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## Appraisal on Consumer Behaviour and Decision Making

### **Abstract**

Now a day's most business organizations are operating in a complex and competitive environment where demands are constantly changing. In this era of intense competition, especially one can achieve success only after having a thorough understanding about their target consumer behavior. Consumer Behavior refers to the study of buying tendencies of consumers. It is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, use, and dispose of goods or services to satisfy their needs and wants. It is really important for marketers to understand what prompts a consumer to purchase a particular product and what stops him from buying. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the various factors which affect the consumers while they purchase any products. **Keywords:** Consumer Behaviour, Decision Making, Involvement.

**Introduction-**Consumer behaviour is a study of how individuals make decision to spend their available resources (time, money and effort) or consumption related aspects (What they buy? When they buy? How they buy? It is broadly the study of individuals, or organizations and the processes consumers use to search, select, use and dispose of products, services, experience, or ideas to satisfy needs and its impact on the consumer and society. It is a globally accepted fact that in recent times, marketers have become dynamic and the consumer has control over the strategic decisions made by the companies. Companies are put to challenge to understand the pulses of new buyers and their buying pattern. India, in this scenario is no exception. It is being a nation of diverse cultures and traditions, understanding the consumers' buying pattern become a hard task.

### **Objectives of the study-**

- To understand the concept of Consumer Behaviour.
- To identify the consumer Involvement in buying
- To ensure factors influencing consumer decision making

**Need for the Study -:** The study of consumer behaviour helps everybody as all are consumers. It is essential for marketers to understand consumers to survive and succeed in this competitive marketing environment. The Importance in day to day life is the purpose of studying a discipline which helps oneself to better appreciate its contributions. The reason to study consumer behaviour is because of the role it plays in the lives of humans. Most of the free time is spent in the market place, shopping or engaging in other activities. The extra time is usually passed in knowing and thinking about products and services, discussing with friends about them, and watching advertisements related to them. The usage of them significantly reveals our life styles.

**Consumer Involvement-:** The study includes personal, product and situational.

**Personal Factors-** Self-concept, needs, and values are the three personal factors that influence the extent of consumer involvement in a product or service. The more product image, the value symbolism inherent in it and the needs it serves are fitting together with the consumer self-image, values and needs, the more likely the consumer is to feel involved in it. Celebrities for example share a certain self-image, certain values, and certain needs. They tend to use products and services that reflect their life style. They get highly involved in purchasing prestigious products like designer wear, imported cars, and health care products.

**Product Factors-** The consumer involvement grows as the level of perceived risk in the purchase of a good or service increases. It is likely that consumers will feel more involved in the purchase of their house than in the purchase of tooth paste, it is a much riskier purchase. Product differentiation affects involvement. The involvement increases as the number of alternatives that they have to choose from increases. This may be due to the fact that consumers feel variety which means greater risk. The pleasure one gets by using a product or service can also influence involvement. Some products are a greater source of pleasure to the consumer than others. Involvement increases when a product gains public attention. The product which is socially visible or that is consumed in public, demands high involvement.

**Situational Factors** -The situation in which the product is brought or used can generate emotional involvement. The reason for purchase or purchase occasion affects involvement. Social pressure can significantly increase involvement. One is likely to be more self conscious about the products and brands one looks at when shopping with friends than when shopping alone. The need to make a fast decision also influences involvement. A consumer who needs a new refrigerator and sees the one- day- only sale' at an appliances retailer does not have the time to shop around and compare different brands and prices. The eminence of the decision heightens involvement. The involvement is high when the decision is irrevocable, for example when the retailer does not accept return or exchange on the sale items. Thus involvement may be from outside the individual, as with situational involvement or from within the individual as with enduring involvement. It can be induced by a host of personal-product-and situation related factors, many of which can be controlled by the marketer. It affects the ways in which consumers see, process, and send information to others.

**Types of involvement-**The two types of involvement are:

a) **Situation Involvement-** Situational Involvement is temporary and refers to emotional feelings of a consumer, experiences in a particular situation when one thinks of a specific product.

b) **Enduring Involvement-**Enduring Involvement is persistent over time and refers to feelings experienced toward a product category across different situations. For example, holidaymakers renting a resort for their trip are highly involved in their choice, but their involvement is temporary.

Whereas involvement of a person whose hobby is bike racing endures overtime and affects his responses in any situation related to pre-purchase, purchase and post- purchase of sport bikes. It is observed that involvement is triggered by special situation in the case of holiday makers, but in the second case, it comes from, and is a part of the consumer. The contrast between situational and enduring involvement is important. When marketers measure involvement they examine the extent to which it can be induced by the product or selling situation. After noticing the type of involvement they are facing, marketers work to control products or selling situations.

**Effects of consumer involvement-** Involvement with the product makes consumers process product-related information more readily. This information is processed thoroughly; hence, it is retained for a longtime. Because of this the consumers become emotionally high and tend to engage in extended problem solving and word- of-mouth communications. These result into three categories: search for information, processing information, and information transmission. Customers who are highly involved tend to search for information and shop around more when compared with low involvement customers. For example, the customer who is highly involved with cars and thinks about buying it is likely to gather information. He sees for alternative models to figure the advantages and disadvantages of each. The more they are involved, the more they learn about the alternatives within that category. To gather the information they use various sources. One such behaviour is to shop around, where they visit various outlets and talk to sales people. The customers of this kind should be encouraged to visit the outlets to know, and compare various models to meet information needs.

**Consumer decision making** - The most important environment in which firms operate is their customer environment because the basic belief of marketing oriented company – that the customer is the centre around which the business revolves. Therefore, marketing people need to understand the processes that their customers go through when making decision. The consumer decision making process involves series of related and sequential stages of activities.

- **Need Recognition-** When a person has an unsatisfied need, the buying process begins to satisfy the needs. The need may be activated by internal or external factors. The intensity of the want will indicate the speed with which a person will move to fulfill the want. On the basis of need and its urgency, forms the order of priority. Marketers should provide required information of selling points.
- **Information Search-** Identified needs can be satisfied only when desired product is known and also easily available. Different products are available in the market, but consumer must know which product or brand gives him maximum satisfaction. And the person has to search out for relevant information of the product, brand or location.

Consumers can use many sources e.g., neighbours, friends and family. Marketers also provide relevant information through advertisements, retailers, dealers, packaging and sales promotion, and window displaying. Mass media like news papers, radio, and television provide information.

- Evaluation of Alternatives- This is a critical stage in the process of buying. Following are important elements in the process of alternatives evaluation a) A product is viewed as a bundle of attributes. These attributes or features are used for evaluating products or brands. For example, in washing machine consumer considers price, capacity, technology, quality, model and size. b) Factors like company, brand image, country, distribution network and after sales service also become critical in evaluation. c) Marketers should understand the importance of these factors to consumers of this factor to consumers while manufacturing and marketing their products.
- Purchase Decision Outcome- The evaluation develops likes and dislikes about alternative products or brands in consumers. This attitude towards the brand influences a decision as to buy or not to buy. Thus the prospective buyer heads towards final selection. In addition to all the above factors, situational factors like finance options, dealer terms, falling prices etc., are also considered.
- Post- Purchase Behaviour- This behaviour of consumer is more important as far as marketer is concerned. Consumer gets brand preference only when that brand lives up to his expectation. This brand preference naturally repeats sales of marketer. A satisfied buyer is a silent advertisement. But, if the used brand does not yield desired satisfaction, negative feeling will occur and that will lead to the formation of negative attitude towards brand. This phenomenon is called cognitive dissonance. Marketers try to use this phenomenon to attract user of other brands to their brands. Different promotional-mix elements can help marketers to retain his customers as well as to attract new customers.

**Conclusion-** The buying behaviour involves several psychological factors. These factors govern the individual thinking process (like motivation, perception and attitude), decision-making steps involved in buying (decision making process), interaction of the consumer with several groups like friends, family and colleagues (group-oriented concepts), and selection of the brand and outlet depending on features and emotional appeal (marketing mix elements in a given environment). All consumers engage in shopping with certain fundamental decision-making modes or styles, including rational shopping and consciousness regarding brand and quality. Quality is one of the important factors to influence the purchase decision of consumers in toys market. Consumer gets brand preference only when that brand lives up to his expectation.

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