

# Customer Awareness and Expectation of Product Water Softener in Maharashtra Region

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## Abstract

The interplay of several elements influences a consumer's decision to purchase a product. The market is now mostly driven by consumers. Consumers have a variety of options from which to choose. The study sheds light on a number of elements that the maker should emphasise in order to entice potential buyers. The goal of this study is to look into consumer knowledge, preferences, satisfaction assessment, and competition analysis in relation to Aquasoft water Softener (EFL). To fulfil the goals, a Descriptive Research was done in many parts of Maharashtra and few regions in Bhopal. A well-structured questionnaire was filled out by 100 people in total. Customers' satisfaction levels are influenced by three dimensions: product quality, price, and size, according to the findings. Further findings reveal that there is a considerable link between the brand name and customer preference. As a result, it has been suggested that the corporation concentrate on brand awareness, product supply, and distribution. Manufacturers are encouraged to build aggressive marketing strategies in order to boost consumer satisfaction and encourage them to become brand loyalists.

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## **1. Introduction**

The home appliance segment is one of the fastest-growing industries in the Indian market. The home appliances industries in India have been growing at a steady pace, driven by both large appliances and small appliances; in 2018, large appliances have had slightly higher growth than small appliances.

Water softeners remove minerals that cause water hardness, one of the most common water quality problems. Hard water spoils appliances, creates bubbles in the bathroom and kitchen, and dries hair and skin. Water softeners save time and money by preventing hours of cleaning prematurely broken water heaters, flaky faucet heads, and soap residues. Water softeners save your time, energy and money while protecting your home and property.

This study aims to understand the product awareness and customer expectation from Aquasoft water softener in the market by going through several data records from the company as well as from fresh data which will be collected. The data analysis can be segregated based on product range, city-wise sales, pin code sales, price range, etc. It will draw analysis and find out how many people are aware of water conditioners and what customers expect from this product. It will be useful for the company to make necessary changes in promotional activities. The wants of a customer are carefully studied by conducting survey on customer preferences.

## **2. Literature Review**

Consumers of services have expectations about what they will receive from the delivery system, stated by (Coye, 2004). These expectations are beliefs about future events which, when compared with the perceived actual service delivered, are presumed to influence satisfaction and assessments of overall service quality. According to (Servaes & Tamayo, 2013), Corporate social

responsibility (CSR) and firm value are positively related for firms with high customer awareness, as proxied by advertising expenditures. For firms with low customer awareness, the relation is either negative or insignificant. In addition, it was found that the effect of awareness on the CSR–value relation is reversed for firms with a poor prior reputation as corporate citizens. This evidence is consistent with the view that CSR activities can add value to the firm but only under certain conditions.

Certain demographic factors studied through extensive research by (Martin, Leary, & Rejeski, 2010) suggest that concerns about self-expression and its consequences are not only found in young people, older adults are also motivated to engage in strategic self-presentation. Many of the concerns about self-portrait of older adults stem from changes related to age and health and are linked to concerns about their own appearance, the perception of being competent and self-sufficient and the attribution to the norms of behavior.

The Shahpura Lake in Bhopal (MP) is exposed to enormous anthropogenic pressures as per (Trivedi & Kataria, 2012); the overall impact has led to the deterioration of water quality, the accumulation of toxic chemicals and sediments. Contaminated lake water can infiltrate aquifers or groundwater bodies in peripheral areas, especially downstream areas. The natural quality of hand pumps, borewells, and drinking water resources tend to deteriorate at the lake's edge. At least 60,000 people live in the suburbs and depend on groundwater.

(Manjare, 2010) suggests that the value of hardness fluctuates from 70 mg/l to 179mg/l. the utmost value (179 mg/l) was recorded within the month of April (summer) and minimum value (70mg/l) within the month of October. Certain cities in Maharashtra reported total hardness was high during summer than monsoon and winter. High value of hardness during summer is often attributed to decrease in water volume and increase of rate of evaporation of water. Similar results were obtained within the present study and in another article by (Joy, 2020) “Hard water softeners to take care of your water quality issues”, where the severe impact of hard water is stated. It deteriorates the quality of your skin and hair and the purpose of a water softener is to solve

all your hard water problems. There are several reasons why household water softening systems are becoming increasingly popular. So, when consumers think that they may have hard water and they're looking for an effective solution to deal with it, perhaps the best option is to install a water softener to take care of the issue.

(Si & Kapoor, 2014) Products and market methods must be adapted to the specific needs of the Indian market. Consumers tend to buy products from brands that they are familiar with, and emotional brands influence consumers' buying propensity. From the data analysis, we can see that the brand strategy of the consumer goods industry plays a vital role in its success and growth.

### **3. Research Design**

Descriptive research design is used in the project research. In a descriptive design, a researcher is solely interested in describing the situation or case under their research study. It is a theory-based design method which is created by gathering, analysing, and presenting collected data. This allows a researcher to provide insights into the why and how of research. Descriptive design helps others better understand the need for the research.

The study centres primary data as the principal source of data collection, and the primary data was collected with the help of a properly structured and planned questionnaire. The data thus collected was tabulated and quantitative in nature serving the qualitative requirements as well.

### **4. Objectives of the Study**

In a research study, objectives play a very important role in success of the study. It helps to minimise wastage of resources, helps to create apt survey and design questionnaire by putting right questions as per the set objectives, helps with the optimum allocation of resources, helps to stay focused to get accurate and impartial results, and to identify target audience out of the entire population from which responses for questionnaire can be taken.

The following are the objectives of the study for the research:

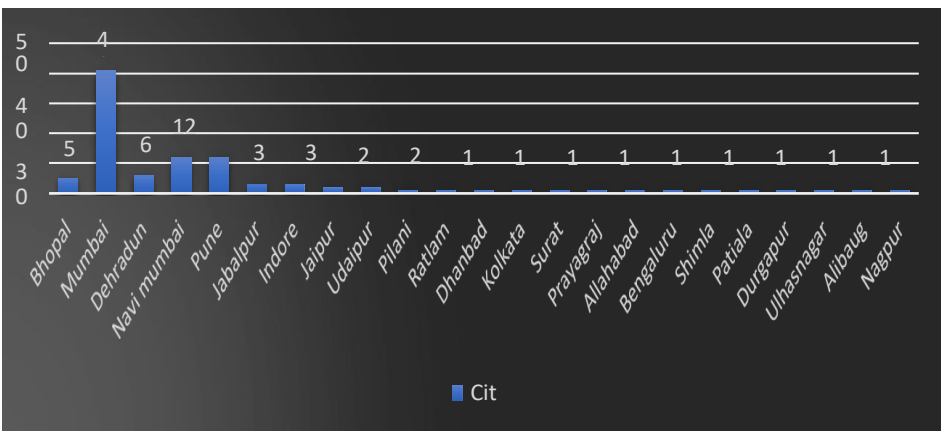
- 1) To study the need and awareness of water softener as a product.
- 2) To ascertain consumer's brand preference for water softener.
- 3) To find the factors influencing the buying behaviour towards the water softener.
- 4) To suggest the promotional tools and techniques for water softener.

## 5. Scope of the Study

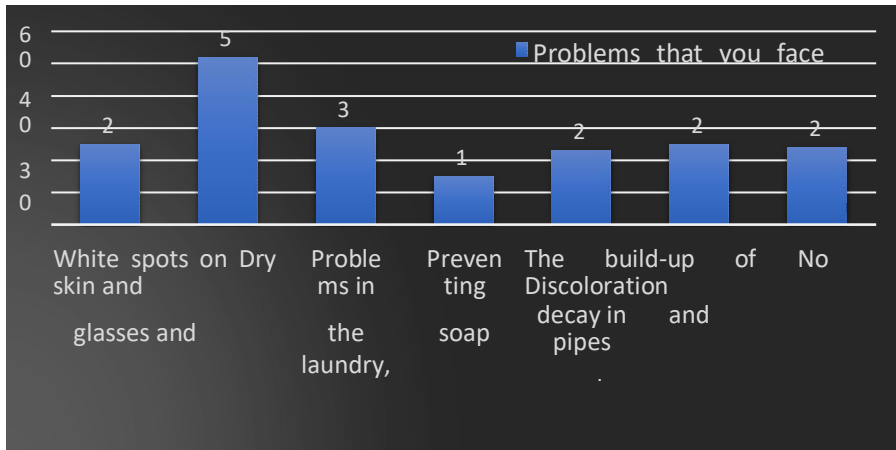
- 1) To draw analysis and find out how many people are aware about water conditioners and what customers expect from this product.
- 2) The study will be useful for the company to make necessary changes in promotional activities.
- 3) The wants of a customer are carefully studied by conducting survey on customer preference.

## 6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

To study the first objective i.e., the need and awareness of this product, a few questions were added to questionnaire to check the awareness among the respondents.



Source: Primary Data



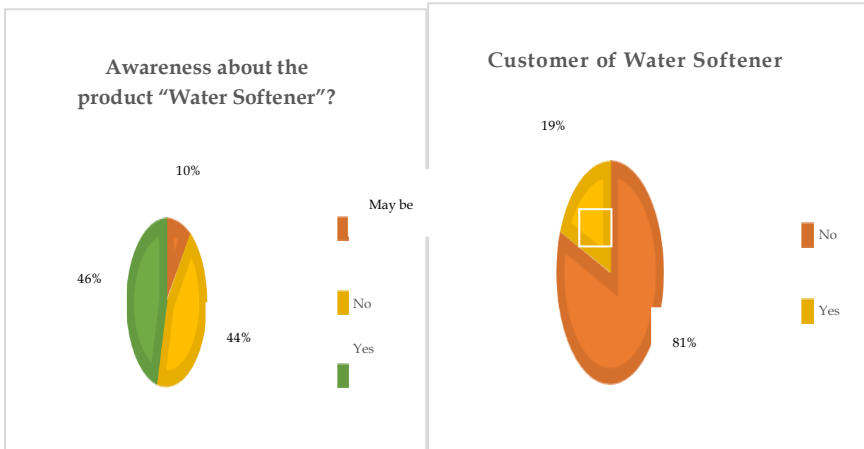
Source: Primary Data

Installation of water softener depends a lot upon the water source because in different cities water from Municipal Corporation or water from borewell is contaminated and can cause several problems.

Maximum respondents are from Maharashtra region followed by Madhya Pradesh where water is hard and even though in some parts it does not concern health alert but affects clothes quality and creates build-up in appliances which decreases their life and increases the cost of living for residents.

People nowadays are very concerned about their health, hygiene, and their lifestyle. As per the given chart 52 respondents are facing dry skin and hair problems, 30 respondents are facing problems in the laundry and a lot of respondents face problems related to their bathware, silverware, and decay in electronic appliances. Therefore, as mentioned above it can be assumed that they must be facing problems related to hard water and so they need this product.

To ascertain the awareness of the product “water softener” in the market, certain questions were put in the questionnaire which helps us to know how many people are aware about the product and are using it.

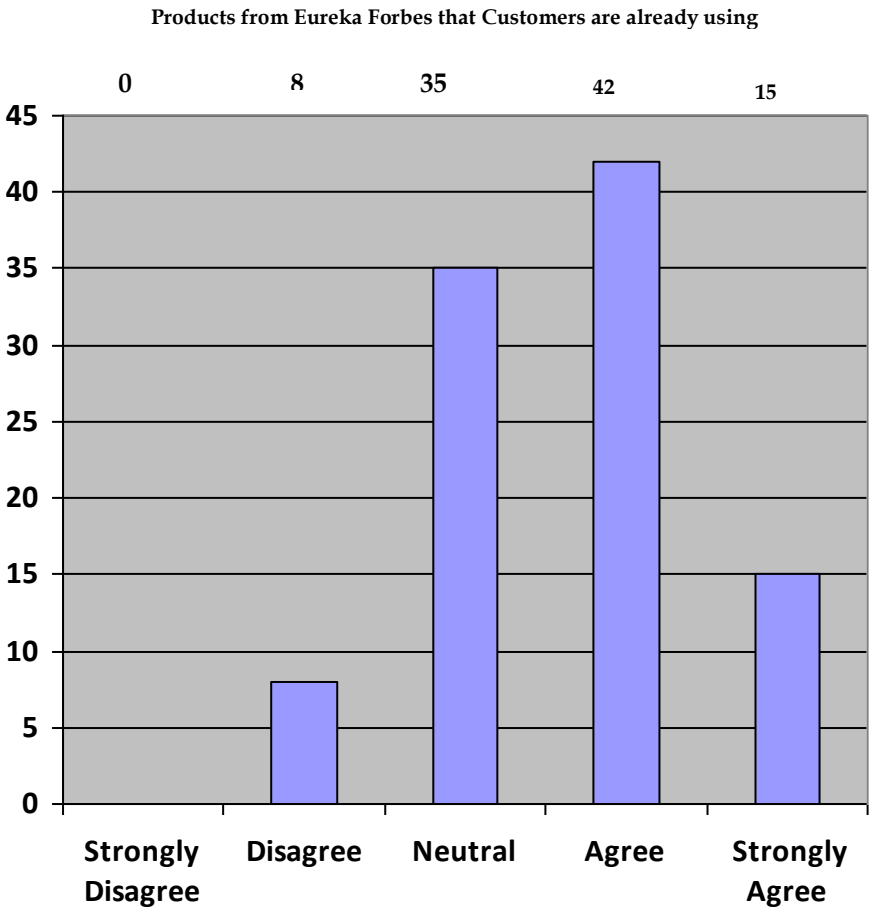
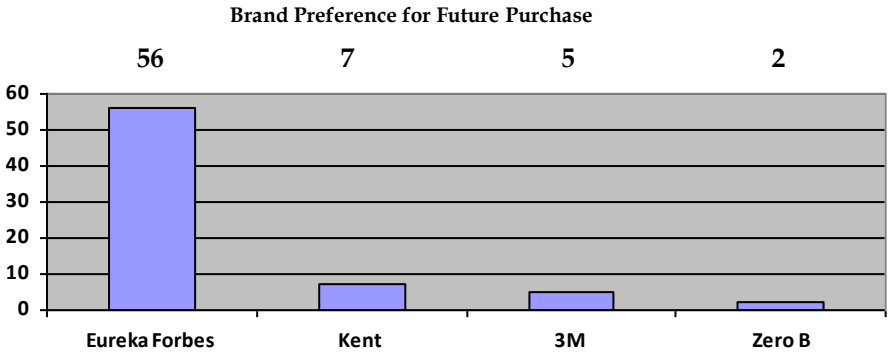


Source: Primary Data

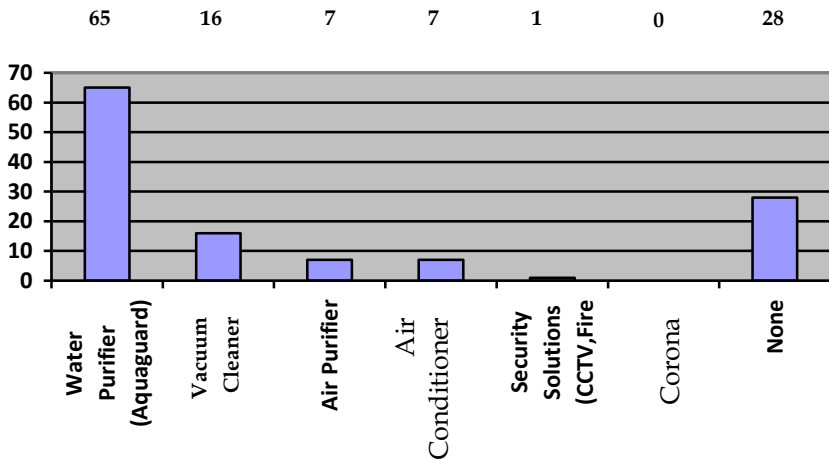
37 people who faced problems given above are aware that it was due to hard water and 44 are unsure if it is due to the water or not while 18 respondents who faced the above problems claimed that it is not due to hard water. For the population, which is not sure, the company can target the population.

Only 46 respondents are aware about this product and 10 are unsure if they know about this product while 44 respondents are fully unaware about water softeners. This gives the company an opportunity to run a campaign to make people aware. 46 respondents were aware about this product and among them only 19 respondents had water softener installed in their homes. It can be observed that awareness is directly proportional to the units installed. 81 % of the population has not installed the product and therefore there is an opportunity for the company for customer acquisition.

To ascertain the brand preference of water softener by customers following data was collected.







Maximum people responded to Eureka Forbes as a brand name that comes to their mind while purchasing a hygiene product like water softener which is a good sign for the company as it shows the trust people have on a brand when it comes to health and hygiene. Kent was the second highest in the graph which makes it a competition for Eureka Forbes followed by 3M with only 4 respondents.

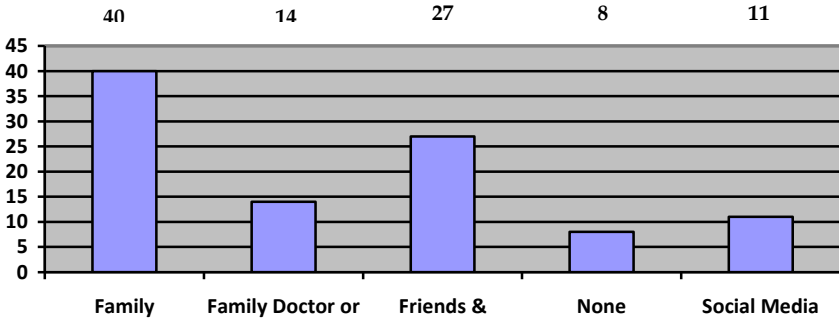
When respondents were asked if they will consider purchasing the water softener in future, almost 75% respondents agreed, and Eureka Forbes was the brand that they preferred followed by Kent and 3M.

Eureka Forbes is well known for its water purifier Aquaguard and vacuum cleaners and we can see that on the chart as well. 65 respondents use water purifiers and 16 use vacuum cleaners by Eureka Forbes which indicates that the company has a big customer base. In the above chart only 8 respondents disagreed that prices of Eureka Forbes are appropriate with the quality and 35 were neutral about it but the rest 57 respondents agree to the given notion. Hence people are happy with the price range of Eureka Forbes products.

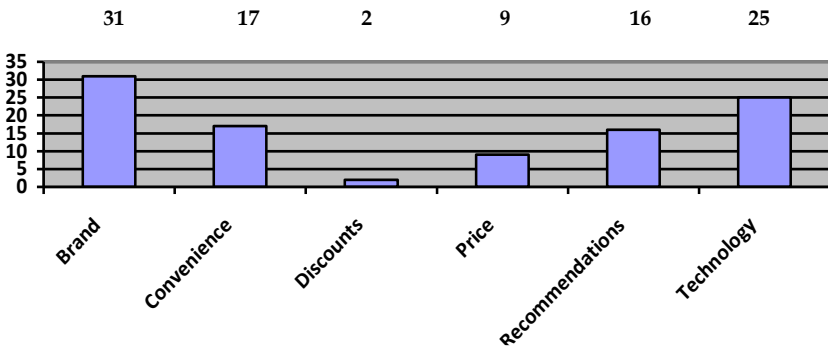
The following interpretations will help us to know the buying behaviour towards water softener and which marketing strategies

and promotional tools will work effectively and can be considered while designing strategies or campaigns.

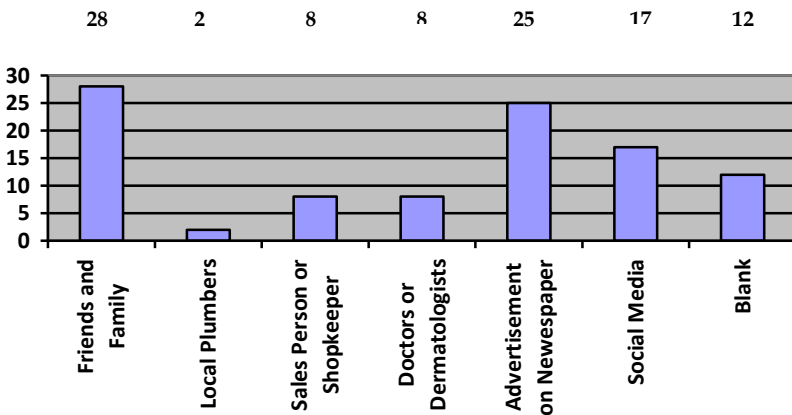
Factors that Influence buying decision of Health & Hygiene Products?

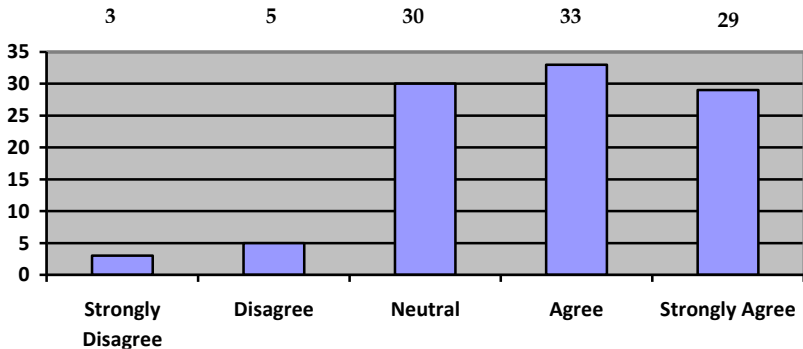


Important Factors that Affect Purchase Defision of Water Softener



Source of Awareness of Water Softener





Affects of Proper Demo by Sales Person or Workshop on Purchase Decision

Most of the respondents take recommendations from family while purchasing health and hygiene products and then they consult their friends and neighbours for the same therefore while making strategies company should consider these points and maybe work more on recommendations.

Maximum respondents prefer good brand name when it comes to buying a water softener followed by technology, convenience, and recommendations. A promotional strategy which makes the public aware about the product and a proper service can help in making a good image.

More people got to know about this product through friends, family and advertisements on newspaper, magazine, hoarding, etc. A company can design their strategy by focusing on the area which promote their product the most.

Only 8 respondents disagree that demo by a salesperson or in a workshop affects their purchase decision. 62 respondents agree to it and the remaining 30 are neutral about it. It shows that a demo activity gives more confidence to buyers to purchase a product.

## 7. Findings & Suggestions

- Water in Mumbai and Pune region is very hard and give problems like dry skin and hair, and faded clothes which creates a need for this product.
- 46% respondents were aware about the product water softener and only 19% have installed it in their homes.

- 80% respondents agreed that products of Eureka Forbes were readily available in the city that means people are aware about the products offered by the company.
- Eureka Forbes is well known because of its water purifier range Aquaguard followed by the category of vacuum cleaner.
- During purchasing of water softener maximum consumers prefer brand, technology, and convenience in comparison to price.
- The biggest competitor of Eureka Forbes Limited is Kent because maximum people are aware about this brand while the other competitors are the local brands.
- After family and friends, maximum people came to know about this product through advertisement in newspaper, magazine, hoardings, etc. Thus, the sales promotion activities of Eureka Forbes water softener made a very good impact on the respondents to make a purchase decision and more than 50% respondents agree on that.
- The product water softener is unknown to many people. As a result, the corporation can try to raise product awareness.
- The salesperson shall introduce all of Eureka Forbes' products when he visits a customer's home to give a demonstration of a product such as a vacuum cleaner or a water purifier to create knowledge.
- Eureka Forbes shall convey salesman to check the quality of the water and make consumers aware about problems caused by hard water. The salesperson can persuade the customer to buy Eureka Forbes Aquasoft water softener which will solve their problems, if any.
- Existing customers can be contacted via email to request referrals, and if sales are made, they shall be given complimentary services. This is because maximum leads are created through referrals and in the survey many respondents stated that they consider recommendations while purchasing health and hygiene products.

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