

BUYING BEHAVIOR OF THE NEW AGED INDIAN WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The research was started with the objective to “Study the buying behavior of Women in the city of Chennai”. The research was carried out with the view to analyze the buying behavior of women with respect to the age, marital status, occupation, professional status factors, etc. to identify the decision maker and the influencer for the purchase made by the women.

With the set of objectives in mind, a structured – undisguised questionnaire was administered for a sample of 200 women from the few distinct geographical areas of the Chennai city. With the help of the data collected the results were analyzed, tabulated, and interpreted.

The inferences were drawn out with the help of the help of statistical analytical tools. From the findings few recommendable suggestions have been opined for the marketers and manufacturers to realize, understand and recognize Women as a lucrative consumer segment and start developing concepts and create products that are women centric, which would reap high growth potentials.

Keywords: New Indian Women, Consumer, Shopping Behaviour, Shopping malls, Purchase Pattern, Satisfaction, Marketers, Purchase drive, Buying behavior, Electronic Gadgets, Apparels and Automobile

INTRODUCTION

For the first time, perhaps, the entire economic world is tilting in favor of the fairer sex. Leaving aside the social implications, the economic implications are hard to ignore for any business entity. Today's woman is no longer confined to the role of a 'homemaker'. Now she is the 'chief purchase officer', controlling 85% of all purchase decisions. She has accomplished this financial freedom by her sheer ability to compete in the male-dominated world. The New Indian Women (NIW) is a hard working, multi-tasker who juggles her role as home maker and professional women.

Although there has been a gradual evolution in the status of women, marketers have, only recently recognized them as a lucrative consumer segment with a high growth potential. This is puzzling until one looks at the behavior of the women consumer.

In India, women hold 25% of the white-collar jobs in sectors like IT, ITES, Pharmaceutical, biotechnology, market research, financial services, advertising, marketing and media. This compares to the figure of 10% in 1980s. In the IT sector, women comprise 24% of the workforce. However this figure is expected to grow to 54% by 2011, and in ITES the figure will be 69%. There are a growing number of women entrepreneurs who have entered fields like manufacturing, media, biotechnology etc., not to mention the first generation entrepreneurs in the beauty business, security, aviation and architecture. They are those who have become consultants on bartending, celebrity management, wedding planning and health management.

The new descriptions of Indian women have connotations for the marketers. The NIW today has a greater sense of empowerment and economic freedom and this show in a way that her consumption pattern has changed.

CONCEPT

“Behavior is a mirror in which every one displays his own image”.

- *Geoth*

“Understanding behavior of the target market is the essential task of the marketing manager under the marketing concept. The consumer market consists of all the individuals and house hold that buy or acquire goods and services for personal consumption”.

- *Philip Kotler*

Never the less marketing must study this target customer's wants, perceptions, preferences and shopping and buying behavior. Such study will provide clues for developing new product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical Evidence.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

The new aged Indian women consumers are noted for the high degree of value orientation. Such orientation to value has labeled Indian women's as one of the most discerning consumers in the world. Even, luxury brands have to design a unique pricing strategy in order to get a foothold in the Indian market.

Indian women consumers are also associated with values of nurturing, care and affection. These values are far more dominant than values of ambition and achievement. Product which communicate feelings and emotions gel with the Indian consumers.

There was every reason for their astonishment. The statistics on women in the company and their influence in purchase decisions, whether in developed economies or in developing economies, show the same trend. Considering the US as the representative of developed economies, we find that women as a market segment, offered vast scope for marketers.

Thus this study is an endeavor to understand the buying behavior of the new aged Indian women in the city of Chennai.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To unearth the women buying behavior
2. To analyze the buying behavior of women with respect to the age, marital status, occupation, professional status factors, etc
3. To identify the decision making process for the purchase made by the women
4. To track down the influencer in the buying behavior process exhibited by the women.
5. To get a clear acquaintance of the value perception of women.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Analytical research design has been adopted in this study. The purpose of choosing analytical design is typically analyzed the behavior on the basis of primary data. This study is typically guided by an initial hypothesis.

For this research study, the primary data was collected through questionnaire and personal comments from the respondents. The primary data were collected at prime shopping malls, food courts, retail outlets, entertainment parks and other public areas of the city in order to study the buying behavior of the new aged Indian women in Chennai city. For this research study, the secondary data were collected from business journals, Internet, magazines, and news articles. The secondary data helped to structure the review of literature.

The researcher has used structured – undisguised questionnaire. This questionnaire has been framed with a set of both open end as well as close-ended questions, and also has used several rating scales to elicit responses with regard to the objective of the study. To find out the relevance, reliability and validity of questionnaire cum interview schedule, a pretest was conducted among the women consumers in Chennai city. After which a fresh questionnaire was prepared keeping the suggestions in mind.

The study focuses on women in Chennai city. Convenience Sampling has been adopted in this study. A sample size of 200 women consumers of various age groups were chosen from the few distinct geographical areas of the Chennai city. The study is undertaken in Chennai which is a capital city of Tamil Nadu.

In this study, various tools were used for analysis the data collected. They are Chi-square test, Variance (One way) Analysis, Variance (two-way) Analysis, Kolmogrov – Smirnov Test, Weighted average analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Martha Barlett, CEO of Trendsight Group, a marketing Consultancy firm specializing in gender specific marketing, offers some pertinent statistics in her book, marketing to Women, suggests that compared to the men, it is ideal to target the women, as it helps to enhance the returns due to the loyalty and referral power of women in the long run. Further, she opines that the natural behavior of women to talk and share experiences adds fillip to the marketing process by the multiplier effect of word of mouth.

- Around 46% of the workforce and 49% of the managerial and professional staff is made up of women.
- They manage workforce, which outnumbers the total workforce of Fortune 500 companies worldwide.
- They play a crucial role in organizational buying, as nearly 53% of the corporate purchases are in the hands of women. Also, 58% of the wholesale and retail buyers are women. They even

influence household purchases to the tune of 91%; 94% furnishings, and 80% all home redecoration plans. Also, women purchase 68% of the new cars and 65% of the new tiers.

- Women comprise 50% of the business travel market and are decision makers in 92% of the cases of family travel.
- In 75% of the households, it is the woman who handles the finances. Around 61% pay the bills and about 83% of them handle the chequebook.
- Women make 66% of all computer purchases and 51% of all consumer electronic purchases.
- Women are responsible for 75% of OTC medication purchases, 80% of healthcare service users.

Source: "Marketing to Women" – Advertising express – ICFAI

Simintiras, Anotonis (1997) attempt to distinguish evaluation outcomes of likely future satisfaction from feelings or emotions prior to the act of purchase, and assess the impact of pre-purchase satisfaction on the purchase behaviour of first time buyers. In their study after conceptualizing pre-purchase satisfaction as the emotional outcome of anticipated satisfaction, it was hypothesized that; pre-purchase satisfaction and anticipated satisfaction are related but distinct constructs; and pre-purchase satisfaction levels are higher for potential first time buyers who buy than those who do not buy. The results provided support for both propositions, and suggest that anticipated satisfaction and pre-purchase satisfaction are distinguishable constructs, and pre-purchase satisfaction is a predictor of the purchase behaviour of first time buyers.

Fletcher & Keith (1988) presents information on the nature of problem recognition, the first sage of problem solving model of buyer behaviour. The problem solving approach stresses the view that the consumer moves through a series of sequential and reiterative stages or procedures in reaching or not reaching a consumption decision. It is claimed that problem recognition is a two stage process; first, the problem of whether to buy, and second, and the problem of what to buy. The first problem is solved with little if any market searches over a prolonged period of time, the second with limited market search over a shorter period. The initial stages of a decision are generally accepted as influencing the later informational requirements and the choice criteria used to evaluate and discriminate between alternative products and, as such, are of major importance to marketers. Precipitation circumstances and enabling conditions do not operate in a clearly predictable way and are often not open to influence by the marketer.

Shainesh (2004) presents that buying behaviour in a business market is characterized by long cycle times, group decision making, participants from different functional areas and levels and sometimes divergent objectives, and changing roles of the participants during the buying cycle. The high levels of market and technological uncertainty of services is the complexity in the buying process.

Despite all this, marketers have been remarkably remiss in not looking at women as a separate segment.

HYPOTHESIS

The hypotheses may be stated as:

1. There exist a relationship between the Marital status and Purchase drive.
2. There exist a relationship between the professional status and Purchase drive.
3. There exist a relationship between the professional status and Product category.
4. There exist a relationship between the Ranking Parameters.

FINDINGS

From the data collected and analyzed through different statistical tools various inferences have been observed which show relationships and also contradict the traditional ideologies of women buying behavior.

Chi square test with 95% confidence level shows that there is no relationship between the marital status and the purchase drive. They act independently. Thus the olden fact of saying that a married women

(44 respondents) would buy based on the derived drive is not applicable and also 63 % of single women say that they would follow their individual drive instincts to make a purchase is also not acceptable.

Chi square test at 95% confidence level shows that there is significant relationship between the professional status and the purchase drive stating that the women buying behavior is ruled by the professional status factor and not the marital status. It is inferred that there is an uncanny relationship between the professional status of the purchaser and the purchase drive. 78 % of women with their liberty say that they prefer a product or brand according to their individual drive to buy it. The remaining 22 % of women react through a derived drive to buy a product.

The result obtained through the ANOVA test clearly indicates that there is significant relationship between the two factors of professional status and product category, because those of working women have become conscious about their well being rather than the family' but the homemakers on the contrary still make product decisions based on their family likings.

A maximum portion of the sample studied, votes the top for FMCG with 39% and the second option goes for Electronic Gadgets with 30% choice and the apparels and other fashionable items support 21%, the least goes to the automobile division with only 10% liking. This clearly indicates that irrespective of their professional status women today make their own purchase decision for various categories.

From the one-way ANOVA test that the parameters for ranking are independent and have no significant relationship within those parameters. The data clearly shows that most of the women prefer Quality parameter. It had always been a misconception that women are more cost conscious but to the contrary it has been proved that they give more importance for quality and then to price to acquaint to its worthiness. The third rank is for advertisements though they are the main influencers and motivators for a buying behavior. Availability and sales promotions fall under rank 4 and 5 respectively. Women do not give much preference to these attributes according to the findings.

The women have become very choosy about the products they buy, this tremendous change in their behavior is due to the prime reason that women are now being employed and they have their own income to be spent. Thus the professional status also plays a vital role for the choice of some products.

It had always been a misconception that women are more cost conscious but to the contrary it has been proved that they give more importance for quality (55%) than to price (44%) to acquaint to its worthiness.

It was a traditional thought that women would spend more time to decide and shop but this has been proven false by the study which states that the new aged women have become more time conscious and they are loaded with information which makes it easier and simpler for them to make quick decisions. On an average a women spends only 10-20 minutes to make a decision.

According to this study the women's value perception is multi-faceted and they are more quality oriented. When it comes to the price attribute women do not opt for the products even if it is heavily priced or low priced but to the maximum prefer when it is reasonably priced within the affordable range.

SUGGESTIONS

It is the appropriate time for the marketers and manufacturers to recognize women as a new segment and develop ideas and products that are women centric.

In this fast moving world not many Indian women consumers would have ample time to think of the functionalities of the product. Hence the marketer would act as a catalyst between the manufacturer and the women consumer to make them to understand ease about the generic idea of the product.

The best suggestion would be that, the manufacturers and marketers should try the pull strategy for the various classifications of women on age and occupation rather than push strategy, which will create a different node and attract liking ness towards the product.

Word of mouth is such a powerful tool, which will grab attention the most among women, which can be achieved by satisfying a women customer with quality as the main objective of any product.

CONCLUSION

Today, the New Indian Women, with her increasing financial power, has a greater discretionary income and utilizes it to satisfy wants that have gone beyond these two to include holidays abroad, personal vehicles, electronic goods etc. her criteria for family purchases have been modified by her increased exposure to various new ideas and information, and by her new role as a facilitator. Previously, the Indian women concentrated on purchases that based on family needs and wants. Her only personal indulgences were items of clothing and adornment. Gradually, the perception that women were looking for products more suited to their physical and emotional needs and wants began to gain ground. Such products should be introduced, where marketers in the developed economies started recognizing this fact. However, the developing economies are still reluctant to extend this to other products. Thus it is high time that the marketers and manufacturers realize, understand and recognize Women as a lucrative consumer segment and start developing concepts and create products that are women centric, which reap high growth potential.

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