

## **Behavior of Working Women on Convenience Food Buying: A Study from Bangladesh Perspectives**

**Khaleda Akter\***

### ***Abstract***

*It is by now well recognized that women in the labor force have been at the forefront of Bangladesh's recent successful economic growth. In developing economies, women play an important role by contributing to household income, adding to the supply of labor for economic activities and above all by empowering women. The aim of the study is to find out the effects of occupation of women on their convenience food buying behavior. It is because food preparation has become the prime task of women in the traditional society in spite of having a prestigious career. It is a Bengali tradition that women prepare food for the family, friends and relatives as a symbol of their love and affection. The study has been conducted through systematic literature review and thereby a questionnaire based survey including 50 respondents serving at different educational institutions, banks and insurance, hospitals, different govt. offices as well as other sectors like group of companies and MNCs' (Multinational Corporations). A statistical analysis has also been conducted using convenience sampling technique. The paper has found that independent working women possess a great knowledge about brand, quality and price of a product and exert a careful and sincere time during purchase. They prefer to purchase time saving and convenience food products due to their working schedules, types of organization they served, busy lifestyle, social status, time constraints, role overload etc. On the basis of the findings it can be recommended that this segment of working women are the most attractive consumer segment for the marketers of super-shop, convenience food marketers as well as for the marketers of time saving durable goods.*

**Key words:** Working women, Convenience food, Women buying behavior.

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\* Lecturer, School of Business, Britannia University, Cumilla, Bangladesh Email: [mktkhaleda@gmail.com](mailto:mktkhaleda@gmail.com)

## **Introduction**

Women are believed of carrying the majority of responsibility for food in shaping their family and even those employed full time they still remains a central figure duty of care and food preparation (Bakar, A.et al. 2014).They are the primary decision maker in purchasing and preparing food in most of the families of Bangladesh. Due to the increased participation in the labor force they are now active in deciding what types of groceries or convenience goods needed to be purchased at what time and from where place. Working women provide their economic assistance to the wellbeing of the family that led them in taking household expenditures decisions. Besides this they have to manage both the family and job responsibilities at a time. The dual act increases their role overload. **Role overload** exists when an individual fulfills multiple **roles** simultaneously and lacks the resources to perform them. It can evolve from both excessive time demands and excessive psychological demands. So the working women are likely to show low involvement in preparing food on daily basis.

## **Background of the study**

The advances in female education have also led to the increase in female employment today and they have some rational to justify convenience food as their food choice for themselves and their family (Rasanthikaa and Gunawardan, 2013). Women are believed of carrying the majority of the responsibilities related to household and most of the time it is cooking. Their tendency to purchase convenience food as well as goods is gradually increasing that make their cooking more convenient than the previous time ever. Many researchers have shown their interest in studying the increased education rate, prevention of child marriage, reduction of maternal mortality rate and economic contributions of women in the economy as well as family. That's why this field is very lucrative to study about working women, their food buying behavior, convenience consumption that will be helpful for the future researchers in studying women buying behavior regarding shopping and specialty goods.

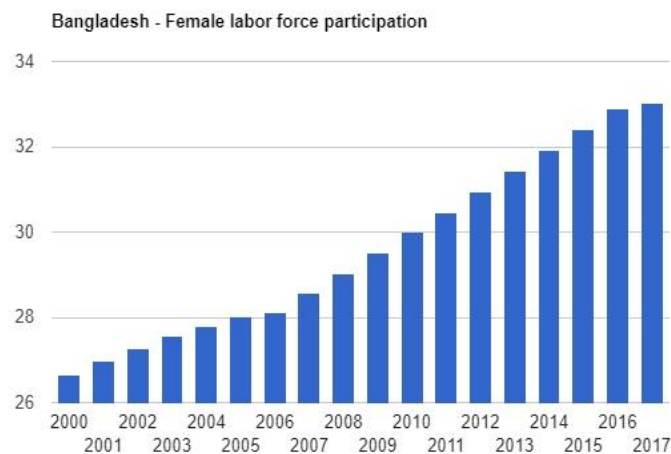
## **Objectives of the study**

1. To identify the factors consisting of working women buying behavior on convenience food and
2. To explain how they make decisions about their convenient food purchase and consumption

## Theoretical Framework

### *Working women*

The female labor force participation rate is the percent of the female population ages 15 and older who are economically active. A woman who earns a salary, wages, or other income through regular employment, usually outside the home. Occupation and employment are similar. Occupation means a general field of employment like teacher, lawyer, Journalist etc. (Willers Eddie 2017). Employment status is the status of a worker in a company on the basis of the contract of work or duration of work done. A worker may be a full-time employee, part-time employee, or an employee on a casual basis. Occupational status is one component of socioeconomic status (SES).



Source: TheGlobalEconomy.com, The World Bank

According to the above statistics accomplished by The World Bank, the participation of female in the workforce has gradually been increased from 26% to 34% in 2017. This indicates that their income is added with total family income and increase purchasing power of women. So, working women are the upcoming focus of marketers in our country due to their affluent spending power and decision making ability.

### *Convenience food*

Convenience food is a food, typically a complete meal that has been pre-prepared commercially and so requires minimum further preparation by the consumer. Convenience foods make life easier. It can be frozen, dried, or canned food that can be heated and prepared very quickly and easily. Put-off, R.(2014) explained convenience food is often appreciated due to its taste, ease and time-

saving capabilities involving less demanding skills and competences than non-convenient food and is often associated with out-of-home as well as at home preparation and consumption. He also explained that this food is often associated with specific brands and certain forms of packaging and is recognized as tasty which is more important than health. Convenience food can be classified into three groups: Ready to eat foods (RTE), ready to use foods (RTU), Beverages. Ready to eat includes dairy snacks, dairy sweets, bakery products, fried snacks, frozen foods etc. Ready to use includes masalas, fresh cut vegetables, ready to fry, canned food etc. Beverages include ready to eat and ready to serve beverages.

### ***Buying behavior***

Consumer buying behavior is the sum total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding the consumer's behavior in the marketplace when purchasing a product or service. "Consumer behavior is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires." (Solomon, Bamossy et al. 2006, p6). Schiffman & Kanuk (2007) take a similar approach in defining consumer behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their need. Bearden et al, has defined Consumer behavior is "the mental and emotional processes and the physical activities of people who purchase and use goods and services to satisfy particular needs and wants. Determinants of Consumer behavior are economic determinants (Income, Income expectations of consumers, availability of consumer credit, and possession of liquid assets such as cash), sociological determinants (family, reference groups, opinion leaders, social class) and psychological determinants (motivation, learning, perception etc.).

### **Literature review**

Working women economic contribution toward family income leads to increase the social recognition and wellbeing of the family motivating the other members to consume more quality products. They tend to purchase goods guided by the taste and preference of themselves and their family member's choice.

Guha, S. (2013) conducted a research study to identify the changing perception and comparison of buying behavior for working and non-working women in Urban India. The study revealed that working women are price, quality and brand conscious and highly influenced by the others

in shopping. The buying behavior of working women depends on what type of organization they work having increased financial power, a greater discretionary income and utilizing it to satisfy their wants. Now they regularly move to malls, exclusive showrooms for shopping & take their decisions themselves, as they has full freedom to buy.

Prathaban, S. and Khurana, N. (2018) explained that working women are conscious about the price, quality, and any unique characteristics of the product having more discretionary income, changing taste and preference and freedom to buy that ultimately influence their buying behavior greatly than the non-working women.

Chopra, A.N (2014) conducted a research study on “Factors affecting Purchase behavior of Women grocery consumer- An Insight” and identified the most significant factors which affects the purchase behavior of the women like promotional strategy, festival offers, discounts , availability, billing Speed ,ambience.

Fernande, S. and Londh, B. R. (2014) studied on working women buying behavior and identified that they face challenges in balancing their roles as a wife-partner, mother, wage-earner and consumer. Specially, married working women experience time constraints and pressures dealing with household responsibilities and their jobs in the marketplace. Their buying behavior is influenced by the reference groups also.

Ahmad et al. (2011)) conducted a study on “Working women work-life conflict” and analyzed the most influential variables such as women’s earning potential, household responsibilities, workplace environment and financial need that lead to work-life conflict. These factors lead working women to make a balance between work and family life and it has direct relation with convenience food purchase.

Huda & Sultan (2013) conducted a study on buying motives of consumers toward herbal skin product and found the influence of family and friends on buying decisions.

French et al. (2010) focused on the income of household that have direct relation with food purchase.

Jain, R. (2016) studied on “Impulse Buying Behavior amongst Working Women – With Respect to the City Of Ahmedabad” and identified the factors behind impulse buying including educational qualification, marital status, income, dependent members in household, size of household, influence of friends and colleagues, well designed window shops, eager and courteous salesperson, discount or campaigns offer, One free with another product, innovative product etc.

Olivas, R. and Bernabéu, R. (2012) “Men’s and women’s attitudes toward organic food consumption: A Spanish case study” examined that education, work role, lifestyle have effects on consumption of food.

Bhatti, S. and Srivastava, R. (2003) conducted a study on “Participation of working women in decision-making process as consumer” and examined that with modernization and education women have been empowered to make the best use of human and non-human resources in management of the family with respect to efficient use of time and energy.

Allan, G. and Crow, G. (2001) explained how recent decades have witnessed remarkable changes in family patterns and household organization that ultimately influenced the purchasing and consuming tendency of convenience food.

Silverstein, M. J. and Sayre, K. (2009) examined that women are responsible for the lion’s share of grocery shopping and meal preparation. Food is also one of consumers’ most important budget items, one that can be adjusted but never eliminated Halder, S. and Urey, I. (2003) conducted a study on “Patterns and Trends in Food Consumption in Poor Urban and Rural Households in Bangladesh” at Brac Center and explained that formal wage employment has increased among them most are women jobs due to the technological change shifting food purchase tendency toward pre- processed, convenience food. Urban lifestyles also lead to the dependency on convenience consumption for working women.

Craik (2009) stated that women, generally find shopping more pleasurable than men and have a more positive attitude towards the browsing and social interaction that often follows with the buying procedure. Women associate buying with leisure, shopping plays an emotional, psychological and symbolic role.

From the extensive literature review the following twelve (12) variables greatly constitute the buying behavior of women on convenience food.

<b>SL.</b>	<b>Variables/Factors</b>	<b>Authors</b>
V 1	Lifestyle	Guha, (2013), Ramprabha (2017), Olivas and Bernabéu, R. (2012).
V 2	Education and modernization	Bhatti and Srivastava(2003),Olivas and Bernabéu (2012)
V 3	Financial power	Guha (2013), Ahmad et al. (2011)
V 4	Freedom to buy	Guha (2013),Prathaban and

		Khurana (2018)
V 5	Pleasure activity	Craik (2009)
V 6	Availability	Chopra (2014)
V 7	Taste and preference	Prathaban and Khurana (2018)
V 8	Types of organization	Guha (2013)
V 9	Work schedule	Guha (2013),
V 10	Time constraints	Guha (2013), Fernande and Londh, (2014)
V 11	Family patterns	Allan.and Crow (2001).
V 12	Influence of others	Guha (2013), Ramprabha (2017), Fernande and Londh (2014), Huda & Sultan (2013)

The following factors also influence the buying behavior of women.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Authors</b>
price conscious, brand conscious, quality conscious	Guha (2013) Prathaban and Khurana (2018)
Promotional offers (discount)	Chopra,(2014) Jain (2016)
Income of household	French et al. (2010)
Formal wage increment	Halder and Urey (2003)
Number of family members.	Guha (2013),

## **Research methodology**

### ***Sampling and data collection***

For the current study, a questionnaire survey was conducted within Cumilla city, Laksam, Feni, Noakhali, and Chittagong from person to person for data collection. Data was collected from a sample of 50 women working in public and private universities, banks, telecommunications, govt. offices, hospitals, group of companies. The respondent women were senior officers, accountants, lecturers, Asst. prof. and a few held the post of senior managers.

### ***Measurement development***

Most of the statements used for developing the questionnaire were drawn from literature on working women buying behavior. The dependent variable is the buying behavior women on convenience food and the most significant twelve (12) independent variables were used to conduct survey. There are more four variables that have also significant

relationships with buying behavior. A five-point Likert rating scale was used to measure their responses. The scale ranged from five (strongly agree) to one (strongly disagree).

**Data Analysis Method**

Statistical Packages for Social Science's (SPSS) software was used to analysis data. Firstly descriptive statistic was generated by SPSS for demographic analysis. Then association was conducted for to find out the relationship between buying behavior of women on convenience food (dependent variable) and factors influencing the buying behavior (independent variable).

**Results**

**Descriptive Statistics**

The total fifty (50) of the respondents were female serving at different organizations like public and private universities, banks, telecommunications, govt. offices, hospitals, group of companies. Among them about 26% are in teaching, 46% in banking service,10% in telecommunications,12% in government service and 6% in others including business and services. In terms of age about 58% of the respondents were between 25-30 years, 24% in 30-40 years, 14% in 20-25 years and only 6% of women belong to the group of age above 40 years. The majority of the respondent working women belongs to the income range of 20000-40000 tk.per month.

		Profession			
		Frequen cy	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	teaching	13	22.8	26.0	26.0
	bank	23	40.4	46.0	72.0
	telecommunication	5	8.8	10.0	82.0
	govt.	6	10.5	12.0	94.0
	others	3	5.3	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	87.7	100.0	
Missin g	System	7	12.3		
Total		57	100.0		



<b>Age</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-25	7	12.3	14.0	14.0
	25-30	29	50.9	58.0	72.0
	30-40	12	21.1	24.0	96.0
	above 40	2	3.5	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	87.7	100.0	
Missing	System	7	12.3		
Total		57	100.0		
<b>income</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10000-20000	10	17.5	20.0	20.0
	20000-40000	24	42.1	48.0	68.0
	above 40000	16	28.1	32.0	100.0
	Total	50	87.7	100.0	
Missing	System	7	12.3		
Total		57	100.0		

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*Correlation analysis*

		Correlations												
Control Variables			lifestyle	Educati on and moderni zation	financia l power	Freedo m to buy	pleasure activity	Availa bility	Taste and preferen ce	organizat ion types	wor k sche dule	Time constr aints	Family pattern	Influence of others
Buying behavior of women	Lifestyle	Correlation	.551	.589	.542	.467	.286	.433	.563	.469	.607	.397	.496	.527
		Significanc e (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.001	.046	.002	.000	.001	.000	.005	.000	.000
		df	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47
	Educatio n and moderniz ation	Correlation	.589	1.000	.514	.733	.513	.554	.440	.543	.709	.388	.425	.600
		Significanc e (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000	.006	.002	.000
		df	47	0	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47
	financial power	Correlation	.542	.514	1.000	.309	.390	.294	.467	.320	.476	.252	.356	.422
		Significanc e (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.031	.006	.041	.001	.025	.001	.081	.012	.002
		df	47	47	0	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47
	freedom to buy	Correlation	.467	.733	.309	1.000	.407	.362	.496	.513	.521	.333	.243	.600
		Significanc e (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.031	.	.004	.011	.000	.000	.000	.019	.093	.000
		df	47	47	47	0	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47

	pleasure activity	Correlation	.286	.513	.390	.407	1.000	.383	.284	.531	.610	.282	.137	.189
		Significance (2-tailed)	.046	.000	.006	.004	.	.007	.048	.000	.000	.050	.349	.194
		df	47	47	47	47	0	47	47	47	47	47	47	47
	Availability	Correlation	.433	.554	.294	.362	.383	1.000	.437	.403	.642	.446	.347	.450
		Significance (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.041	.011	.007	.	.002	.004	.000	.001	.015	.001
		df	47	47	47	47	47	0	47	47	47	47	47	47
	taste and preference	Correlation	.563	.440	.467	.496	.284	.437	1.000	.307	.396	.316	.344	.555
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.001	.000	.048	.002	.	.032	.005	.027	.016	.000
		df	47	47	47	47	47	47	0	47	47	47	47	47
	organization types	Correlation	.469	.543	.320	.513	.531	.403	.307	1.000	.481	.460	.265	.494
		Significance (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.025	.000	.000	.004	.032	.	.000	.001	.066	.000
		df	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	0	47	47	47	47
	work schedule	Correlation	.607	.709	.476	.521	.610	.642	.396	.481	1.000	.496	.246	.371
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.005	.000	.	.000	.089	.009
		df	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	0	47	47	47
Time	Correlation	.397	.388	.252	.333	.282	.446	.316	.460	.496	1.000	.184	.354	

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	constraints	Significance (2-tailed)	.005	.006	.081	.019	.050	.001	.027	.001	.000	.	.207	.013	
		df	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	0	47	47
	Family pattern	Correlation	.496	.425	.356	.243	.137	.347	.344	.265	.246	.184	1.000	.439	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.012	.093	.349	.015	.016	.066	.089	.207	.	.002	
		df	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	0	47
	Influence of others	Correlation	.527	.600	.422	.600	.189	.450	.555	.494	.371	.354	.439	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.002	.000	.194	.001	.000	.000	.009	.013	.002	.	
		df	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	0

he results of correlation analysis are presented in the above Table. The results indicated that almost all variables have statistically significant relationship at ( $p < 0.001$ ). The independent variables have moderate to high positive relation with the dependent variable (buying behavior of women). Work schedule has the highest value (.607) and pleasure activity has the lowest value (.286). So, it is proved that all the above analyzed factors have statistical significance with the behavior of working women on convenience food buying.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

It is evident from this study that working women have to balance between their personal life and professional life. They need to make effective decisions about their spending regarding food. As their contribution to the family increases the overall income of a family increases. Due to the work schedule and time constraints, they need to make quick decisions about food products. Sometimes they purchase convenient or ready to cook food as a pleasure in order to make their cooking easier and time saving. Working women has better financial power and freedom to take purchase decision that can lead the marketers to identify and target this lucrative consumer segment for convenience food like frozen foods, dried snacks, bakery food, fresh cut vegetables, and breakfast cereals, canned fish, meat or chicken etc. The findings of the study also revealed that working women taste and preference regarding food is highly influenced by their education, recommendations of friends, family and colleagues that ultimately influence their buying behavior. Sometimes, buying convenience food gives them pleasure from their routine life. The promotional offers like discounts by the marketers motivate them to make quick purchase of convenient food. From the above study it can be inferred that the working women are the prime decision makers of a family and they have greater influence on the family spending. So, this segment should be studied more deeply to design effecting marketing strategy by the marketers.

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