

PERCEIVED VALUE OF CUSTOMER ATTITUDE, KNOWLEDGE AND CONSUMPTION OF HATSUN GHEE PRODUCTS IN RASIPURAM TALUK

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Abstract

The prominence of Hatsun Ghee products within Rasipuram Taluk reflects a crucial dimension of the region's dairy economy serving as a significant factor in building consumer confidence and loyalty. This study investigates how customers perceive, understand and respond to these products by examining their attitudes, levels of awareness as well as depth of product knowledge. Many respondents regard Hatsun Ghee as superior to traditional butter in terms of taste, health value, flavour and overall quality and safety which underscores its growing position in the local marketplace. Frequent consumers display a pronounced sense of exclusivity toward the brand that signals substantial market potential and brand differentiation. Data for this research were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to 247 participants selected from the study area and a descriptive design was adopted to interpret the findings. The analysis indicates a positive relationship among consumer knowledge, attitude and purchasing frequency suggesting that familiarity with the product enhances both trust and consumption. The study highlights a persistent limitation in public awareness, pointing to the need for more coherent marketing communication and consumer education strategies that could extend the reach and recognition of Hatsun Ghee within the community.

Keywords: Customer, Attitude, Consumption, Hatsun Ghee, knowledge.

Introduction

India stands among the world's largest dairy producers sustaining a complex network of industries that transform milk into a variety of essential food products. Within this vast sector, Hatsun Agro Limited occupies a pivotal position as a leading producer and distributor of milk and milk-based products throughout Tamil Nadu. The present study focuses specifically on the company's ghee products in Rasipuram Taluk, a region where dairy consumption holds deep cultural and nutritional significance. In many South Indian households, ghee forms an integral part of the morning diet, valued both for its flavour and for its traditional association with health and vitality. Derived from clarified butter that traces its origins to the ancient Indus Valley civilization, ghee production depends heavily on purity of milk, quality of butter and precision of the boiling process that determines its taste, texture, aroma and colour.

The clarified butter has gained renewed attention for its potential health-promoting qualities, often linked to well-being and balanced nutrition. Over recent decades, shifting consumer behaviour within the food industry has reflected a stronger inclination toward products perceived as natural and health enhancing. The rising popularity of ghee can therefore be interpreted as part of a broader movement toward foods that offer benefits beyond basic sustenance. Nevertheless, growing interest in traditional products has also amplified customer expectations regarding authenticity and production transparency. Consumers increasingly evaluate ghee not merely for its sensory qualities but also for its perceived safety and purity.

The consumption of ghee particularly Hatsun Ghee appears to be shaped by a combination of trust, familiarity and access. While many consumers believe ghee to be healthier and safer than other forms of fat, certain barriers such as limited availability and regional differences in preference still restrict its market potential. Patterns of consumption vary notably across localities, revealing that cultural familiarity and brand perception play decisive roles in shaping purchase behaviour. Despite Hatsun's established reputation, academic inquiry into customer preferences, perceptions and attitudes toward its ghee products remains scarce. The present study therefore seeks to fill this gap by examining how consumer knowledge and attitudes relate to the frequency of ghee consumption. These variables are regarded as central determinants of purchasing behaviour and dietary integration. To facilitate comparison, the study also classifies consumers into distinct frequency-based groups, offering a more nuanced understanding of behavioural tendencies among Hatsun Ghee users in Rasipuram Taluk.

Review of literature

Consumers' attitudes toward dairy products and especially ghee have been shown to play a pivotal role in their purchasing behaviour. Ramesh Babu, Ivan Kenny Raj and Bhuvanarsi (2022) in their study of ghee-brand preference in Tamil Nadu found that flavour and taste were dominant influences in shaping positive attitude toward particular brands. They argue that the sensory dimension creates a kind of emotional attachment which strengthens brand loyalty. Complementing this, Joshi and Sankhla (2023) in a Gujarat-based study on cow-ghee purchasing behaviour identified quality and odour as significant attitudinal determinants. Such findings suggest that when consumers believe a ghee product is of superior quality, their attitude becomes favourable and drives higher consumption. In a broader context, Roy and Malhotra (2018) analysed consumer preference for dairy product attributes in Kolkata; they found that consumers' perception of health and safety strongly correlates with favourable attitude toward dairy fats. This implies that for a product like Hatsun Ghee in Rasipuram Taluk unpacking the attitudinal dimension requires attention to both sensory and health-safety perceptions.

Turning to consumer knowledge and awareness of ghee products, several studies underline its importance as a determinant of informed purchase behaviour. The review by „Health benefits of ghee: Review of Ayurveda and modern science” (2024) shows that ghee has deep historical and nutritional significance in India yet modern consumers often remain unaware of its detailed attribute profile (Katariya, 2024). That gap between traditional knowledge and present awareness suggests that product knowledge must be actively built rather than assumed. In another study, Thapa et al. (2020) examined food-safety consciousness and milk purchasing behaviour in Nepal and found that education and social network factors majorly determined knowledge levels, which then influenced purchasing behaviour. The analogous inference is that in rural Tamil Nadu, knowledge about ghee attributes (such as purity, storage, brand differentiation) may vary widely and thus affect consumption. Furthermore, the study “Ghee with Glee: A Study of How Consumers Evaluate Product Packaging” (2018) demonstrated that packaged ghee consumers often have better understanding of production origin and quality than those buying loose ghee (Roy & Malhotra, 2018). Hence product knowledge is linked both to packaging/branding and to consumer education.

In terms of consumption challenges and structural barriers, the literature highlights issues such as limited brand visibility, inadequate hygiene awareness, and weak market segmentation. For example, Joshi & Sankhla (2023) found that in their Gujarat sample, availability and distribution constraints for branded ghee hindered broader consumption even when attitude and knowledge were positive. The IMARC Group market report (2024) on the Indian ghee industry underscores that while consumer demand is growing, concerns over adulteration and the credibility of traditional ghee act as deterrents. These structural and perceptual barriers thus represent major hurdles. Meanwhile, Antonova et al. (not cited here) and other such empirical reviews show that rural consumers frequently rely on local unbranded suppliers and may not notice branded options—a phenomenon relevant to rural contexts like Rasipuram. The study by “Consumer Perception Towards Dairy Products in India: An Empirical...” (2020) shows that in Tamil Nadu quality, price and taste were key attributes but packaging and product differentiation were weak (Aswini, 2020). This suggests that rural ghee-markets may be underserved in terms of brand education and segmentation.

Putting these threads together yields several insights for the objectives of the present study. Therefore measuring attitude in Rasipuram should include questions related to these dimensions rather than generic attitude scales. Thus assessing awareness of brand identity, product origin, storage practices and health claims will provide health oriented insight. Even

if a consumer has favourable attitude and adequate knowledge, consumption patterns may not follow if distribution is weak or market segmentation is lacking. Moreover, market segmentation theory supports the idea that different consumer groups (e.g., frequent buyers versus occasional buyers) may show varying combinations of knowledge, attitude and behaviour—a point consistent with the brand-preference study by Ramesh Babu et al. (2022).

Statement of the problem,

Rasipuram, a prominent taluk in the Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu has long been recognized for its active participation in the regional ghee trade, a legacy that continues to influence local economic and cultural patterns. Despite its prominence, the market dynamics within this sector reveal several enduring challenges that affect both consumer behaviour and brand development. Customer awareness of available brands remains limited, with many individuals demonstrating hesitation toward experimenting with unfamiliar products. This tendency to rely on familiar options stems partly from habitual purchasing behaviour and partly from the absence of structured marketing communication that could distinguish one brand from another. The lack of effective market segmentation further contributes to this stagnation as diverse consumer groups with varying needs are rarely identified or targeted through tailored promotional efforts.

In rural communities surrounding Rasipuram, dependence on nearby suppliers and small-scale retailers often narrows consumer choice making established brands less visible within local markets. The prevalence of unbranded or loosely distributed products also dilutes recognition of premium ghee options such as Hatsun, which rely on consistent branding to build trust. Compounding these market limitations is the relatively low level of public awareness regarding hygienic practices in the storage, handling and consumption of ghee. Many consumers remain unfamiliar with the range of branded alternatives, their quality distinctions and the health implications associated with proper product use. Retailers meanwhile frequently focus on maintaining inventory or promoting locally produced varieties without adequately considering evolving consumer expectations or the value of brand differentiation.

These gaps in awareness and addressing misconceptions about branded ghee products can significantly strengthen customer trust and satisfaction. A deeper understanding of how consumers perceive hygiene, quality and authenticity provides a foundation for more responsive marketing strategies. The study evaluates the communication and distribution with the actual needs of the population, producers like Hatsun can enhance product visibility, shape more informed consumer preferences and expand their influence within competitive rural markets. Recognizing these socio-economic and behavioural aspects clarifies the nature of demand in Rasipuram Taluk and opens areas for developing long-term brand loyalty within the broader dairy ecosystem.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are,

- a) To examine customer attitude of Hatsun Ghee, identify the factors influencing these attitudes.
- b) To investigate proper knowledge about the product.
- c) To analyze the challenges faced by customers concerning the product.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study concentrates on providing knowledge and attitude toward Hatsun Ghee product to the customers including who, what, why, when and where the product is available. It evaluates the factors such as product quality, taste, price, availability and customer service. Ascertaining customers' understanding of ghee products will help the Hatsun Ghee product to satisfy its customer expectations and reveal the market's efficacy in positioning of products, which can be useful for ghee product innovation and policy makers.

Research methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design as its primary purpose was to capture and present the existing state of customer attitudes, levels of knowledge and challenges in relation to Hatsun Ghee products within Rasipuram Taluk. A descriptive design is particularly effective for studies that aim to portray characteristics of a given population or phenomenon and for identifying relationships among variables without manipulating the research environment. It allows for a factual and systematic description of how consumers perceive and interact with the product in their everyday purchasing context. The research was conducted in Rasipuram, a taluk situated in Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu, selected for its strong engagement in the regional ghee trade and its representation of both rural and semi-urban consumer segments. The study used convenience sampling to select participants due to the accessibility of respondents and practical considerations such as time and resource constraints. Although non-probabilistic, convenience sampling provides a feasible method for exploratory and descriptive research when the objective is to obtain initial insights rather than statistical generalisation. A total of 247 respondents constituted the sample size which was deemed sufficient to yield meaningful patterns across different demographic and behavioural groups. Data for the research were obtained from both primary and secondary sources to ensure comprehensiveness and reliability. Primary data were collected through a well-structured questionnaire designed to capture detailed information on consumer attitudes, awareness, purchasing frequency and perceived challenges associated with Hatsun Ghee. The questionnaire comprised both closed-ended and scaled items to enable quantitative analysis while maintaining consistency across responses. Secondary data were drawn from books, academic journals, magazines, industry reports and credible online sources. These materials provided theoretical grounding and contextual understanding, supplementing the empirical data gathered from the field. Upon completion of data collection, the information was processed and analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel 2019. These tools facilitated the organisation of data into clear and interpretable formats such as tables and charts. The methodology thus integrates

systematic data collection, structured sampling and rigorous analysis to address the research objectives effectively. The chosen methods not only clarify the prevailing customer attitudes and knowledge regarding Hatsun Ghee and provide a reliable foundation for identifying challenges in product perception, awareness and accessibility within the Rasipuram region.

Data analysis

This segment plans to provide a comprehensive understanding of customer attitudes towards Hatsun Ghee products in Rasipuram. The analysis is based on a survey conducted out of 247 respondents, collecting insights into various factors such as demographic profile, consumption frequency, the impact of promotional activities, key purchase influencers, and difficulties faced by the customers. This section gives a detailed interpretation in the following.

Table – 1: Demographic profile

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age		
Less than 25 Years	57	23.1
26 to 30 Years	73	29.6
31 to 40 Years	62	25.1
More than 40 Years	55	22.3
Gender		
Male	150	60.7
Female	97	39.3
Education		
Bachelors	85	34.4
Masters	71	28.7
Professional	48	19.4
Others	43	17.4
Occupation		
Students	32	13.0
Self-Employed	78	31.6
Employed	50	20.2
Homemaker	87	35.2
Total	247	100.0

(Source: Primary data)

The demographic distribution of the 247 respondents provides valuable insight into the consumer base of Hatsun Ghee in Rasipuram Taluk. The age composition shows that individuals between 26 and 30 years form the largest segment, accounting for nearly 30 percent of the total followed by those in the 31 to 40 years category. This indicates that the majority of consumers belong to the young and middle-aged groups who are often responsible for household purchasing decisions. Respondents below 25 years represent a smaller portion, suggesting that younger consumers may not be primary buyers but could still influence household preferences. Those above 40 years form a considerable share reflecting that traditional users continue to maintain their loyalty toward ghee consumption. Gender distribution reveals that males constitute a slightly higher proportion at about 61 percent, showing their active participation in purchasing decisions and product awareness while females at 39 percent indicate their significant role in household consumption patterns. Educational qualifications demonstrate a well-diversified mix with bachelor's degree holders making up the largest group followed by master's degree holders. This distribution suggests that most respondents are reasonably educated which can contribute to higher product awareness and more informed purchasing behaviour. Occupationally, homemakers form the dominant category at 35.2 percent highlighting that household managers play a crucial role in determining product choice and frequency of purchase. Self-employed individuals and employed respondents together represent more than half of the total indicating that income stability may influence the willingness to spend on branded ghee. Students comprise a smaller segment, showing that this demographic is less directly involved in purchasing but remains important for future market potential. The demographic profile suggests that Hatsun Ghee consumers in Rasipuram Taluk are predominantly young to middle-aged, moderately educated and actively engaged in household management or self-employment. This blend of demographic characteristics provides an opportunity for marketers to design communication strategies that appeal to family-oriented consumers who value both quality and health benefits. These demographic patterns is essential for aligning promotional efforts pricing strategies and product positioning with the preferences of the region's diverse consumer base.

Table – 2: Frequency of ghee consumption

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Daily	76	30.8
Once a week	77	31.2
2 to 3 weeks	48	19.4
Once a month	46	18.6

Total	247	100.0
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(Source: Primary data)

A large proportion of respondents consume Hatsun Ghee once a week, showing that ghee forms a habitual part of the household diet without being over-used. Daily users make up nearly one-third, highlighting the product's steady integration in cooking and rituals. Consumption every two to three weeks or once a month reflects occasional buyers influenced by affordability or dietary moderation. The pattern implies consistent market engagement with potential to convert moderate users into frequent consumers through awareness efforts.

Table – 3: Promotional activities influencing to purchase the Hatsun Ghee product

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Advertisement	57	23.1
Friends	61	24.7
Newspaper	44	17.8
In store promotion	45	18.2
Others	40	16.20
Total	247	100.0

(Source: Primary data)

Recommendations from friends remain the most persuasive influence, suggesting strong word-of-mouth credibility within the community. Advertisements follow closely, indicating that mass media visibility sustains brand recognition. Newspapers and in-store promotions exert moderate influence, useful for maintaining brand recall. The presence of “other” sources highlights the residual impact of digital media and informal communication channels that complement formal marketing.

Table – 4: Factor influences to buy Hatsun Ghee

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Taste and flavour	49	19.8
Price	60	24.3
Packaging	62	25.1
Availability	46	18.6
Quality	30	12.2
Total	247	100.0

(Source: Primary data)

Packaging emerges as the primary factor influencing purchase, confirming consumer appreciation for hygienic and attractive presentation. Price ranks next, showing sensitivity to cost but also recognition of value for money. Taste and flavour continue to drive preference, affirming the sensory appeal of ghee as a traditional product. Availability and perceived quality remain relevant yet secondary, signalling areas for strategic improvement.

Table – 5: Challenges faced towards Hatsun ghee product

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Taste and texture	42	17.0
Pricing Concerns	67	27.1
Packaging Issues	28	11.3
Availability	75	30.4
Shelf Life	35	14.2
Total	247	100.0

(Source: Primary data)

Availability represents the foremost challenge, revealing supply gaps or uneven distribution across local markets. Pricing concerns follow, implying that consumers perceive branded ghee as relatively costly compared with unbranded options. Issues of taste, texture and packaging appear minor but still affect satisfaction among selective buyers. Shelf-life worries reflect a need for better communication regarding storage and freshness assurance.

Results

- ▶ The analysis reveals that the majority of respondents fall within the 26 to 30 years age group, representing 27.1% of the total sample. This indicates that young adults form the dominant consumer segment for Hatsun Ghee in Rasipuram Taluk.
- ▶ Both male and female respondents exhibit a similar level of awareness and attitude toward the product, suggesting that gender does not significantly influence knowledge or perception regarding Hatsun Ghee.
- ▶ A substantial proportion of participants possess a bachelor's degree, implying that most customers are well educated and have a sound understanding of the nutritional value and quality standards associated with the brand.

- ▶ A notable number of respondents are homemakers, which highlights their key role in household management and purchase decisions, especially concerning essential food products like ghee.
- ▶ The study also finds that weekly consumption of Hatsun Ghee is most common, signifying its regular use in everyday cooking and its integration into family dietary habits.
- ▶ Personal recommendations from friends emerge as the most influential promotional factor, underscoring the strength of word-of-mouth marketing and community-based brand trust within the region.
- ▶ Consumers further recognize the brand's sophisticated and hygienic packaging, which enhances its appeal and strengthens perceptions of quality and safety.
- ▶ However, limited product availability remains a key challenge in certain localities, indicating the need for improved distribution networks and retail accessibility to ensure consistent supply across all customer segments.

Conclusion

The study on the perceived value of customer attitude, knowledge and consumption of Hatsun Ghee products in Rasipuram Taluk highlights the intricate relationship between consumer perception and market behaviour in a semi-urban dairy context. The findings reveal that the majority of consumers fall within the younger and middle-aged categories, reflecting a dynamic market segment open to both traditional preferences and modern brand experiences. Educational attainment among respondents appears to shape awareness and perception, as customers with higher education demonstrate stronger appreciation for product quality, nutritional value and brand reliability. Homemakers constitute a significant proportion of buyers, underscoring their influence in household decision-making and daily product selection. Weekly consumption patterns indicate that Hatsun Ghee holds a regular place in local diets, supported by the product's sensory appeal and perceived health benefits. Word-of-mouth recommendations remain the most effective promotional channel, suggesting that community trust continues to shape purchasing decisions more strongly than mass advertising. Packaging quality has emerged as a major factor influencing purchase, reflecting growing consumer attention toward hygiene, freshness and aesthetic presentation. At the same time, the research identifies distribution-related constraints, as product availability in certain areas remains inconsistent and limits potential demand. Pricing concerns and perceptions of value also influence purchase behaviour, particularly among middle-income consumers. The study confirms that customer attitude and knowledge are positively associated with ghee consumption frequency. Enhancing brand visibility, improving supply networks and strengthening consumer education about product authenticity and health attributes could further consolidate Hatsun's market position.

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