

Market Research Study for Cooptex



REPORT



People Studies

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Methodology



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The market research study for Cooptex, commissioned by the Thamizh Nadu Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society Ltd., had the following mutually agreed-upon objectives:

1. to assess the competence of sales personnel to meet today's market,
2. to find out the level of satisfaction of existing co-optex customers,
3. to suggest new target-markets for co-optex products, and
4. to recommend areas of improvement for co-optex products.

The study, carried out in June 2007, adopted a **social-psychological approach**, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Two sets of **structured questionnaires** - one for **customers**, and the other for **employees** - were administered. The sample consisted of 45 outlets out of a total of 136 spread across Thamizh Nadu, two-thirds of which are urban and one-third semi-urban / rural [an average of 2 urban and 1 rural outlets per Region excepting Chennai where all 13 outlets were included]. In each outlet, a **convenience sample** of around 10 customers each of **Cooptex** and major neighbouring **competitor/s** [totaling 695], and 2 employees each of Cooptex and competitor [totaling 140] were interviewed. This sample also included 35 Cooptex customers who were interviewed over telephone. To make the study more extensive, wherever it was convenient, more than one Cooptex outlets were included, though not necessarily 10 customers and 2 employees were met in each.

The quantitative data were supplemented by the **qualitative data**. The qualitative study employed a **wide range of tools** including *candid and critical observation* of both internal and external environments, *simulated purchase* to assess the quality of customer service, *informal interaction* with customers and employees, observations on neighbourhood / *public perception*, *empathic hearing* to employees, and study of *artefacts*, *body language* and non-verbal communication. Additional data were collected from the **weavers** by holding in-depth interviews with them at their residences.

The study obviously has its **limitations**: **firstly**, the purpose is not to find out the market share of Cooptex, and therefore it did not probe into the financial and administrative aspects; **secondly**, the study used a convenience sampling, with a pre-fixed number for each outlet, irrespective of its size and the magnitude of its turn-over; **thirdly**, the demographic composition of the respondents of the study may not reflect that of the State in general.

The **strength** of this study, however, lies in its innovative social-psychological approach. The findings are **reliable** because of the creative and systematic **triangulation** of the quantitative and qualitative data.