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**Title**

**CHALLENGES TO BE FACED BY THE DEALERS OF HOUSEHOLD  
APPLIANCES IN THE CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY**

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**Introduction:**

Development is related to technological change which is instrumental in improving the quality of the life of the common man. Recent and subsequent decades are apt to witness further advancement in every field. Home equipments developed from simple hand-operated tools for cooking, washing and cleaning into highly complicated electrical appliances, many of them automatically controlled. There were a number of reasons for this development, the main one being the near disappearance of the domestic servants. Equipments were therefore designed to save the people's time and energy. The demand for these new and improved appliances was increased by the growing number of married women employed outside the home or self-employed. Modern house-hold appliances can be divided into two main heading, electrical and non-electrical. The electrical appliances include mixie, grinder, washing-machine, water purifier, refrigerator, cooker, ovens, iron-box and heater.

**Statement of the problem:**

The present family set up is of nuclear nature. Hence, there is an ever-growing market for household appliances. Due to proliferation of products as well as the availability of various substitutes, the success of a company very much depends upon the ability to position the brand in the minds of the consumers. The company must be able to satisfy the wants and needs of the consumers. The channels of distribution for such goods include dealers as the main path. Hence the satisfaction of the consumers' wants also depends on the dealers' services. From the point of view of the consumers and the dealers, it is found out that the dealers of house-hold appliances face some challenges. Hence the present study is aimed at finding out the challenges to be faced by them.

**Objectives of the study:**

The present study has the following objectives:

1. To find out the brand awareness among the consumers.
2. To find out the best suited media for advertising house-hold appliances.

3. To present the dealers' expectations expected from the manufacturers.
4. To present the customers' expectations expected from the manufacturers.
5. To present the challenges to be faced by the dealers.
6. To present suggestions to meet the challenges.

### **Research Methodology:**

The present study is based on both primary data and secondary data. In order to make the study effective and representative keeping in view the researcher take utmost care of time and resources available, a sample size of 25 dealers functioning for more than 10 years in Coimbatore district have been contacted to find out the opinion of the dealers. A sample of 80 consumers was chosen by **convenience sampling method** to collect the opinion of the consumers. The collected data were interpreted by using statistical tools like ranking method and chi-square method. The secondary data available in leading business magazines and dailies were also utilized.

### **Period of primary data collection:**

The primary data for this study was collected during the last week of July 2011.

### **Limitations of the study:**

1. The study takes into consideration only seven electrical household appliances namely mixies, wet grinders, washing machines, refrigerators, electric cookers, electric heaters and iron boxes which are held by many households.
2. The results are based on the opinion of the sample dealers and customers and hence the limitations related to any social research apply to this study also.
3. The study gives the results of analysis of data collected during the last week of July 2011 only.



**Profile of the consumer respondents:**

1. 87.5% of the respondents are below the age of 50.
6. 50% of the respondents are having their monthly income in the range of Rs.5, 000 to Rs.15, 000.

**Findings of the study: (From the opinion of the customers):**

1. Mixies are held by 95% of the respondents followed by grinders held by 75% of the respondents. Washing machines and refrigerators are held only by 30% of the respondents.
2. The study aimed at finding out the brand awareness among the respondents. For this purpose the respondents were asked to mention the top three brand names of each appliance about which they are aware of. It is found out that the awareness is present among 84% of respondents for mixies, 73% for wet grinders, 57% for refrigerators and 42% for washing machines.
3. The study shows that the television is the pre-dominant media that plays an important role creating brand awareness for the most of the household appliances. Its role in creating awareness is 56% for mixies, 45% for wet grinders, 33% for refrigerators and 25% for washing machines. The second important source of awareness is only the friends and relatives.
4. 59% of the customers are having dealer loyalty and 41% are changing their dealers.
5. Out of 47 respondents having dealer loyalty , 53% quote the reason “Comparatively low price”, 26% quote “Credit facilities” and the remaining 21% quote “Prompt and better service” as the reasons for having dealer loyalty.
6. Out of 33 respondents who are changing their dealers price is the very important reason under consideration
7. Opinion of the respondents about the dealers: The respondents were given 8 statements about dealers in general and they were asked to give their opinion as to agreeing or not.

**Findings of the study: (From the opinion of the dealers):**

1. The researcher collected the opinion of 25 dealers who are with more than 10 years service in Coimbatore district. The interview schedule method was used to collect the information.
2. Out of 25 dealers 36% are having more than 3 branches in Coimbatore District.
3. Out of the total 25 dealers, 60% deal with all the seven appliances under study and the remaining 40% deal with only five appliances namely mixie, grinder, washing machine and refrigerator 5. 36% of dealers sell only on cash and 64% of dealers sell both on cash and credit basis.
4. The installment period for grinder mixie, washing machine, and refrigerator varies from 10 to 20 months and for the other 3 products it varies from 3 to 10 months.
5. The dealers face some problems in collecting the installment amount from the customer's. Two additional employees have been appointed by 56% of the dealers exclusively for this collection work. It is opined by 64% of the dealers that 44% of the customers are not prompt in their payment. Even though the buyers are identified for their improper payment, 64% of the dealers task the risks with the strong and positive hope of collection from them.

**Challenges faced by the dealers:**

Dealer is a firm that buys and resells merchandise at either retail or whole sale. Channel institution like products, are subject to life cycles. A particular channel institution may emerge suddenly, enjoy rapid growth, reach a point of relative maturity and eventually move into a period of slow decline. As such, the dealers of subject to life cycles. A major force behind the dealers' life cycle is economics, which makes new combination of marketing functions suddenly more efficient than the previous ones.

**Conclusion:**

The dealers can ensure reasonable profit margins by the following progressive measures:

1. Effective stock control

2. Wise investment
3. Reduce the unwanted expenses
4. Personalized services to the customers
5. Adoption modern principles of business
6. Dealers realize the importance of after sales service and providing the spare parts, but most could make far more money in the aftermarket they do. This is the golden age of services. The after markets have become four to five times larger than the original product businesses. Customers do not expect products to be perfect, but they do expect dealers to fix things quickly when they break down.

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