28 | 15 | 94 |
| | Female | 6 | 17 | 18 | 9 | 6 | 56 |
| Total | | 21 | 36 | 35 | 37 | 21 | 150 |

Among the 150 respondents, **MTR masalas** (36) and **Everest masalas** (35) were the most popular choices overall. The **male** group showed a strong preference for **local homemade masalas** (28) and **MTR masalas** (19), while **females** preferred **Everest masalas** (18) more than other brands. Both genders showed similar preferences for Achi Masalas, with males favoring it slightly more (15) than females (6). There was no significant difference in overall preferences between the genders.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 8.532 | 4 | .074 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 8.616 | 4 | .071 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1.235 | 1 | .266 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 8.532$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.074$) indicates no significant relationship between gender and masala product preferences. The Likelihood Ratio Test ($\chi^2 = 8.616$, $p = 0.071$) and Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 1.235$, $p = 0.266$) also show no significant gender-based difference in preferences. While there are variations in preferences for different masala brands, these differences are not statistically significant. Given that no cells had expected counts below 5, the results are reliable, but caution is still advised due to the marginal p-value.

Taste Satisfaction of Masala Products by Gender

| | | Taste Satisfaction of Masala Products by Gender | | | | | Total |
|--------|--------|---|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------|
| | | very dissatisfied | satisfied | neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | satisfied | very satisfied | |
| Gender | Male | 4 | 5 | 16 | 26 | 43 | 94 |
| | Female | 5 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 17 | 56 |
| Total | | 9 | 17 | 26 | 38 | 60 | 150 |

Among the 150 respondents, 60 rated their masala products as "very satisfied," with males (43) showing a stronger positive response than females (17). Satisfaction levels were higher among males, with 26

respondents marking "satisfied," compared to 12 females. However, dissatisfaction was slightly higher among females, with 5 respondents choosing "very dissatisfied" versus 4 males. The neutral category had 16 males and 10 females.

| Chi-Square Test | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 11.942 ^a | 4 | .018 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 11.676 | 4 | .020 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 8.864 | 1 | .003 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 11.942$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.018$) shows a statistically significant relationship between gender and taste satisfaction levels. The Likelihood Ratio Test ($\chi^2 = 11.676$, $p = 0.020$) and the Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 8.864$, $p = 0.003$) confirm this significance. Males tend to report higher satisfaction levels compared to females, suggesting a possible gender-based difference in taste perception or preference.

Recommendation of Masala Brand to Others by Gender:

| | | Recommendation of Masala Brand to Others by Gender | | | | | Total |
|---------------|---------------|--|----|-----------|-----|----------------|-------|
| | | Definitely no | No | Sometimes | Yes | Definitely yes | |
| Gender | Male | 2 | 10 | 12 | 22 | 48 | 94 |
| | Female | 5 | 6 | 14 | 11 | 20 | 56 |
| Total | | 7 | 16 | 26 | 33 | 68 | 150 |

Among the 150 respondents, males (48) were more likely to "definitely recommend" their masala brand compared to females (20). A higher proportion of males (22) also selected "yes" for recommending the brand, while females were more evenly distributed across response categories. More females (5) than males (2) responded with "definitely no," indicating slightly lower confidence in recommendation among female respondents.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 8.558 ^a | 4 | .073 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 8.378 | 4 | .079 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 5.503 | 1 | .019 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 8.558$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.073$) and Likelihood Ratio test ($\chi^2 = 8.378$, $p = 0.079$) indicate that the relationship between gender and recommendation is not statistically significant at the 5% level. However, the Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 5.503$, $p = 0.019$) suggests a possible trend where males are more likely to strongly recommend their preferred masala brand. Despite this trend, the overall differences between genders are not significant enough to draw firm conclusions.

Purchase Decision based on Gender:

Among the 150 respondents, quality and purity (45 responses) was the most important factor influencing masala brand purchase decisions, followed by price and affordability (34 responses) and flavors and taste (32 responses). Males prioritized quality and purity (33) more than females (12), while females showed a more balanced preference across different factors. Brand reputation and availability were less influential compared to other attributes.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 6.485 ^a | 5 | .262 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.507 | 5 | .260 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .053 | 1 | .818 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 6.485$, $df = 5$, $p = 0.262$) and the Likelihood Ratio test ($\chi^2 = 6.507$, $p = 0.260$) indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and the factors influencing masala brand purchase decisions. The Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 0.053$, $p = 0.818$) further confirms this. Both genders have similar decision-making patterns, with quality, price, and taste being the top considerations, while packaging and availability play a minor role.

Masala Brand Preferences by Monthly Income:

| | | Masala Brand Preferences by Monthly Income | | | | | Total |
|----------------|-----------------|--|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Achi masalas | MTR masalas | Everest masalas | Local Home-Made Masalas | No Specific Preferences | |
| Monthly Income | Below 10,000 | 8 | 17 | 16 | 10 | 3 | 54 |
| | 10,000-30,000 | 3 | 7 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 25 |
| | 30,001-50,00 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 21 |
| | 50,001-1,00,000 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 16 | 9 | 41 |
| | above1,00,000 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 |
| Total | | 21 | 36 | 35 | 37 | 21 | 150 |

Among different income groups, MTR Masalas (36) and Everest Masalas (35) were the most preferred brands, followed closely by local homemade masalas (37). Respondents with an income below ₹10,000 showed the highest preference for MTR and Everest Masalas, while those earning between ₹50,001-₹1,00,000 preferred local homemade masalas (16). Higher-income groups (above ₹1,00,000) had lower engagement with branded masalas, favoring homemade options.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 35.133 ^a | 16 | .004 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 39.312 | 16 | <.001 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 10.304 | 1 | .001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 35.133$, $df = 16$, $p = 0.004$) and Likelihood Ratio test ($\chi^2 = 39.312$, $p < 0.001$) indicate a statistically significant relationship between monthly income and masala brand preference. The Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 10.304$, $p = 0.001$) suggests a systematic trend where lower-income groups prefer commercial brands, while higher-income groups show a stronger preference for homemade masalas. This highlights a shift in consumer choices based on income levels, likely influenced by affordability and traditional cooking practices.

Taste Satisfaction of Masala Products by Monthly Income:

| | | Taste Satisfaction of Masala Products by Monthly Income | | | | | Total |
|----------------|-----------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------|
| | | Very dissatisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | |
| Monthly Income | Below 10,000 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 19 | 54 |
| | 10,000-30,000 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 25 |
| | 30,001-50,000 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 21 |
| | 50,001-1,00,000 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 13 | 19 | 41 |
| | above1,00,000 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| Total | | 9 | 17 | 26 | 38 | 60 | 150 |

Taste satisfaction varied across income groups, with higher-income respondents (₹50,001 and above) reporting greater satisfaction. The highest satisfaction levels (Very Satisfied = 19) were observed among those earning ₹50,001-₹1,00,000, while lower-income groups (Below ₹10,000) had a mix of satisfied and dissatisfied responses. Neutral responses were more common among middle-income respondents.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 21.658 ^a | 16 | .155 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 26.970 | 16 | .042 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 10.535 | 1 | .001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 21.658$, $df = 16$, $p = 0.155$) indicates no statistically significant relationship between income and taste satisfaction. However, the Likelihood Ratio test ($\chi^2 = 26.970$, $p = 0.042$) suggests a possible association. The Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 10.535$, $p = 0.001$) reveals a trend where satisfaction increases with income, implying that higher-income groups are more satisfied with their masala brand choices.

Recommendation of Masala Brand to Others by Monthly Income:

The recommendation of masala brands varied across income groups. Higher-income respondents (₹50,001 and above) were more likely to recommend their preferred brands, with 19 individuals in the ₹50,001-₹1,00,000 group and 6 in the ₹1,00,000+ group being very satisfied. Lower-income groups showed mixed responses, with some dissatisfaction among those earning below ₹10,000

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 39.202 ^a | 16 | .001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 40.773 | 16 | <.001 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 11.973 | 1 | <.001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 39.202$, $df = 16$, $p = 0.001$) indicates a statistically significant relationship between income and brand recommendation. The Likelihood Ratio ($\chi^2 = 40.773$, $p < 0.001$) and Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 11.973$, $p < 0.001$) further confirm that higher-income groups are more likely to recommend their masala brand, while lower-income groups show varied responses.

Purchase Decision based on Monthly Income:

| | | Purchase Decision based on Monthly Income | | | | | | Total |
|----------------|-----------------|---|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Quality and Purity | Flavors and Taste | Price and Affordability | Brand Reputation | Availability | Packing and Convenience | |
| Monthly Income | Below 10,000 | 11 | 9 | 13 | 16 | 5 | 0 | 54 |
| | 10,000-30,000 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 25 |
| | 30,001-50,00 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 21 |
| | 50,001-1,00,000 | 21 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 41 |
| | above1,00,000 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Total | | 45 | 32 | 34 | 23 | 13 | 3 | 150 |

Purchase decisions for masala products varied across income groups. Quality and purity were the most influential factors, particularly for higher-income groups (₹50,001 and above), with 21 respondents selecting it. Lower-income groups (below ₹10,000) considered brand reputation and price affordability more important, while availability and packing had minimal influence across all income levels.

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 47.094 ^a | 20 | <.001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 50.839 | 20 | <.001 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 6.552 | 1 | .010 |
| N of Valid Cases | 150 | | |

The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 47.094$, $df = 20$, $p < 0.001$) shows a statistically significant relationship between income and purchase decision factors. The Likelihood Ratio ($\chi^2 = 50.839$, $p < 0.001$) and Linear-by-Linear Association test ($\chi^2 = 6.552$, $p = 0.010$) confirm that income levels significantly impact the factors influencing masala purchases, with higher-income individuals prioritizing quality and lower-income groups considering affordability and brand reputation.

Findings:

- The sample was composed of 62.67% male and 37.33% female respondents, with the majority (52%) in the 18-25 age group. Income levels varied, with 36% earning below 10,000, and 27.33% falling in the 50,001-1,00,000 range. Most respondents (52.67%) identified as beginner-level in culinary skills.
- Everest Masalas were the most preferred brand across all age groups, with the 36-45 and 46-55 age groups showing the strongest preference. Younger respondents (18-25) preferred brands like Achi and MTR, while some (21 respondents) favored homemade masalas.
- Older age groups (36-55) reported higher satisfaction with masala products, while the 18-25 age group exhibited more varied responses, including some dissatisfaction. Taste satisfaction was positively correlated with age.
- A majority (68 respondents) would recommend their chosen masala brand to others. Older age groups (36-45) were more likely to recommend, while younger age groups (18-25) were less consistent in their recommendations.
- Quality and purity were the leading factors in brand choice, particularly for the 18-25 group. Price and affordability were more significant for younger respondents. No significant relationship was found between age and purchase decision factors.
- Males favored local homemade masalas and MTR, while females preferred Everest. Males also reported higher satisfaction with masala products and were more likely to recommend their brand to others. However, gender did not significantly influence purchase decisions.

Conclusion:

This research offers significant insights into the preferences and behaviors of consumers toward masala brands, revealing variations based on age, gender, and other factors. Older consumers tend to demonstrate stronger brand loyalty, higher satisfaction, and a greater likelihood of recommending their preferred brands. In contrast, younger consumers exhibit more diverse preferences and are less consistent in their brand choices. Key factors influencing consumer decisions include quality, purity, and price, with younger individuals prioritizing affordability. Gender differences were also observed, with males favoring local and homemade masala brands, while females preferred established brands like Everest. These findings emphasize the importance of targeting marketing strategies based on demographic characteristics to effectively address the needs and preferences of different consumer segments in the Indian masala market.

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Cite this Article:

K.Venkata Ashwath Reddy and Kiranmayi Patel, "A STUDY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION OF MASALA PRODUCTS IN ANDHRA PRADESH", Naveen International Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences (NIJMS), ISSN: 3048-9423 (Online), Volume 1, Issue 3, pp. 38-51, December-January 2025.

Journal URL: <https://nijms.com/>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71126/nijms.v1i3.20>



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