

## PROBLEMS FACED BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, WHILE PURCHASING CONSUMER DURABLE GOODS

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### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted with an objective to identify the problems faced by university students in purchasing consumer durables. An *ex-post-facto* research design was adopted for conducting the study. The study was carried out in College of Home Science, Hyderabad, Telangana, India. Data was selected from 30 college students randomly. Further the data was analyzed with percentage and frequency.

**KEYWORDS:** Consumers, Durable Goods and Decision Making

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### Article History

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer durable goods are a category of consumer products which are purchased occasionally because they are made to last for an extended period of time. In this research we have selected few categories of consumer durable goods which are used by majority of the students; to identify problems faced by them while purchasing those goods. India seems to be the fifth largest market in the world for consumer durables by 2025. Demand for consumer durables in India has been growing due to the rising incomes, increasing urbanization, and changing lifestyles.

Marichamy K (2013), conducted a study on consumer behavior of women, with special reference to durable goods in Madurai city. The study revealed that, majority of the respondents felt that there was non-availability of spares and as complaints were not attended in time and exchange and replacement cost of the product was very less, made them forego the purchased product that opt for new products.

Another study on consumer behaviour towards consumer durable goods in Thiruvavur district was conducted, by Sathya and Vijayasanthi (2015). The studies revealed that, majority of respondents were influenced by advertisements in television for buying products like TV, Mobile Phones and Mixie. About 96 per cent of the respondents were influenced by others opinion. Purchase decisions were mostly influenced by family members. Most influenced factors were Price and quality were the other factors, which influenced the purchase decision of consumer durable goods.

A study on consumer brand preference for consumer durable goods, with reference to Lucknow district done by Hasan (2014) revealed that, factors such as quality, technology and price had statistically proved to be significant in determining the attitude towards the preference for consumer durable goods.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

An ex-post- facto research design was used, to identify problems faced by thirty university students inclusive of both under graduate (18) and post graduate (12) students, with regard to consumer durable goods. The location of the study was Hyderabad, College of Home science. The questionnaire consists of mainly five categories of consumer durable goods i.e., clothing, jewellery, bags, watches and cosmetics. The collected data was tabulated and inferences were drawn by using percentages.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results (Table 1) revealed that the major sources of information for clothing were open market (47%), internet (40%) followed by super markets (33%). Even for jewellery (37%), footwear (67%) and bags (50%) open market was found to be the major source of information. However internet was the major source of information while buying watches (47%) and clothing (40%).

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Source of Information**

Sl. No	Products	Source of Information											
		Super Market		Internet		Home Delivery		Vendors		Open Market		T.V Shopping Channel	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Clothing	10	33.33	12	40.00	4	13.33	3	10.00	14	47.00	5	17.00
2	Cosmetics	14	47.00	5	17.00	2	7.00	4	13.33	12	40.00	5	17.00
3	Jewellery	6	20.00	7	23.33	1	3.33	8	27.00	11	37.00	4	13.33
4	Watches	5	17.00	14	47.00	1	3.33	3	10.00	10	33.33	2	7.00
5	Foot wear	8	27.00	7	23.33	2	7.00	5	17.00	20	67.00	-	-
6	Bags	10	33.33	6	20.00	1	3.33	4	13.33	15	50.00	1	3.33

(In this table the respondents have given multiple answers, so the total number exceeds above 30)

About 47 per cent of the respondents got information about cosmetics from super markets. A little more than one-fourth of the respondents were dependent on vendors for getting the information about the jewellery. T.V shopping channel was the source of information for 17 per cent of the respondents, about clothing and cosmetics. Home delivery was the least source of information about any consumer durable goods.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Problems Faced While Purchasing the Product**

SI NO	Problems	Products					
		Clothing F (%)	Cosmetic F (%)	Jewellery F (%)	Watches F (%)	Footwear F (%)	Bags F (%)
1	Faulty or damaged goods	7(23.33)	6 (20.00)	3 (3.33)	2 (7.00)	6 (20.00)	9(30.00)
2	Goods lacked durability, wore out very quickly	8(27.00)	1 (3.33)	3 (3.33)	3 (3.33)	10(33.33)	8(27.00)
3	Wrong or unsuitable product provided	7(23.33)	4 (13.33)	-	8(27.00)	5 (17.00)	4(14.00)
4	Service not provided	5(17.00)	5 (17.00)	4 (13.33)	2 (7.00)	-	2(7.00)
5	Service not up to standard	5(17.00)	7 (23.33)	9 (30.00)	4(13.33)	1 (3.33)	4(13.33)
6	Goods or service delivered late or not at all	4(13.33)	4(13.33)	7 (23.33)	8(27.00)	1 (3.33)	1(3.33)
7	Failure or delay in promised repair	3(10.00)	2 (7.00)	4 (13.66)	7(23.33)	4 (13.33)	3(10.00)
8	Supplier refusing to help, being difficult or obstructive	4(13.33)	4 (13.33)	5 (17.00)	2 (7.00)	6 (20.00)	1 (3.33)
9	Offers of inadequate redress, including credit notes instead of refunds	9(30.00)	4 (13.33)	4 (13.33)	2 (7.00)	1 (3.33)	4(14.00)
10	Problems returning unwanted goods, getting refund or with cancellation rights	9(30.00)	3 (10.00)	4 (13.33)	3(10.00)	6 (20.00)	5(17.00)
11	Problems with guarantee/warranty	14(47.0)	3 (10.00)	6 (20.00)	6(20.00)	7 (23.33)	3(10.00)
12	Problems with product or service safety	3(10.00)	8 (27.00)	8 (27.00)	6(20.00)	4 (13.33)	1 (3.33)
13	Problems with charges	8(27.00)	10 (33.3)	1 (3.33)	3(10.00)	4 (13.33)	1 (3.33)
14	Contracts, terms and Conditions unfair or unclear	2(7.00)	4 (13.33)	8 (27.00)	4(13.33)	2(7.00)	4(13.33)
15	Problems Pursuing a Claim	3(10.00)	-	9 (30.00)	4(13.33)	2(7.00)	3(10.00)
16	Problems with the way something was sold Eg. put under pressure to buy, misleading advice	7(23.33)	12(40.00)	5 (17.00)	1 (3.33)	2(7.00)	1 (3.33)
18	Failure to give notice or supply adequate notification of cancellation	3(10.00)	5(17.00)	6 (20.00)	5(17.00)	4(13.33)	3(10.00)
19	Problems with the price of goods and services e.g. overcharged or not told about extra costs	8(26.00)	4(13.33 )	6 (20.00)	4(14.00)	7(23.33 )	4(14.00)
20	The price was too high for the quality	9(30.00)	7( 23.33 )	11(37.00)	5(17.00)	6(20.00 )	3(10.00)
21	Inadequate or confusing operating/assembly instructions	4(14.00)	4(13.33 )	4( 14.00 )	6(20.00)	3(10.00 )	2(7.00 )
22	Any other complaint	1( 3.33 )	1( 3.33 )	5(17.00 )	-	1( 3.33 )	4(14.00)

(Due to Multiple responses, total exceeds 30)

The above table 2 depicts the problems faced by respondents while purchasing consumer durable goods. Major problems faced by respondents in clothing were problems with warranty/ guarantee (47%), high price (30%), problems while returning unwanted goods (30%), problems with inadequate redressal (30%) and lacks of goods durability (27%). While in cosmetics major problems observed were putting pressure on consumers to buy something (40%), problems with charges (33%), problems with product (27%), high price (23%) and service was not up to standard (23%). About 37 per cent of the respondents felt that the price was too high for jewellery followed by problems while pursuing claim (30%), service was not up to standard (30%), problems with product safety (27%) and contract or terms and conditions un clear to the consumers (27%). Problems with reference to watches were wrong or unsuitable product (27%), late delivery of the product (27%), delayed repair (23%) and problems with guarantee/ warranty and product safety (20%). Major problems faced with footwear purchase were lack of durable goods (33%), overcharging to the products and problems with warranty/ guarantee (23%), problems with supplying product and problem in returning unwanted goods (20%). While with related to bags, problems found were difficulty in returning unwanted goods (17%), offers of inadequate redress (14%), problems with price (14%) and service not up to standard (13%).

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Cost Incurred Due to the Problem**

Sl. No	Items	Products					
		Clothing F (%)	Cosmetics F (%)	Jewellery F (%)	Watches F (%)	Foot Wear F (%)	Bags F (%)
1	Cost to you of any telephone calls, postage or stationery	6(20.00)	3(10.00)	6(20.00)	-	5(17.00)	-
2	Any travel costs you have incurred	10(33.33)	8(27.00)	6(20.00)	3(10.00)	5(17.00)	4(13.33)
3	Costs to you on any legal matters or for legal advice	4(13.33)	6(20.00)	7(23.00)	1(3.33)	1(3.33)	3(10.00)
4	Costs to you of getting any other type of expert advice or assistance	1(3.33)	6(20.00)	6(20.00)	3(17.00)	1(3.33)	-

\*Multiple responses

Table 3 shows that regarding cost incurred due to the problems, about 33 per cent of the respondents spent money on travelling to return or exchange, 20 per cent on phone call/ postages followed by 13 per cent had incurred cost on seeking legal advice. In case of problems faced regarding cosmetic products, respondents spent travel costs (27%) to return or exchange goods, on legal advice or technical advice charges (20%). The costs incurred for jewellery related problems were legal advice (23%), expert advice (20%), travel cost (20%) and phone/postage cost (20%). Getting expert advice (17%) followed by travel cost (10%) was incurred in case of watches. An equal number of respondents spent money on both travelling and making calls while solving problems related to foot wear. While with related to bags, about 13 per cent spent on travelling and (10%) on seeking legal advice.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Reaction during the Period of Problem**

S. No	Feelings	Reaction							
		A Great Deal		A Fair Amount		A Little		Not at All	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Under stress	8	27.00	6	20.00	15	50.00	1	3.33
2	Angry	4	14.00	14	47.00	10	33.33	2	6.66
3	Worried	3	10.00	7	23.33	5	17.00	15	50.00
4	Frustrated	1	3.33	6	20.00	12	40.00	11	37.00

About 27 per cent of the respondents were in great deal of stress during the problem period, followed by being quite angry (47%) and a little frustrated (40%). While 23 per cent were having a fair amount of worry, 50 per cent were not at all worried about the problems faced. Around 37 per cent of respondents didn't get frustrated at all (Table 4).

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Complaints Made**

S.N.	Complaining Body	Clothing	Cosmetics	Jewellery	Watches	Footwear	Bags
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
1	Advertising Standards Authority	5 (17.0)	7(24.00)	3(10.00)	1(3.33)	-	-
2	Citizens Advice\ CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau)	1 (3.33)	7 (24.00)	4 (13.33)	-	1 (3.33)	1(3.33)
3	Consumer Forum\ Consumer Futures \ Extra Help Unit	2(7.00)	-	7 (24.00)	2 (7.00)	1 (3.33)	-
4	Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) or other financial industry body	2 (7.00)	1 (3.33)	8 (27.00)	1 (3.33)	-	2(7.00)
5	Local council\ councillor	3(10.00)	6(20.00)	2(7.00)	-	2 (7.00)	1(3.33)
6	Member of Parliament (MP)	1 (3.33)	2(7.00)	5(17.00)	2(7.00)	1(3.33)	2(7.00)
7	National Consumer Council	4(13.3)	7(24.00)	4(14.00)	5(17.00)	3(10.00)	2(7.00)
8	Police	2(7.00)	2(7.00)	7(24.00)	2(7.00)	-	1(3.33)
9	Trading Standards Services	4(14.00)	8(23.33)	1(3.33)	-	-	-
10	Other specific advisory, mediating or regulatory body	2(7.00)	3(10.00)	3(10.00)	2(7.00)	4(14.00)	-
11	Anywhere else	-	1(3.33)	3(10.00)	-	4(14.00)	4(14.00)

(Due to multiple response total exceeds 30)

The table number 5 shows that about 20 per cent of the respondents had complained to other specific advisory/ mediating or regulatory regarding clothing related problems, followed by in advertising standard authority (17%), trading standard services (14%) and national consumer council (13%). More or less an equal percentage (23-24%) of respondents about cosmetics made complaints to citizen's advice, national consumer council, and advertising standards authority, trading standard services and complaining to local councillor (20%). About twenty seven percent of the respondents had complained to financial conduct authority (FCA) or other financial industry body followed by consumer forum (24%) regarding jewellery problems Police (24%) and to Member of Parliament (17%). While 17 per cent of the respondents had complained to national consumer council and 10 per cent to the other specific advisory, mediating or regulatory body regarding problems related to watches.

In case of foot wear, very less respondents had reported and some of them were to other specific advisory, mediating or regulatory body (14%) and some of them reported somewhere else (14%). While in case of bags very less respondents reported to anybody.

**Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Satisfaction with the Help Received**

S. No.	Products	Very Satisfied		Fairly Satisfied		Not Very Satisfied		Not at all Satisfied	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Clothing	8	27.00	14	47.00	2	7.00	6	20.00
2	Cosmetics	9	30.00	9	30.00	3	10.00	3	10.00
3	Jewellery	12	40.00	5	17.00	8	27.00	-	-
4	Watches	10	33.33	5	17.00	10	33.33	-	-
5	Footwear	4	14.00	9	30.00	7	24.00	4	13.33
6	Bags	8	27.00	8	27.00	6	20.00	2	7.00

In terms of help received regarding complaint made, 47 per cent were fairly satisfied with the help got regarding clothing followed by 27 per cent with high satisfaction (Table 6). While 30 per cent of the respondents were very satisfied and 30 per cent were fairly satisfied with help received regarding cosmetics. About 40 per cent were very satisfied with the help received in jewellery problems and 27 per cent were not very satisfied with its help. Around 33 per cent of respondents were very satisfied with help received regarding the complaints made about watches and 33 per cent were not very satisfied. Thirty per cent were fairly satisfied with footwear related help and 24 per cent were not very satisfied. An equal number of respondents were very satisfied and fairly satisfied (27%) with the help got in bags related problems.

**Table 7: Distribution of Respondents by the Extent of Problem Resolve**

Sl. No	Products	Completely Resolved		Partially Resolved		Not Resolved at all	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
		1	Clothing	10	33.33	14	47.00
2	Cosmetics	2	7.00	6	20.00	13	43.33
3	Jewellery	9	30.00	6	20.00	5	17.00
4	Watches	6	20.00	13	43.33	2	7.00
5	Footwear	3	10.00	11	37.00	8	27.00
6	Bags	10	33.33	9	30.00	6	20.00

Regarding clothing (33%), bags (33%) and jewellery (30%) more or less an equal percentage of respondents felt that their problems were completely resolved. About 47 per cent felt that their problems were partially resolved with respect to clothing followed by watches (43%), footwear (37%) and bags (30%). While 43 per cent and 27 per cent of the respondents expressed that problems were not at all resolved regarding cosmetics and footwear respectively (Table 7).

**Table 8: Distribution of Respondents by Action Taken**

S. No.	Action Taken	Clothing	Cosmetics	Jewellery	Watches	Footwear	Bags
		F%	F%	F%	F%	F%	F%
1	Use a Different Provider /Avoid Current one	19(63.33)	4(13.33)	8(27.00)	4(13.33)	3(10.00)	3(10.00)
2	Shop Around	4(13.33)	10(33.33)	4(13.33)	5(17.00)	2(7.00)	6(20.00)
3	Spend More / Invest in Better Quality	9(30.00)	4(13.33)	15(50.00)	9(30.00)	4(13.33)	3(10.00)
4	Understand/Check Terms and Conditions	7(23.33)	10(33.33)	7(23.33)	9(30.00)	4(13.33)	3(10.00)
5	Change Channel of Purchase	5(17.00)	2(7.00)	7(23.33)	9(30.00)	6(20.00)	3(10.00)
6	Complain More	8(27.00)	9(30.00)	3(10.00)	3(10.00)	2(7.00)	4(13.33)
7	Check Reviews/Feedback	6(20.00)	7 (23.33)	17(57.00)	4(13.33)	4(13.33)	4(13.33)
8	Ask for Recommendations	9(30.00)	5 (17.00)	13(43.33)	5 (17.00)	4 (13.33)	15(50.00)

Table number 8 shows about action taken by the respondents for the problem faced while purchasing various consumer durable goods. Around 63 per cent had gone for a new different provider, invested in better quality or gone for recommendation (33%) and (27%) had complained further while purchasing clothing. However regarding cosmetic products respondents had shopped around (33 %) t and checked terms and conditions (33%), complained more (30%) and checked reviews (23%). Fifty seven per cent of the respondents checked reviews before purchasing jewellery, followed by spending more on better quality (50%) and asking for recommendations (43%). About thirty percent of the respondents invested in better quality while purchasing watches, checked terms and conditions (30%) and thirty per cent changed channel of purchase. Major actions taken while purchasing foot wear were change in channel of purchase (20%), spending more on better quality (13%), checking terms and conditions (13%), checking reviews and feedback and asking for the recommendations (13%). Half of the respondents preferred asking recommendations while purchasing bags followed by shop around (20%), complaining more (13%) and checking reviews/feedback (13%).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded from the results that major sources of information for clothing, cosmetics, footwear, jewellery and bags were open market and super market; internet was the major source for watches. Various problems were faced by the respondents while purchasing the goods like faulty or damaged goods, receiving wrong product through door delivery, low standard service for repairing the goods, and inadequate redressal mechanism, to solve the problems. Respondents had to spend money on travel, to exchange the faulty goods, making telephone calls to inform about the problem faced while using the product. Majority of the consumers were under a little stress, a bit frustrated and little

annoyed during the period of problem. About one-fourth of the respondents only had complained to different organizations like advertising standards authority, consumer forum, police etc. The results implied that though the respondents are educated, they were not completely aware of their rights and responsibilities in consuming the goods. Thus more awareness needs to be brought among the consumers to exercise their rights to redressal.

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