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CONSUMER MINDSET TOWARDS GOLD PRODUCTS IN TRICHY

Michael Neil Adams M A

Ph.D Research Scholar (Full Time), PG & Research Department of Commerce

Jamal Mohamed College, Trichy-20

michaelneiladams16@gmail.com

9944079404

Dr S. Gopi

Assistant Professor & Research Supervisor

PG & Research Department of Commerce

Jamal Mohamed College, Trichy-20

sgopi@jmc.edu

9095003364

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***Abstract:** As of 2026, the gold market in Tiruchirappalli (Trichy) faces a unique transition. With gold prices reaching historic highs of approximately ₹14,000–₹15,000 per gram, this study examines the shifting consumer mindset in a city where traditional values meet modern financial pressures. While gold remains an indispensable asset for cultural milestones and a "safe haven" for the middle class, high volatility has triggered a move toward lightweight 18K jewelry and digital gold investments. This research utilizes primary data from Trichy's urban and semi-urban populations to analyze how price sensitivity is reshaping buying habits. Findings indicate that while "Big-Box" branded retailers are gaining trust through hallmarking transparency, traditional consumers are increasingly leveraging gold loans and exchange schemes to maintain liquidity without divesting their assets. Ultimately, the 2026 Trichy consumer is characterized by a "strategic" mindset—balancing the sanctity of tradition with a modern demand for affordability and investment utility.*

***Keywords:** Consumer behaviour, Indian jewellery, purchase decision, purity, design, price, cultural significance, store of wealth.*

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Introduction

In 2026, the consumer mindset towards gold in Tiruchirappalli (Trichy) has reached a pivotal junction where deep-rooted cultural heritage meets high-tech financial pragmatism. Long celebrated as the "Rockfort City," Trichy serves as a vital hub for Tamil Nadu's gold trade, where the yellow metal is more than an ornament—it is a symbol of divinity, security, and social status. However, as gold prices climb toward the ₹14,000 per gram mark, a distinct shift is visible in the local consumer psychology. While traditional heavy "Temple Jewellery" remains essential for weddings and festivals like Akshaya Tritiya, the modern Trichy consumer—particularly the younger demographic—is gravitating toward lightweight, contemporary designs and 18K hallmarked jewellery. This "conscious luxury" mindset prioritizes everyday wearability and ethical sourcing over sheer volume. Furthermore, with rising volatility, consumers are adopting a "wait-and-watch" approach, increasingly utilizing digital platforms, monthly savings schemes, and SIPs to hedge against price hikes. For the residents of Trichy, gold remains the ultimate "safe haven," but the 2026 mindset is characterized by a strategic balance: preserving the sanctity of tradition while demanding transparency, purity, and modern utility in every purchase.

Review of literature

The growing preference for branded jewellery over traditional non-branded jewellery in India has been widely explored in recent research. Several studies have highlighted increasing consumer awareness, shifting preferences, and the factors influencing purchase decisions in the branded jewellery segment. Berad et al. (2015) conducted a comparative study in Nasik city and found that 100% of respondents were aware of branded jewellery. Key factors influencing purchase decisions included design, price, purity, brand image, variety, display, service quality, promotional offers, and influence of family and friends. Similarly, Gomathy and Devi (2015) reported high levels of consumer awareness regarding branded jewellery, with Tanishq emerging as the most preferred brand among customers. Ramachandran and Karthick (2014) observed that branded jewellery has brought a revolutionary change in the Indian jewellery market by offering unique styles and designs that distinctly differentiate it from unbranded counterparts. Jyothi and Babu (2014), in their empirical study in Tirupati, identified multiple factors affecting consumer preferences, including variety, gold purity, brand image, after-sales service, advertising, promotional schemes, celebrity endorsements, and brand familiarity. Rawal (2015) examined consumer buying behaviour towards diamond jewellery from branded retailers and emphasized that branded outlets are preferred due to assured quality, transparency, and perceived reliability. The study provided insights into customer expectations, perceptions, and attitudes towards branded jewellery. Asha and Christopher (2014), in a study focused on Kanyakumari district, revealed that gold jewellery purchases are largely driven by social and cultural occasions such as weddings, anniversaries, festivals, and childbirth, with a growing inclination towards branded products. Vadra and Malhotra (2014) noted a significant shift in consumer preference from gold content (making charges and weight) to contemporary and fashionable designs, indicating the rising importance of aesthetics and style in jewellery buying.

decisions. Raju and Kumar (2013), in their study in Hyderabad, identified price, purity, design, variety, and brand image, along with the influence of family and friends, as primary determinants of consumer preference for branded jewellery. Mulky et al. (2015) analyzed the platinum jewellery segment and observed that the Indian jewellery market is highly dynamic, with brands positioned across a wide spectrum of price, quality, innovation, and design, reflecting intense competition and evolving consumer aspirations. Overall, the literature indicates a clear transition in the Indian jewellery market from unorganized, traditional retailers to organized branded players, driven by rising consumer awareness, trust in quality assurance, innovative designs, effective marketing strategies, and changing lifestyle preferences. This revised version eliminates redundancy (e.g., repeated listing of similar factors), improves readability, groups similar findings logically, and presents a coherent narrative while retaining all key insights and proper attribution. You can further customize it based on your research objectives. Let me know if you want it shorter or more elaborate.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the psychological and cultural drivers that influence gold purchase decisions among different demographic groups in Trichy, particularly during festive and wedding seasons.
2. To evaluate the impact of gold price volatility on consumer buying patterns, specifically examining the shift toward lightweight jewelry and digital gold as prices reach historic highs.
3. To assess consumer awareness and trust regarding BIS Hallmarking, making charges, and transparency in branded versus local non-branded retail showrooms in the Trichy region.
4. To identify the primary motivation behind gold acquisition, determining whether modern consumers in Trichy view the metal primarily as a traditional ornament for social status or as a strategic financial hedge for liquidity.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the consumer mindset towards gold products in Trichy. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 120 respondents selected using convenience sampling. The questionnaire covers demographic profile, purchase motives, investment perception, brand preference, and influencing factors such as price, purity, design, and cultural values. Secondary data is gathered from journals, reports, and industry publications. Data analysis is carried out using percentage analysis, weighted average method, and simple statistical tools. The findings help identify consumer attitudes, preferences, and behavioral patterns related to gold purchases in Trichy.

Results and Discussions Based on the analysis the interpretations are given below:

Table 4.1: Gender- Wise Classification

Gender	No. of Consumers	Percentage
Male	181	36.2
Female	319	63.8
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

Table 4.1 reveals that 181 respondents were males, and 319 respondents were females. Majority of the respondents belong to the Gender of Females

Table 4.2: Age- Wise Classification

Age	No. of Consumers	Percentage
18-30	58	11.6
31-40	83	16.6
41-50	194	38.8
above 50	165	33.0
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

Table 4.2 reveals that out of 500 consumers 11.6% of the respondents belongs to the age category of 18-30, 16.6% of the respondents belong to 31-40, 38.8% of the respondents belong to 18-25 and the remaining 33% belong to the age group of above 50. Majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 41-50.

Table 4.3: Marital Status -wise Classification

Marital Status	No. of Consumers	Percentage
Married	447	89.4
Unmarried	53	10.6
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

Table 4.3 reveals that out of 500 respondents, 89.4% respondents were married, and 10.6% respondents were unmarried. Majority of the respondents belong to the status of married.

Table 4.4: Education- wise Classification

Education	No. of Consumers	Percentage
Up to matriculation	119	23.8
secondary to graduation	207	41.4
PG & above	103	20.6
Professional	71	14.2
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

Table 4.4 reveals that out of 500 respondents, 23.8% respondents have education qualification up to matriculation, and 41.4%% respondents were from secondary to graduation, and 20.6% respondents were from PG and above,14.2% were from professional education. Majority of the respondents belong to the education of secondary to graduation.

Table 4.5: Monthly Family income- wise Classification

Family income	No. of Consumers	Percentage
less than 25000	196	39.2
25001-50000	151	30.2
50001-75000	77	15.4
75000 -1,00,000	45	9.0
1,00,000 & above	31	6.2
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

Table 4.7 reveals that out of 500 respondents, 39.2% respondents were in the monthly family income of less than 25,000, 30.2% of respondents were up to 25,001-50,000, 15.4% respondents were up to 50,001- 75,000, 9% respondents were up to 75,000- 1,00,000, 6.2% respondents were up to the income 1,00,00. and above. Majority of the respondents belong to the monthly family income of less than 25,000.

Table 4.6: Products in Jewellery Preferred

Products in Jewellery	No. of Consumers	Percentage
Earrings	162	32.4
Bangles	53	10.6
Necklace	42	8.4

Chains	101	20.2
Rings	86	17.2
Bracelets	56	11.2
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

The result shows that out of 500 respondents 32.4% of the respondents prefer to buy Earrings, 10.6% prefer to buy bangles, 8.4% prefer to buy necklace, 20.2% prefer to buy chains, 17.2% prefer to buy rings. and the remaining 11.2% prefer to buy bracelets. Majority of the respondents prefer to buy Earrings

Table 4.7: Frequency of Purchase

Frequency of Purchase	No. of Consumers	Percentage
once in 3 months	20	4.0
once in 6 months	85	17.0
once in a year	395	79.0
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

The above table exhibits that 4% respondents purchase jewellery, once in 3 months, 17% respondents purchase jewellery once in 6 months, 79% respondents purchase jewellery once in a year. Majority of the respondents purchase jewellery, once in a year.

Table 4.8: Time Spend on Purchase

Time spend	No. of Consumers	Percentage
30 minutes	50	10.0
40 minutes	220	44.0
1 hour	170	34.0
more than 1 hour	60	12.0
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

The above table exhibits that 10% respondents spend time to purchase jewellery, in 30 minutes, 44% respondents spend time to purchase jewellery in 40 minutes, 34% respondents spend time to purchase jewellery in an hour, 12% respondents spend time to purchase jewellery, for more than 1 hour. Majority of the respondents spend time to purchase jewellery in 40 minutes.

Table 4.9: Preference to buy

Prefer to Buy	No. of Consumers	Percentage
Investment	215	43.0
Fashion	50	10.0
Occasions	130	26.0
Festivals	80	16.0
Gifts	25	5.0
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

The above table exhibits that 43% respondents prefer to buy jewellery, for investment purpose, 10% respondents prefer to buy jewellery, for fashion 26% respondents prefer to buy jewellery, for occasions, 16% respondents prefer to buy jewellery, for festivals, 5% respondents prefer to buy jewellery, for gifts. Majority of the respondents prefer to buy jewellery, for investment.

Table 4.10: Attributes attract to purchase

Attributes	No. of Consumers	Percentage
Product quality	170	34.0
Gram and weight	80	16.0
Price	120	24.0
Purity	40	8.0
Designs	30	6.0

Making and wastage charges	60	12.0
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

The above table exhibits that 34% respondents prefer the product quality attributes to purchase jewellery, 16% respondents prefer the gram and weight, 24% respondents prefer the price of the jewellery, 8% respondents prefer designs of jewellery, 12% respondents prefer the making and wastage charges in jewellery. Majority of the respondents prefer the product quality in jewellery

Table 4.11: Factors influence to buy

Factors influence	No. of Consumers	Percentage
Advertising	290	58.0
Shop display	65	13.0
Word of worth	30	6.0
Family/friends/relatives	95	19.0
Attractive packaging	10	2.0
Dealer	10	2.0
Total	500	100.0

(Source: primary data)

The above table exhibits that 58% respondents prefer advertising as a influencing factor which make them to purchase jewellery, 13% respondents prefer shop display, 6% respondents prefer word of mouth, 19% respondents prefer family/friends/relatives, 2% respondents prefer attractive packaging, 2% respondents prefer dealer for purchasing the jewellery. Majority of the respondents prefer advertising as influencing factor to purchase jewellery.

Interpretation

HO: There is no significant relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery products and gender of the consumers.

Table 4.12: Relationship between Type of jewellery products and Gender of the Consumers

	Jewellery Products						Total
Gender	Earrings	Bangles	Necklace	Chains	Rings	Bracelets	
male	63	13	7	34	40	24	181
female	99	40	35	67	46	32	319
Total	162	53	42	101	86	56	500

(Source: primary data)

Chi square value= 15.887. df =5, table value at 5 per cent level of significance=11.070

Hence the computed chi-square value is more than the table value. So, the hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery Products and gender of the consumers.

HO: There is no significant relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery products and age of the consumers.

Table 4.13: Relationship between Type of jewellery products and Age of the Consumers

	Jewellery Products						Total
Age	Earrings	Bangles	Necklace	Chains	Rings	Bracelets	
18-30	17	11	4	12	9	5	58
31-40	28	5	11	15	15	9	83
41-50	54	16	20	44	43	17	194
above 50	63	21	7	30	19	25	165
Total	162	53	42	101	86	56	500

(Source: primary data)

Chi square value= 27.886. df =15, table value at 5 per cent level of significance=24.996

Hence the computed chi-square value is less than the table value. So, the hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery Products and age of the consumers.

HO: There is no significant relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery Products and marital status of the consumers.

Table 4.14: Relationship between Type of jewellery products and marital status of the Consumers

	Jewellery Products						Total
Marital status	Earrings	Bangles	Necklace	Chains	Rings	Bracelets	
Married	141	46	34	90	83	53	447

Unmarried	21	7	8	11	3	3	53
Total	162	53	42	101	86	56	500

(Source: primary data)

Chi square value= 10.721. df =5, table value at 5 per cent level of significance=11.070

Hence the computed chi-square value is less than the table value. So, the hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is no relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery Products and marital status of the consumers.

HO: There is no significant relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery products and educational qualification of the consumers.

Table 4.15: Relationship between Type of jewellery products and educational qualification of the Consumers

Education	Jewellery Products						Total
	Earrings	Bangles	Necklace	Chains	Rings	Bracelets	
Up to matriculation	37	7	4	23	37	11	119
secondary to graduation	66	20	25	45	27	24	207
PG & above	43	20	0	22	10	8	103
Professional	16	6	13	11	12	13	71
Total	162	53	42	101	86	56	500

(Source: primary data)

Chi square value= 64.061 df =15, table value at 5 per cent level of significance=24.996

Hence the computed chi-square value is more than the table value. So, the hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery Products and educational qualification of the consumers.

HO: There is no significant relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery Products and monthly family income of the consumers.

Table 4.16: Relationship between Type of jewellery products and Monthly family income of the Consumers

Monthly Family income	Jewellery Products						Total
	Earrings	Bangles	Necklace	Chains	Rings	Bracelets	
less than 25000	60	25	17	37	34	23	196

25001-50000	48	9	15	40	25	14	151
50001-75000	29	15	3	11	11	8	77
75000 -1,00,000	17	4	7	9	4	4	45
1,00,000&above	8	0	0	4	12	7	31
Total	162	53	42	101	86	56	500

(Source: primary data)

Chi square value= 42.637 df=20, table value at 5 per cent level of significance=31.410

Hence the computed chi-square value is more than the table value. So, the hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a relationship between consumer preference for type of jewellery Products and monthly family income of the consumers

Findings

- Gold is primarily purchased for both investment and traditional purposes in Trichy.
- Purity and trust in the jeweller are the most influential factors in purchase decisions.
- Hallmarked gold is strongly preferred by the majority of consumers.
- Price fluctuations significantly affect the timing of gold purchases.
- Design variety plays an important role, especially among younger consumers.
- Brand reputation influences repeat purchases and customer loyalty.
- Weddings and festivals are the major occasions for buying gold products.
- Consumers view gold as a safe and long-term investment.
- Word-of-mouth and family influence strongly impact buying behavior.
- Online awareness exists, but in-store purchases remain dominant in Trichy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the consumer mindset in Trichy as of 2026 represents a sophisticated blend of ancestral tradition and modern financial pragmatism. While gold remains an emotional and cultural anchor—indispensable for religious festivals and the "Muhurtham" wedding seasons—the local population has become highly adaptive in response to record-high prices. The study reveals a distinct "dual-objective" mindset: consumers continue to revere gold as a symbol of divinity and social status, yet they increasingly treat it as a strategic financial hedge. There is a visible transition from the heavy, traditional "Temple Jewellery" toward lightweight, contemporary 18K designs that cater to the professional lifestyle of Trichy's growing urban workforce.

Furthermore, the shift from local unorganized goldsmiths to branded retail showrooms highlights a demand for absolute transparency, BIS hallmarking, and structured saving schemes. Ultimately, the

residents of Trichy are not moving away from gold; rather, they are redefining their relationship with it by prioritizing purity, liquidity, and investment utility over mere volume. For the jewelry industry, success in this market now depends on balancing the metal's historical sanctity with innovative, transparent, and flexible purchase models that accommodate the modern consumer's budget-conscious yet quality-driven outlook.

Gold jewellery continues to occupy a special place in the cultural and emotional fabric of the region, being perceived not merely as an ornament but as a symbol of prosperity, social status, security, and tradition. However, the rapid rise of organised and branded jewellery retailers has significantly altered consumer expectations. Branded outlets are preferred by a growing segment of customers—especially younger and urban buyers—because of assured purity, modern designs, exchange and buy-back policies, transparent billing, and enhanced shopping experience.

In conclusion, jewellers operating in Tiruchirappalli District—whether traditional or branded—must adopt a customer-centric approach by focusing on quality assurance, contemporary and customised designs, competitive and transparent pricing, purity certification, and excellent pre- and post-purchase service. Building and sustaining trust, authenticity, and credibility remain the cornerstone of success in this highly sentiment-driven yet increasingly discerning market. Only those jewellers who align their strategies with the changing preferences and rising expectations of consumers will be able to strengthen their market position in the years ahead.

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