

# **BUYER BEHAVIOUR**

For the successful execution of marketing strategies or for translating the strategies into the meaningful purposes, it is essential to have a detailed knowledge of the changing behavior of users of services. Although fashion firms have a limited consumer base, yet these are segmented as to their demand for products because these users have different values, perceptions, preferences and a behavior pattern which are the result of environmental influences.

Management is increasingly using new techniques to analyze the user needs and identify how to improve marketing products and communications to satisfy these needs, as a study of users buying behavior helps marketers in diagnosing the level of their expectations.

## **BUYER'S DECISION PROCESS:**

- 1. Need recognition-** The buyer here recognizes his needs and problems and finds out what product can fulfill his needs.
- 2. Information search –** The customer goes through various means through which he can obtain the information about the product or service that he desires. He comes to know about the various alternatives available.
- 3. Evaluation of alternatives –** at this stage, the prospective buyer analyzes the various available

alternatives on the basis of many factors like price, shelf life, usability, duration of use, etc.

**4. Purchase decision** – The buyer, after sorting out 2-3 alternatives that he finds better suited than the rest, then actually purchases the product. Here the product visibility and availability is important.

**5. Post purchase evaluation** – The buyer uses the product and evaluates it in terms of the fulfillment of the various needs that the product claims to satisfy. This is important process and may decide whether the buyer will purchase the product again.

The various factors that influence buying behavior in the case of fashion merchandise are:

### **CULTURAL FACTORS:**

Culture is the most basic determinant of persons' wants and behavior. An analysis of these helps in identifying the users' preferences and explaining the behavior of the people for every culture and sub-culture. This is proved by the cultural variation that we find in different parts of the world and for that matter between different regions or states of the same country.

For e.g. the fashion trends in the western countries are not similar to the trends we see in India and for that matter the fashion trends that people in metros and other big cities like Bangalore adorn would be rarely found in the other parts of the country.

Cultural factors consist of a) Culture, b) Sub culture and c) Social class:

**Culture:** Culture influences considerably the pattern of consumption and the pattern of decision-making. Marketers have to explore the cultural forces and have to frame marketing strategies for each category of culture separately to push up the sales of their products or services. But culture is not permanent and changes gradually and such changes are progressively assimilated within society. Culture is a set of beliefs and values that are shared by most people within a group. Culture is passed on from one group member to another, and in particular is usually passed down from one generation to the next; it is learned, and is therefore both subjective and arbitrary.

**Sub-culture:** Sub-culture refers to a set of beliefs shared by a subgroup of the main culture, which include nationalities, religions, racial groups and geographic regions. Many sub-Cultures make up important market segments and marketers have to design products and marketing programs tailored to their needs.

**Social class:** Consumer behavior is determined by the social class to which they belong. Social class is not determined by a single factor, such as income but it is measured as a combination of various factors, such as income, occupation, education, authority, power, property, ownership, life styles, consumption, pattern etc.

There are three different social classes in our society. They are upper class, middle class and lower class. These three social classes differ in their buying behavior. Upper class consumers want high-class goods to maintain their status in the society. Middle class consumers purchase carefully and collect information to compare different producers in the same line and lower class consumers buy on impulse.

## **SOCIAL FACTORS:**

Social factors strongly affect consumer responses and companies must consider them when designing marketing strategies. One would often find people of the elite class adorning clothes of the latest trends in the market whereas it would be difficult to find a person of the middle-income group changing his or her wardrobe often according to the changing trends in the market. Knowledge of all these makes it easier to identify the individuals who would develop a liking for the new trends and designs that they are planning.

The social factors influencing consumer behavior are a) Family, b) Reference Groups, c) Roles and status.

**Family:** Family members can strongly influence the buyer behavior, particularly in the Indian context. The tastes, likes, dislikes, life styles etc. of the members are rooted in the family buying behavior.

The family influence on the buying behavior of a member may be found in two ways

- i) The family influence on the individual personality, characteristics, attitudes and evaluation criteria and
- ii) The influence on the decision-making process involved in the purchase of goods and services. In India, the head of the family may alone or jointly with his wife decides the purchase. So marketers should study the role and the relative influence of the husband, wife and children in the purchase of goods and services.

**Reference group:** A group is two or more persons who share a set of norms and whose relationship makes their behavior interdependent. A reference group is a group of people with whom an individual associates. It is a group of people who strongly influence a person's attitudes values and behavior directly or indirectly.

**Roles and status:** A person participates in many groups like family, clubs, and organizations. The person's position in each group can be defined in terms of role and status. A role consists of the activities that a person is expected to perform. Each role carries a status. People choose products that communicate their role and status in society.

Marketers must be aware of the status symbol potential of products and brands.

## **PERSONAL FACTORS:**

This is an important factor because the kind of goods and services people buy or use changes according to their age, level of income, and the stages in life etc. These factors play a major role in their buying behavior as preferences for food, clothing and leisure activities etc, change with time and age.

**Age:** Age of a person is one of the important personal factors influencing buyer behavior. People buy different products at their different stages of cycle. Their taste, preference, etc also change with change in life cycle.

**Occupation:** Occupation or profession of a person influences his buying behavior. The life styles and buying considerations and decisions differ widely according to the nature of the occupation. For instance, the buying of a doctor can be easily differentiated from that of a lawyer, teacher, clerk businessman, landlord, etc. So, the marketing managers have to design different marketing strategies suit the buying motives of different occupational groups.

**Income:** Income level of people is another factor which can exert influence in shaping the consumption pattern. Income is an important source of purchasing power. So,

buying pattern of people differs with different levels of income.

**Life Style:** Life style to a person's pattern or way of living as expressed in his activity, interests and opinions that portrays the "whole person" interacting with the environment. Marketing managers have to design different marketing strategies to suit the life styles of the consumers.

For e.g. young people i.e. those between the age of 15 to 35 years of age would be more interested in wearing apparels and buying other accessories of the latest trends. But people of middle age or in the later years of life would be more interested in comfortable clothes. They would not bother much of the latest trends in the matter.

People who have surplus funds and can afford to spend luxuriously on their clothing, accessories, cosmetics etc would be more interested in buying latest additions for their wardrobe. This is not possible for people whose earnings are small-just to cater to their basic needs and some savings.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS:**

Persons buying choices are also influenced by four major psychological factors: motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes.

**Motivation** means that there are certain factors that induce a person to achieve something while there are others that restrict him from doing certain tasks. In addition, the needs and wants of a person change with period of time and follow a certain hierarchy. It is only when one of the needs is satisfied that a person moves to fulfill his other needs.

**Perception** is the meaning that a person attributes to incoming stimuli gathered through the five senses - sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Certainly a buyer's behavior is influenced by his or her perceptions of a good or service.

**Learning** describes the changes in an individual's behavior arising from experience. When consumers experience a product, they learn about it and then try to use it in future whenever the need arises. Hence, organizations should try to introduce the new features and products to the customers' in order to avail benefits in future.

**Beliefs and Attitudes** of people and their likings and disliking influence buying behavior in the manner that their needs and wants are dependent on these likings and disliking.

These factors should be taken care of by the designers of the products for keeping these in mind; the designer can



make products of various ranges and suiting the tastes of all segments of the consumers. This would overall help the firm in avoiding unnecessary costs or increased costs by reducing costs of production and making products that cannot live up to the customers' expectations.