

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AS CONSUMERS VERSUS ADVERTISEMENT

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Abstract— Empowering women in the field of communication is a tool for opening up the opportunities for women to enter the world of productive work, to participate in development and to change their lives into an educated and economically independent women who takes all decisions in the purchasing behavior. In India, women form a significant part of the consumer force. The nature of the consumer products under the capitalistic system makes consumption dependent on the purchasing power of the population. Advertising involves a commercially viable language of appearances and images in which commodity relations systematically penetrate and organize cultural meaning. The print and television advertising media is one area where these changes are significantly visible, targeting the consumers and thus influencing their purchasing behaviour. The consumer purchases various commodities for their basic needs in order to sustain life. Among the crucial needs in this earth, food is the most essential requirement. They have the unique distinction of meeting an essential need of the consumer, irrespective of their economic and social status.

Keywords-Empowering, consumer, purchasing behavior, advertisement, communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment in the field of consumerism is multi-dimensional. It allows women to have choices, which in turn means relative strength and bargaining power for them. It is clear that women can be empowered individually, the feminist vision is one where women are able to articulate a collective voice and demonstrate collective strength [1]. Advertisement is a way of communicating information to the consumer which enables the consumer to compare and choose from the products and services available in the market. Advertising reaches us through a channel of communication referred to as a medium. Thus, we have medias such as the radio, television, newsprint, magazines, bill boards and word-of-mouth to send their messages. But today, technology enables advertising to reach us efficiently through a variety of addressable medium (direct mail, interactive media – world wide web [2].

Today, advertisers and agencies pay more attention to product claims, especially those related to consumer foods and the nutritional value of processed foods. The family being one of the institutions representing the social need to which advertisers seek to link their images to bolster

corporate legitimacy[3]. In the present competitive marketing scenario, consumer confidence is essential. They maintain careful systems of advertising review to ensure that ads meet their own standards and industry, media and legal requirements.

II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study were:

- Sources of information regarding the food products
- Consumer buying motives
- Impact of advertisements on buying practices

III. METHODOLOGY

The household survey is to study the buying practices among the selected middle and high income group women consumers. The study was conducted in Chennai City, a cosmopolitan capital of Tamil Nadu. The city has been divided into 155 division distributed over 10 zones. Among the ten zones, 3 zones were selected at random for the study. The success of any depends on the careful selection of the sample. Weighing the merits and demerits of the sampling methods and considering the purpose and nature of the research, purposive sampling method was adopted for the study. Interview method was advocated to study the present trends in consumer behavior. The method of collecting information through personal interview is usually carried out in a structured way. To enable the investigator to put forth questions in a coherent manner, later explained the purpose of the study and collected relevant information from the women consumers. The collected data were systematically consolidated and analysed.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Consumer information processing is initiated by the incoming stimuli. The stimuli can either be initiated by the marketeer in the form of advertisements, displays, sales pictures or by direct information sources like friends, relatives, family members, neighbours, dealers and manufacturers. Sometimes, a consumer also gets exposed to industrial exhibitions and existing users. The sources of information are shown in the table I.

TABLE I. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Sources	Percentage of women*	
	Middle Income N=150	High Income N=150
Television	58	62
Neighbours	38	50
Family members	36	45
Friends /relatives	32	37
Exhibitions	29	30
Seller	20	29
Print media	23	20
Radio	20	19

* Multiple response

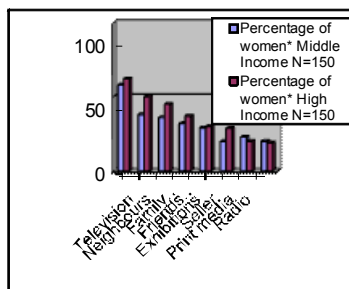


Figure:1

It is interesting to note, from the above table that a majority of both high income group women (62 per cent) and middle income group women consumers (58 per cent) indicates that the advertisement broadcasted through Television was the major sources of information to know about the introduction of new products, advantages of the existing products and any special offers for the products are available.

Next to Television, the sources of information for both high income group women (50 per cent) and middle income group women (38 per cent) was neighbours who already purchased and used a new product. This source of information not only provided information about a product but also provided the advantages and tips for better use of the product. Exhibitions created awareness in the minds of women consumers on some selective products such as convenience foods. Radio and print media had lesser influence on the women consumers for both the income groups in providing information.

V. CONSUMER BUYING MOTIVES

Motives can be a strong desire, feeling an urge from within, a drive, a stimulus or emotion, which play a role in the consumers decision to purchase a product or service.

TABLE II. CONSUMER BUYING MOTIVES

Motives	Percentage of women*
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	Middle Income N=150	High Income N=150
Need	100	100
Desire	58	87
Brand	55	96
Price	93	78
Quality	78	95
Reliability of the seller	72	92
Mode of payment	92	45
Discount	86	56
Special Offer	90	80
Free gift	89	65

* Multiple response

It is clear from the above table that need was the main motive which influenced all selected women consumers of both the income groups. Among middle income group women consumers, price of the commodity (93 per cent), mode of payment (92 per cent) and special offers (90 per cent) given by the manufacturer and dealers were the motives that stimulated the buying behaviour, besides need as motive. Whereas among the high income group women consumers, brands (96 per cent), quality (95 per cent) and reliability of the seller (92 per cent) were dominant motives for buying products.

Middle income group women consumers gave least importance to brands (55 per cent) whereas high income group women consumers gave least importance to mode of payment (45 per cent).

VI. IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement plays a significant role in the promotion of any product. It is a form of conveying message about the product, idea, features and the latest modification. It is an efficient, persuasive technique to make people to buy the product of their choice [5].

TABLE III. IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENT

Impact	Percentage of women*	
	Middle Income N=150	High Income N=150
Introduce new product in the market	72	76
Build confidence in the product	67	73
Inform about the incentives / discount	59	65
Announce a special bargain offer	55	42
Give accurate information to consumer	45	67
Inform consumer about the price range	43	75

Suggest good quality at reasonable price	43	63
Motivate intelligent use of money	40	43
Create demand for a specific brand	35	59
Help to gain acceptance of the product	30	55
Information for both buyer and seller	28	31

Multiple response.

It is inferred from the table, that a majority of 76 per cent of high income group women and 72 per cent of middle income group women pointed out that advertisements were helpful to introduce a new product in the market. A greater percentage of high income group women consumers informed about the price range (75 per cent) building confidence in the new product (73 per cent) providing accurate information about the product (67 per cent) and about the incentives and discount offer (65 per cent). On the other hand middle income group women pointed out that advertisement helped in building confidence in the product (67 per cent) and gave information about the incentives and discount offers (59 per cent). In general, the impact of advertisements were perceived by all selected women consumers, but in varied degrees.

VII. CONCLUSION

Due to the advancement in science and technology, competition have brought into the global market a wide variety of food commodities. Imitation and brand infringement make it impossible for the ordinary consumer to choose the right quality of food. Thus, in order to make desirable changes in the knowledge and in the behaviour of the consumer, "consumer consciousness" is the need of the hour, which has to be promoted at the global level.

Hence, it is needless to say that globalization and liberalization has made tremendous impact on advertisement especially after the advent of electronic media by which we reach any part of the world at the click of the "mouse".

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

Advocate the development of consumer information programmes through mass media to reach rural and illiterate consumer.

Women should become knowledgeable on better purchasing power.

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