

Consumer Purchasing Decisions Towards Ayurvedic Medicinal Products In Hyderabad - A Survey

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Abstract

The consumer is viewed as king in the present situation of marketing. Gone are the days when producers would have offered anything to the buyers. At present it is customer preferences which will decide what manufacturers have to produce and the standards of quality of the product. Hence, a marketer needs to consider different variables while deciding on marketing of a product as consumers have various preferences and sometimes totally diverse preferences. With the pharmaceutical business growing and with some experience in a pharmaceutical working environment, the objective of this research survey was to study the consumer behavior in consuming/purchasing Ayurvedic medicines/products and their attitudes toward herbal medicines in Hyderabad. The data are predominantly compiled by face to face conversation, based on the questionnaire, with sample of 200 consumers at distinct places of Hyderabad. The consumers were interviewed using a structured interview questionnaire.

Keywords: Ayurvedic Medicine; Pharmaceutical environment, Consumers.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an Indian system of medicine derived from “Ayurvedic” natural herbs and is a form of alternative medicine. Almost 80 percent of people in India use some form of traditional medicine, a category that includes Ayurveda. Other practicing nations include Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Myanmar and as such is comparable to Chinese and European traditional systems of medicine. Drivers of Ayurveda Industry are growing awareness of the effectiveness and efficacy of traditional systems of medicine, disillusionment with modern Allopathy with its concurrent high side effects, support from Governments, increase in the R&D activities, and others. The growing eCommerce and emergence of self-learned consumers coupled with the growth of the global herbal and nutrition industry is serving the cause of the market. The clinical drivers of the Ayurveda market are growing incidence and prevalence of chronic diseases such as rheumatic disorders, cardiology, allergy and others, lower side effects associated with herbal medicines and lack of effectiveness of modern allopathy in treatment of diseases such as Hepatitis, arthritis, and others. In India self-care is not a new thing its existence can be traced back to centuries. Over the counter (OTC) ayurvedic pharma products plays a major role in the pharma industry which is almost unknown to the common man. In U.S 81% of the adult population do prefer OTC pharma products over the prescribed ones; and in India the figures are almost close to 76%. In that 76%; 71% of the population are from the rural areas of India. The Indian pharma industries revenue includes both the prescribed medicines & the OTC medicines. Ayurvedic medicines are produced by several thousand companies in India, but most of them are quite small, including numerous neighborhood pharmacies

that compound ingredients to make their own remedies. It is estimated that the total value of products from the entire Ayurvedic production in India is on the order of one billion dollars (U.S.). The industry has been dominated by less than a dozen major companies for decades, joined recently by a few others that have followed their lead, so that there are today 30 companies doing a million dollars or more per year in business to meet the growing demand for Ayurvedic medicine.

Review of literature

Aashiek Cheriyan(2019), in his paper put a attempt to understand about the pharma products which are sold without having any prescriptions and the consumers buying behavior on OTC pharma products in Chennai. He has concluded that Indian pharma industry has experienced a robust growth in the recent years and many companies are looking towards consumer preferences to come on with new varieties of medicines to attract the consumers. They also highlighted that the consumers are navigating to non prescriptive medicines as awareness levels have increased and consumers will look forward to go off patients and the OTC ayurvedic medicines will see a exponential growth.

According to Deshpande SG, Srivastava RK (2018) have mentioned that India doesn't have any regulatory policies implemented till date for the OTC drugs. The Indian drug market is regulated by the Drugs & Cosmetic Act (DCA), 1940 and Drugs & Cosmetic Rules (DCR), 1945. The term OTC or non – prescription drugs has no legal recognition in India and all the drugs which are not included in the list of Schedule H, H1, X are considered to be non – prescription drugs or OTC drugs.

Neelakanth.M.Pujari(2016) aimed in the research to find out the factors that are influencing the customer's choice towards prescription & non-prescription drugs. He also intended to understand and explore consumer behavior and to relate it to pharmaceutical awareness. In his research he concluded the fact that people are desiring for medication as per their own choice and pricing preferences . The physician's or pharmacist's suggestion is not of as much concern over money.

Dadlich et al, (2015) states that the pharma companies are using new marketing strategies in order to attract the public towards OTC market. The pharma companies always look upon their position and their competitor's strategies and then decide whether to continue with the same strategies or to alter it according to the changing scenario. Whether to become a market leader or to become a market niche depends upon the strategies selected by the companies.

Need for the study

Numerous studies have been regulated on consumer behavior in the use of Ayurvedic medicine/products or herbal drugs in several areas. However, no studies have been conducted on Ayurvedic drug/medicine on consumption behavior of consumers. In Hyderabad, drug stores are available in sufficient numbers and are visited by bulk of consumers. If these consumers have disproportionate drug purchasing behavior or have improper decision making process of purchasing drug, they will obtain low quality Ayurvedic drug/medicine which are unsafe, and the consumer's health may be at risk. Because of this, there is a need in studying the Ayurvedic/herbal drug purchasing/buying behavior of consumers in Hyderabad.

Objectives of the study

- 1.To evaluate the awareness levels of consumers and knowledge on OTC products in Ayurvedic medicinal products.
- 2.To understand the perception towards buying behaviour of consumers in choosing ayurvedic OTC products.

Research Methodology

The present investigation has been carried out at Hyderabad region of Telanagana, India. For proper and orderly study; the study sites were selected considering the population and density of area. Direct discussions with different consumers/informants were made and their views were recorded. Data collection was done in one stage only; in the present study the primary data was collected from consumers (about 235 consumers with in age group of 15-75 yr.) After collecting the data the next important phase was to evaluate the data. The results were depicted through charts and tabulation to understand the behaviour of respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table no 1 . Usage of Ayurvedic medicine for treatment of common diseases

Sr.No	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	182	77.4
2	No	53	22.6
	Total	235	100

77.4% (n=182) of consumers consume Ayurvedic medicine for treatment of common/prevalent diseases like common cold, cough, constipation, allergy etc. This concludes that Ayurvedic medicine was mostly consumed by consumers for prevalent diseases. Human body is prone to diverse infections and ailments anytime due to polluted atmosphere and increased bacterial spread levels. It is quite common that people often periodically or frequently gets infected with one or other bacteria or virus. Ayurveda has prescribed several simple homemade medications to prevent and fight such common ailments.

Table no 2 . Usage of Ayurvedic medicine for treatment of major diseases

Sr.No	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	63	26.6
2	No	172	73.4
	Total	235	100

26.6% (n=63) consumers taking Ayurvedic medicine for the treatment of major diseases like diabetes, arthritis, bronchial asthma, tuberculosis, migraine, depression etc. (The other 73.4% (n=172) consumers refused to take Ayurvedic medicine because, they don't know about the diseases and the effect of Ayurvedic medicine on these diseases.

Table no 3 . Usage of OTC Ayurvedic medicines without consulting Physician

Sr.No	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	172	
2	No	63	
	Total	235	100

73.2% (n=172) of people consume medicine without consulting Physician. These data shows that the people are interested in the OTC (over the counter) products of Ayurveda because they are much influenced by the advertisement given by various Ayurvedic manufacturing companies (Dabur, Himalaya, Zandu etc.)

Table no 4 . Usage of preferred medication

Sr.No	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Ayurvedic	152	64.8
2	Allopathic	77	32.6
	Homeopathic	4	1.8
	Unani	2	0.8
	Total	235	100

64.8%, n=152 of the subjects preferred Ayurvedic medicines in comparison with Allopathic (32.6%, n=77), Homeopathic (1.8%, n=4), Unani (0.8%, n=2) medication. Ayurveda is the most extensively practiced system of medicine of the Indian traditional medicine systems, but there are others such as Siddha and Unani which are also practiced in the Indian subcontinent.

Graph 1: Consumer consumes Ayurvedic medicine along with allopathic, homeopathic medicine for treating common disease

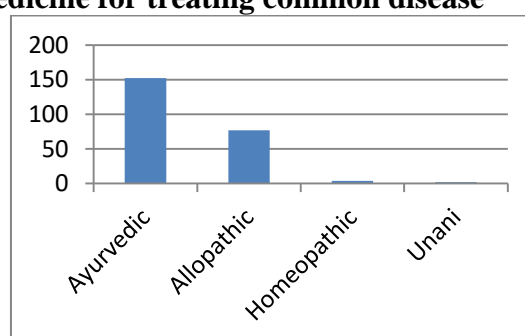


Table no 5. Usage of herbal cosmetic products

Sr.No	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	171	72.6
2	No	64	27.4
	Total	235	100

72.6%, n=363 of Consumers are using herbal cosmetic products. This indicates that the herbal cosmetics are in great demand. Indian herbs and its significance are popular worldwide. Herbal Cosmetics have growing demand in the world market and is an inestimable gift of nature. There are a wide range of Herbal cosmetic products available in the market.

Table no 6 . Usage of preferred brand

Sr.No	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Dabur	105	45
2	Himalaya	45	19
3	Patanjali	46	19.5
4	Zhandu	27	11.5
5	Others	12	5
6	Total	235	100

Many of the consumers have rigid mind set of particular brand like Dabur (45%, n=105), Himalaya(19%, n=45), Patanjali (19.5%, n=46),Zhandu(11.5%,n=27) and other brands(5%,n=12).Therefore Dabur comes out to be the most favorite brand among consumers .

Graph 2: Favorite Ayurvedic brand

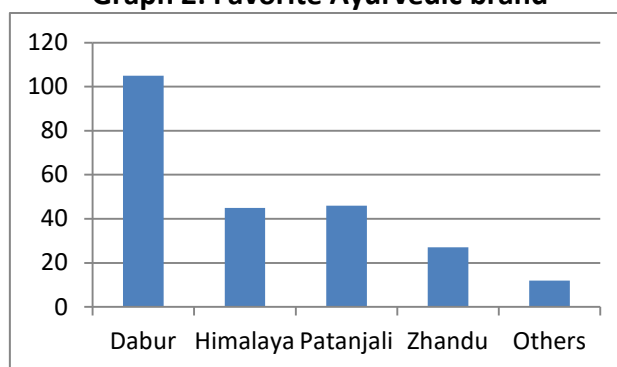


Table no 7 . Consume some Ayurvedic health/food supplements

Sr. No	Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	184	78.4
2	No	51	21.6
3	Total	235	100

78.4%, n= of Consumers are using some Ayurvedic health/food supplements or Rejuvenating Ayurvedic medicines. Rejuvenation therapy involves tonic herbs/drugs such as *Asparagus racemosus*, *Withania somnifera*, *Ocimum sanctum* to nourish all the tissues, promote the strength, enhance ojas and strengthen the immunity. It also involves eating foods like nuts, ghee and dairy products. In Ayurveda, Rasayana (tonics) are the sweet flavored tonic which increases the quantity and quality of the tissues as it is anabolic. The herbs/drugs that boost immunity are full of immune-enhancing saponins and polysaccharides.

Table no 8 . Consumer agrees with reliability of Ayurvedic medicines

Sr.No	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	173	73.6
2	No	62	26.4
3	Total	235	100

73.6%, n=173 consumers agrees with the reliability of Ayurvedic Medicines. There are some advantages of natural medicine over modern medicine as complementary therapy, is easily available as home remedies.

Table no 9 . Consumer agrees with reliability of Ayurvedic medicines

Sr.No	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	216	92
2	No	19	8
3	Total	235	100

Natural therapy is comparatively cheaper than modern remedies and treatments. Natural remedy generally does not produce any reaction unless intake of such medicine (the dosage) is not followed as per advice 92%, n=216 of consumers do not feel any side effect on their health. Complementary treatment or natural remedy is less likely to affect other bodily systems and hence is relatively safe.

CONCLUSION

The behavior of consumers has here been researched to discover the factors behind their behavior for choosing ayurvedic OTC products in case of mild and complicated diseases. The decision making and factors affecting choice of products and brands and similarly priced medicines have also been studied. Consumers of different age groups, gender and occupations were included in the research. The findings have revealed that they felt easy to adopt ayurvedic products as they are safe and without sideeffects and they are more reliable. The information regarding the brands and understanding the products have made them tend to prefer for the products.

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