

Consumer Buying Behavior Towards Aavin Milk and Dairy Products : A Study of Aavin

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ABSTRACT

The dairy sector in India constitutes a vital component of the national food economy, with cooperative dairy brands such as Aavin—the flagship brand of the Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation (TCMPF)—serving millions of households across the state. In the rapidly urbanizing and economically dynamic Coimbatore district, Aavin operates in an increasingly competitive environment characterized by the growing market presence of private dairy brands offering differentiated products, innovative packaging, and aggressive promotional strategies. Despite Aavin's established cooperative legacy, limited empirical research examines consumer perception, buying behaviour, and brand preference specifically for Aavin in urban markets such as Coimbatore. This study addresses this gap by adopting a descriptive research design and collecting primary data from 150–200 urban consumers through structured questionnaires. The marketing mix framework (4Ps—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) serves as the theoretical foundation for examining how Aavin's marketing strategies influence consumer awareness, purchase decisions, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Six hypotheses are proposed to test the relationships between marketing mix elements, demographic moderators, and consumer behaviour outcomes. Planned statistical tools include descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, Chi-square tests, and graphical representations. The findings are expected to yield actionable insights for Aavin's strategic marketing planning, product positioning, and customer engagement initiatives in Coimbatore. The study further contributes to the empirical literature on cooperative dairy brand marketing in urban Indian markets.

Keywords: *Consumer Perception, Brand Preference, Aavin, Dairy Industry, Marketing Mix, Brand Loyalty, Consumer Behaviour.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The dairy industry occupies a position of strategic importance in India's food economy, contributing significantly to nutritional security, rural employment, and household income generation. India's dairy sector is among the largest in the world by volume of milk production, and cooperative structures have historically been instrumental in linking smallholder farmers with urban consumer markets. Among the most prominent cooperative dairy brands in South India, Aavin—the official brand of the Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation (TCMPF)—has established itself as a trusted provider of milk and a diverse portfolio of dairy products across Tamil Nadu. Supported by an extensive procurement network, standardized quality controls, efficient distribution channels, and an affordability-first pricing philosophy, Aavin has served as a cornerstone of dairy supply across both rural and urban communities in the state.

Coimbatore district, one of the fastest-growing urban agglomerations in Tamil Nadu, represents a particularly dynamic market for dairy brands. Rising purchasing power, increasing health awareness, shifting lifestyle preferences, and growing exposure to private-label dairy products have collectively transformed the consumer landscape in the city. Private dairy companies such as Milky Mist, Hatsun Agro, and Dodla Dairy have significantly expanded their market presence in urban Tamil Nadu by investing in modern packaging, value-added product categories, and targeted marketing communications. This competitive intensification has created both challenges and opportunities for Aavin to consolidate its market position.

In this context, understanding consumer perception and brand preference has emerged as a critical strategic priority. Consumer perception refers to the cognitive process through which individuals select, organize, and interpret information

about a product or brand to form an evaluative judgment [1]. Brand preference, on the other hand, denotes the degree to which a consumer consistently chooses a particular brand over available alternatives when making purchase decisions [2]. For cooperative brands like Aavin, which have traditionally relied on product quality, affordability, and institutional trust rather than marketing-driven differentiation, a systematic analysis of these consumer-side constructs is essential for sustaining competitiveness and expanding market reach.

Despite the importance of the Aavin brand and the analytical richness of the Coimbatore dairy market, existing empirical research on consumer behaviour specifically toward Aavin in urban settings is limited. Most available studies on the Indian dairy sector either focus on rural consumption patterns, examine multiple brands without cooperative-specific emphasis, or investigate brand loyalty in broader FMCG contexts. This study addresses this gap by conducting an empirical investigation of consumer perception and brand preference toward Aavin milk and dairy products in Coimbatore district. The primary objective is to analyze how Aavin's marketing mix elements—product quality, pricing, distribution, and promotional activities—influence consumer awareness, purchase behaviour, satisfaction, and loyalty. Secondary objectives include assessing consumer awareness of Aavin's product portfolio, evaluating the competitive positioning of Aavin relative to private dairy brands, and providing evidence-based recommendations for marketing strategy enhancement.

The study hypothesizes that: (H1) product quality significantly influences consumer purchase decisions; (H2) price and perceived value-for-money significantly affect consumer preference; (H3) effective distribution and availability positively influence consumer satisfaction and brand preference; (H4) promotional activities significantly affect consumer awareness and brand loyalty; (H5) there is a significant difference in consumer preference between Aavin and private dairy brands; and (H6) demographic factors such as age, income, and family size moderate the relationship between Aavin's marketing strategies and consumer behaviour. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section II reviews the relevant literature, Section III presents the research methodology, Section IV discusses data analysis and results, Section V interprets findings in relation to study objectives, and Section VI concludes with implications and recommendations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to consumer perception, brand preference, marketing mix effectiveness, and buying behaviour in the dairy sector provides the foundation for this study. The following review synthesizes key findings from prior research and identifies the gaps that the present investigation seeks to address.

A. Consumer Perception in the Dairy Sector

Consumer perception refers to the interpretive process through which individuals form evaluative judgments about products and brands based on their experiences, expectations, and cognitive frameworks [1]. In the context of the dairy industry, product quality, freshness, packaging, and brand image have been consistently identified as primary drivers of consumer perception. Sharma and Kumar (2020) demonstrated that the freshness and packaging of milk products are the most influential determinants of consumer trust in cooperative dairy brands, particularly in markets where food safety and hygiene are of paramount concern [3]. Similarly, Kaur and Singh (2018) found that consumer attitudes toward dairy products in India are significantly shaped by perceptions of product purity, nutritional value, and price transparency [4]. These findings suggest that for Aavin to maintain consumer trust, consistent investment in product quality standards and packaging modernization is essential.

B. Brand Preference and Loyalty

Brand preference in consumer markets is understood as a function of trust, perceived quality, value for money, and accumulated purchase experience [2]. Ramesh (2019) argued that cooperative dairy brands such as Aavin derive their brand equity primarily from institutional credibility, consistent product quality, and community-oriented brand identity, which engender high levels of trust among both rural and urban consumers [5]. However, the same study noted that private dairy brands have progressively encroached on cooperative market share through attractive packaging innovations, value-added product offerings, and aggressive marketing investments. Keller's Brand Equity Model (2008) further establishes that strong brand equity manifests through consumer recognition, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty, all of which are positively correlated with sustained market performance [6]. In the

cooperative dairy context, brand loyalty is additionally sustained by the affordability advantage and supply reliability that brands like Aavin are perceived to offer.

C. Marketing Mix and Consumer Behaviour

The marketing mix framework, conceptualized by Kotler and Keller (2020) as comprising product, price, place, and promotion [1], has been extensively applied in consumer behaviour research across the FMCG and dairy sectors. Singh and Mehta (2018) demonstrated that effective distribution strategies and promotional visibility in retail outlets are among the most significant factors positively influencing purchase decisions in the Indian dairy market [7]. Their study further found that product variety, competitive pricing, and modern packaging jointly enhance consumer satisfaction and increase repeat purchase frequency. The role of promotional communications in creating brand awareness and sustaining loyalty has been underscored by several scholars, who find that advertising campaigns and in-store brand visibility significantly amplify the probability of brand trial and subsequent preference formation among first-time buyers.

D. Consumer Buying Behaviour in Urban Dairy Markets

Buying behaviour in urban dairy markets is shaped by an interplay of demographic, psychographic, social, and cultural factors. Rao (2021) established that urban consumers, in contrast to their rural counterparts, demonstrate stronger preferences for branded, packaged milk and value-added dairy products such as flavored milk, yogurt, and cheese, driven by considerations of convenience, hygiene, and lifestyle alignment [8]. Health consciousness, which is intensifying among urban Indian consumers as a consequence of rising disposable incomes and greater access to health information, further amplifies the demand for nutritionally fortified and organically certified dairy products. Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard's (2019) multi-stage consumer decision-making model—encompassing need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation—provides a useful framework for understanding how Aavin's marketing initiatives interact with these behavioural processes [9]. Sharma and Ramesh (2020) additionally observed that demographic factors including age, income level, and family size function as significant moderating variables in the relationship between marketing stimuli and purchase behaviour in urban dairy markets [10].

E. Research Gaps

Despite the breadth of existing research on consumer behaviour in the dairy sector, several critical gaps remain. First, the majority of empirical studies focus on rural consumption patterns or examine multiple private brands without devoting specific attention to cooperative brands such as Aavin in urban settings. Second, there is a paucity of studies that empirically investigate the effectiveness of Aavin's marketing mix elements—product quality, pricing, distribution, and promotion—in driving consumer outcomes in the Coimbatore market specifically. Third, existing literature provides limited evidence on how demographic and lifestyle moderators influence the relationship between Aavin's marketing strategies and consumer satisfaction or loyalty in urban Tamil Nadu. Fourth, comparative analyses of consumer preference between Aavin and its private-sector competitors in urban markets remain insufficiently developed. The present study directly addresses these identified gaps by conducting a structured empirical investigation in Coimbatore, thereby contributing updated evidence to the marketing and consumer behaviour literature in the Indian dairy sector.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for systematically examining patterns, trends, and relationships among consumer behaviour variables in a defined market context. The descriptive approach enables the researcher to characterize consumer perceptions, satisfaction levels, and brand preferences regarding Aavin products in Coimbatore without manipulating the research environment. This design is consistent with established practice in marketing and consumer behaviour research, where the objective is to generate evidence-based insights that can inform strategic decision-making.

B. Conceptual Framework

The study is grounded in the marketing mix framework (4Ps) as conceptualized by Kotler and Keller (2020), which posits that product quality, pricing strategy, distribution effectiveness, and promotional activities constitute the primary levers through which organizations influence consumer behaviour [1]. These four elements serve as independent variables in

the proposed model. Consumer behaviour outcomes—comprising awareness, purchase decisions, satisfaction, and brand loyalty—constitute the dependent variables. Demographic and lifestyle characteristics of respondents, including age, income level, occupation, and family size, are incorporated as moderating variables that may strengthen or attenuate the relationships between marketing mix stimuli and consumer outcomes. The model thus hypothesizes a structured pathway from Aavin's marketing inputs through consumer cognition and evaluation to observable behavioural outcomes.

C. Sampling Design

The study population comprises all urban consumers of Aavin milk and dairy products in Coimbatore city. Given the impracticability of a complete census enumeration of this large and dispersed population, a convenience sampling technique is employed. This non-probability sampling approach is appropriate for descriptive exploratory studies where accessibility and representativeness across demographic subgroups are prioritized over probabilistic rigor. A sample size of 150 to 200 respondents is targeted, encompassing household consumers, students, working professionals, and retail customers who regularly purchase or are aware of Aavin products. Respondents are selected to ensure diversity across age, gender, income, educational qualification, occupation, and family size categories, thereby enhancing the reliability and transferability of findings within the Coimbatore urban context.

D. Data Collection

Primary data are collected through structured questionnaires administered personally and, where applicable, via online survey platforms. The questionnaire is designed around the key constructs of the conceptual model and comprises close-ended items using Likert scales (five-point), multiple-choice questions, and ranking-format items. The instrument is organized into four thematic sections: (i) respondent demographic profile; (ii) consumer awareness and product perception; (iii) purchase behaviour, satisfaction, and loyalty; and (iv) comparative assessment of Aavin versus competing dairy brands. Personal interviews are optionally conducted with select respondents to supplement questionnaire data with qualitative depth. Observation of consumer purchasing patterns at retail outlets and Aavin milk parlours further augments the dataset. Secondary data are sourced from Aavin's official annual reports, Government of Tamil Nadu dairy industry publications, peer-reviewed academic journals, and industry market research reports relating to the Coimbatore dairy sector.

E. Variables

The study operationalizes the independent variables of the marketing mix as follows: Product quality is measured through consumer ratings of freshness, taste, packaging, and product variety; Price is assessed through perceived affordability, value-for-money, and comparative pricing satisfaction; Place (Distribution) is evaluated through availability, accessibility, supply consistency, and retail outlet proximity; and Promotion is measured through awareness of Aavin's advertising campaigns, in-store visibility, and perceived effectiveness of promotional communications. The dependent variables—awareness, purchase decision, satisfaction, and loyalty—are operationalized through Likert-scale items capturing knowledge of Aavin's product range, purchase frequency, perceived product experience, and repeat purchase intention, respectively.

F. Statistical Tools for Analysis

The collected data are analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations, are used to summarize respondent profiles and variable distributions. Pearson's correlation analysis is employed to examine the strength and direction of relationships between marketing mix variables and consumer behaviour outcomes. Multiple regression analysis is conducted to identify the relative predictive impact of each marketing mix element on consumer purchase decisions and brand loyalty. Chi-square tests of independence are applied to assess associations between categorical demographic variables and consumer preferences. Graphical tools including bar charts, pie charts, and histograms are used to visually represent key findings and trends.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The following section presents the planned data analysis structure based on the study's conceptual framework and research design. As this study is in the Phase I (proposal and design) stage, the analysis presented here reflects the anticipated data interpretation approach, supported by representative illustrative findings based on the research framework. Full empirical results will be reported upon completion of primary data collection.

A. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the 150–200 respondents will be analyzed using frequency distributions and percentage analysis. Key demographic variables include gender, age group, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, monthly household income, and family size. This profiling will establish the representativeness of the sample and provide context for interpreting consumer behaviour variations across subgroups. Table I illustrates the planned demographic variable structure.

TABLE I. Planned Demographic Variable Structure

| Variable | Categories | Analysis Method |
|----------------------|--|-----------------|
| Gender | Male / Female | Frequency, % |
| Age Group | Below 25 / 25–35 / 35–50 / Above 50 | Frequency, % |
| Education | School / Diploma / Graduate / Postgraduate | Frequency, % |
| Occupation | Student / Professional / Homemaker / Other | Frequency, % |
| Monthly Income (INR) | < 20,000 / 20–40K / 40–60K / > 60K | Frequency, % |
| Family Size | 1–2 / 3–4 / > 4 members | Frequency, % |

B. Consumer Awareness of Aavin Products

Consumer awareness will be assessed by examining respondents' knowledge of Aavin's product portfolio, brand identity, and marketing communications. Analysis will quantify the proportion of respondents who are aware of specific Aavin product categories—including pasteurized milk, flavored milk, curd, butter, ghee, and ice cream—and the primary sources through which awareness was acquired (word-of-mouth, advertising, retail visibility, etc.). This dimension directly addresses Objective 1 and will provide evidence for testing H4, which posits that promotional activities significantly influence consumer awareness.

C. Consumer Perception of Marketing Mix Elements

Respondent perceptions across the four marketing mix dimensions will be summarized using mean scores and standard deviations on five-point Likert scales. Table II presents the planned measurement approach for each marketing mix construct. Higher mean scores will indicate more favorable consumer perceptions. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post-hoc tests will be applied if significant inter-group differences in perception scores across demographic categories are anticipated.

TABLE II. Marketing Mix Perception Measurement Framework

| Construct | Key Attributes Measured | Scale |
|----------------------|---|----------------|
| Product Quality | Freshness, taste, packaging, nutritional value, variety | 5-point Likert |
| Price | Affordability, value-for-money, price fairness, competitor comparison | 5-point Likert |
| Place (Distribution) | Availability, outlet accessibility, supply consistency | 5-point Likert |

| Construct | Key Attributes Measured | Scale |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| Promotion | Ad recall, brand visibility, promotional offer effectiveness | 5-point Likert |

D. Consumer Purchase Behaviour, Satisfaction, and Loyalty

Purchase behaviour will be analyzed through frequency of purchase, preferred Aavin product categories, and primary purchase locations (Aavin parlours, retail stores, mobile booths, supermarkets). Consumer satisfaction will be measured as an aggregate construct reflecting perceived product value, purchase experience, and fulfillment of expectations. Brand loyalty will be operationalized as repeat purchase intention and willingness to recommend Aavin products to others. These analyses will test Hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H6.

E. Hypothesis Testing: Illustrative Statistical Framework

Table III presents the planned statistical tests corresponding to each hypothesis. Chi-square tests will be used for nominal categorical associations, Pearson's correlation for continuous variable relationships, and regression analysis to quantify the predictive contribution of marketing mix elements to consumer loyalty and satisfaction. A significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ will be maintained across all inferential tests. Demographic moderation effects will be assessed through sub-group analysis and, where sample sizes permit, interaction terms in the regression models.

TABLE III. Hypothesis Testing Framework

| Hypothesis | Variables | Statistical Test | Expected Direction |
|------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------|
| H1 | Product quality → Purchase decisions | Pearson's r / Regression | Positive, significant |
| H2 | Price / Value-for-money → Brand preference | Pearson's r / Regression | Positive, significant |
| H3 | Distribution availability → Satisfaction & preference | Pearson's r / Regression | Positive, significant |
| H4 | Promotional activities → Awareness & loyalty | Pearson's r / Regression | Positive, significant |
| H5 | Aavin vs. Private brands → Consumer preference | Chi-square / ANOVA | Significant difference |
| H6 | Demographics → Moderation of marketing-behaviour link | Sub-group Interaction | Significant moderation |

F. Competitive Brand Comparison

Respondents will be asked to compare Aavin with private dairy brands (Milky Mist, Hatsun, Dodla) on dimensions of product quality, pricing satisfaction, packaging attractiveness, and overall brand trust. Chi-square analysis will determine whether statistically significant differences in consumer preference exist across brand categories, directly testing H5. A comparative mean score analysis will identify the specific competitive advantages and vulnerabilities of Aavin relative to its private-sector counterparts.

V. DISCUSSION

The discussion that follows interprets the anticipated findings in relation to the study's objectives, theoretical framework, and prior literature. While full empirical results await primary data collection, the analysis design is informed by strong conceptual foundations and is expected to yield several meaningful insights.

With respect to consumer perception (Objective 1 and H1), the literature consistently indicates that product freshness, taste, and packaging are primary determinants of dairy brand trust [3]. Aavin's longstanding quality assurance mechanisms and ISO-certified processing infrastructure are expected to produce favorable consumer perceptions of product quality. However, the study anticipates that packaging—a dimension where private brands have invested significantly—may emerge as a relative weakness for Aavin in the urban Coimbatore market, consistent with findings by Ramesh (2019) [5].

Regarding price sensitivity (H2), Aavin's positioning as a value-for-money cooperative brand is expected to resonate strongly with lower- and middle-income consumer segments. However, the anticipated moderation analysis (H6) may reveal that higher-income respondents exhibit reduced price sensitivity and place greater emphasis on packaging quality and product variety—a finding consistent with Sharma and Ramesh (2020) [10]. This differentiation has important implications for Aavin's product segmentation and premium product development strategies.

Distribution effectiveness (H3) is hypothesized to be a critical driver of consumer satisfaction and brand preference in the urban Coimbatore context, where the convenience of purchase locations significantly influences buying decisions. Aavin's extensive network of milk parlours and retail distribution points is expected to yield positive consumer assessments of availability; however, supply consistency during peak demand periods and the penetration of modern retail formats may emerge as areas requiring operational improvement.

The role of promotional activities (H4) in shaping consumer awareness and loyalty is of particular strategic relevance. Aavin has historically under-invested in marketing communications relative to its private-sector competitors. The anticipated findings are expected to reveal lower promotional recall scores for Aavin compared to private brands, suggesting that targeted investment in digital marketing, social media engagement, and in-store brand visibility could meaningfully enhance consumer awareness and preference among younger demographic cohorts.

The competitive comparison (H5) is expected to reveal that while Aavin commands strong loyalty among established, older consumer segments who prioritize trust and affordability, private brands are gaining preference among younger, more lifestyle-conscious consumers who value packaging innovation and product variety. This generational bifurcation in brand preference has significant implications for Aavin's long-term market positioning and underscores the need for a differentiated marketing strategy that addresses both its existing loyal base and the growing aspirational consumer segment.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive research design for empirically investigating consumer perception and brand preference toward Aavin milk and dairy products in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. Grounded in the marketing mix framework and established theories of consumer decision-making and brand equity, the study articulates a structured analytical pathway from Aavin's marketing inputs to consumer behaviour outcomes, moderated by demographic and lifestyle characteristics.

The research addresses a significant gap in the existing literature on cooperative dairy brands in urban Indian markets, where most prior studies have concentrated on rural consumption patterns or generic FMCG brand comparisons without specific attention to cooperative dairy dynamics. By focusing on Coimbatore—a rapidly urbanizing market with a diverse and increasingly competitive dairy landscape—the study generates context-specific insights of both academic and practical relevance.

The anticipated findings carry several important implications for Aavin's strategic management. First, Aavin should invest in modernizing its product packaging and expanding its value-added dairy product portfolio to attract younger, health-conscious urban consumers without compromising the affordability ethos that anchors its loyalty among established consumer segments. Second, the organization should allocate resources toward targeted promotional campaigns leveraging digital and social media platforms to improve brand recall and awareness among demographic groups currently under-served by its traditional communication channels. Third, supply chain enhancements that improve distribution

consistency in modern retail formats and reduce stockouts during peak demand periods are essential for sustaining consumer satisfaction levels. Fourth, strategic pricing differentiation—introducing premium product tiers for higher-income consumers while maintaining affordable core product lines—could enable Aavin to compete more effectively across multiple consumer segments simultaneously.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes a replicable empirical framework for investigating cooperative dairy brand marketing in other urban markets across India, thereby enriching the broader literature on marketing effectiveness in the cooperative enterprise sector. Future research should employ longitudinal survey designs to track changes in consumer perception and loyalty over time, and could usefully incorporate ethnographic methods to deepen understanding of the cultural and social factors shaping dairy brand preference in urban Tamil Nadu.

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