

Changing Pattern of Consumer Buying Behaviour in the Context of Indian Society: A Review

Dr. Rajni Saluja,

Associate Professor,
Desh Bhagat University, Amloh, Punjab, India.

Dr. Pawan Kumar,

Assistant Professor
Lovely Professional University,
Phagwara, Punjab, India.

Kanchan,

Assistant Professor
Government College,
Malerkotla, Punjab, India.

ABSTRACT

In present scenario, the study of consumer buying behaviour has pivotal role from marketer point of view. This article reviewed the literatures with regard to the changing pattern of consumer buying behaviour at two points of times. Significant changes have been taking place in Indian market during Pre and post liberation period. The delivery of goods and services has been extensively increased during post liberalization period due to the entrance of many foreign companies in India. The concept of consumer buying behaviour have been strongly associated with their society, economic status, psychological and social set up during pre-liberalization period i.e. the period from 1970-1993. But the concept of consumer buying behaviour has drastically changed and more efforts were made to identify the desires, wants and satisfaction of the customers after liberalization period i.e. 1993 onwards. Marketers were interested to find out the answer of questions like why consumer opposed to buy the product, why the consumer shown attitude while purchasing etc. The researcher has developed more rational models of consumer behaviour and recent developed model composed of all important components by taking into account the consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions of consumers in the market place when purchasing a product or service, etc. Early models of consumer buying behaviour was based on the decision making aspects of the consumer in the context of their social, economic, psychological condition, while the recent model was more comprehensive and includes market aspects of the product also. The role and implications of these models have been highly recognised by different organizations, marketers, traders etc. for setting up new avenues for economic and social growth of economy in the context of Indian perspectives. The present study aims to integrate the different paradigms of thoughts with regard to consumer buying behaviour that could be helpful for future research.

Keywords: Consumer buying behaviour, decision process, pre and post liberalization period, factors affecting consumer buying behaviour, models.

INTRODUCTION:

The concept of consumer buying behaviour refers to the decision of the consumer whether to buy or not to buy a product. Therefore, the concept of consumer's buying behaviour is very difficult to understand since the consumer's buying decision is influenced by many factors. Buying behaviour is the decision making power of an individual which is very uncertain particularly, at a situation when he has to decide one product among many products having

similar specification. The consumer buying has been passing through numerous changes in the context of Indian society especially after the period of liberalization. The business and trade competitiveness of apparel industry has drastically increased with the entrance of many foreign brands companies in Indian markets after liberalization i.e. the period 1993 onwards. Since then onwards, the apparel industries has been adopting innovative, creating and different ways to attract the consumers. Thus, a number of forces have been creating around the consumer which forcefully changed his purchasing behaviour regarding particular product. Some of these forces are social set up of the consumer in the society, income level of the consumer, perception level of the consumer regarding particular product or brand, level of delivery of marketing services of particular company etc. and last, but the least, the socio-psychological environment around the consumer. More specifically, the consumers have been living in the society where these factors are not static, and thus, the pattern of consumer buying behaviour is an ever-changing process due to changes in socio-economic, psychological, demographic status of the consumer. Thus, the present study is an attempt to review the studies that assess the changing pattern of consumer buying behaviour with special reference to apparel industry in the context of Indian society.

Indian market is the world leading consumer markets and it occupied prime position in the international market. The increasing purchasing power and rising influence of social media enabled the Indian consumer to spend more on consumer goods. Indian apparels industry has rich heritage and Indian people wish to wear different and unique clothes at every festivals and occasion. Therefore, the rising demand apparels and huge customer base attract foreign investment in India. Indian textile industry is one of the oldest industries and presently earning about 39.2 billion US \$ from exports. This industry has great place in Indian economy as it contributes about seven per cent to the total industrial output and about two per cent to the total gross domestic product and also it provides employment of 45 million people (IBEF, 2017). Besides, tremendous industrial growth in terms of physical production, the Indian textile industry has faced big challenge in terms of changing pattern of consumer buying behaviour due to fast changes taking place in the society with regard to fashion of apparels in lieu of modernization. To cope up with this emerging challenge in the world market, heavy investments has been made in Indian textiles industries on account of making Indian industries more accountable at global as well as domestic markets. This study is an attempt to review the articles in the fields of consumer behaviour which are observed to be varied over the period of time. The various issues of marketing services faced by the consumer while purchasing process along with different market forces that influence consumer buying behaviour have been reviewed in this paper.

METHODOLOGY:

The study was focussed to review the relevant literature with regard to various aspects of the consumer buying behaviour. More-specially, the pattern of consumer buying behaviour is observed to be significantly changed in two periods of time i.e. pre and post liberalization period. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to review the relevant literature with regard to different aspects of the consumer buying behaviour at two points of time. Broadly, the study covered the two aspects of the consumer behaviour: Firstly, the changing concept of consumer buying behaviour, and secondly, the different factors that influence consumer behaviour.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The review of literature with respect to changing pattern of consumer buying behaviour is broadly discussed under the following four heads:

The concept of consumer buying behaviour:

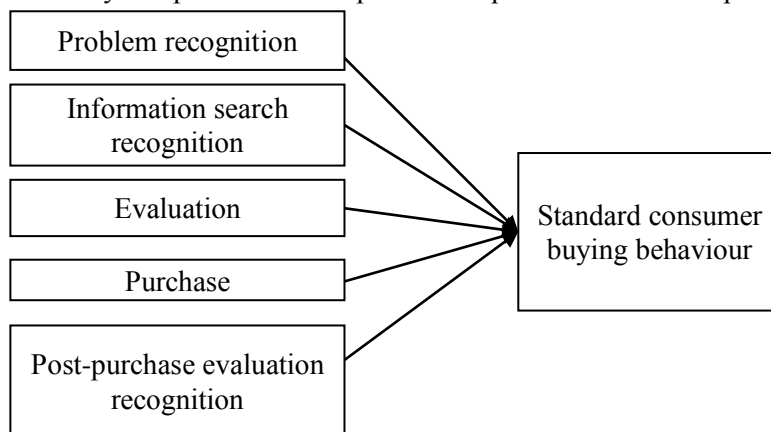
Consumer behaviour and decision making to buy a product is always become a prominent research topic. The decision of consumer to buy a product is very complex and it is very difficult to understand the nature of consumer in this respect. According to walter and paul (1970) consumer behaviour is process by which an individual decide what, when, where, how and from whom to buy. Consequently it is the attitude or expression of the consumer while purchasing products. It is worth mentioning here the consumer behaviour is the result of such purchases which gives immense satisfaction to the consumer according to requirements. The concept of consumer buying behaviour is the question like situation and many questions together revolving in his mind. These question are whether to buy of not, why to buy, where to buy and how much to buy. It is state of the consumer that how he changed his decision under the influence of marketer (Aaker *et al*, 1971). Lator on Webster (1975) defined that consumer buying behaviour has strong association with society. Taking into consideration the social consciousness of the consumer, the buying behaviour of a consumer is the

psychological, physical and social potential of the customer to buy a product. The concept of consumer buying behaviour can be predicted on the basis of the lifestyle of the customer as the consuming attitude of the customer is significantly varied with lifestyle. Moreover, the lifestyle of the people is supposed to be influenced by many factors like culture, society, family background, personalities and perception of the customer (Engel *et al*, 1982). The consumer buying behaviour are those actions and pattern of the costumers in the decision making process which directly involved the acquisition and consuming of goods and services on account of satisfying their demands (Du-plessis *et al*, 1991:Engel *et al*, 1991).

With the passage of time, the concept of consumer buying behaviour has drastically changed and more attention has been paid towards the desires, wants and satisfaction of the customers. After liberalization i.e. the period 1993 onwards, the competition in the market has increased due to the entry of many foreign companies in Indian market and more work was done to expand marketing services to the consumer. Now the marketers were interested to find out the answer of questions like why consumer opposed to buy the product, why the consumer shown attitude while purchasing (Brain Mullen, 2001). More efforts were made to understand the environment around consumer while buying. Now, the consumer behaviour were based on three roles namely buyer, payer and user. Consumer behaviour is attributed by the physical activity and decision of an individual in acquiring and using of goods and services. The consumer has certain goals and purpose of purchasing something and therefore, buying behaviour is goal oriented and ends with buying transactions (Peter *et al*, 2005). According to Kurtz and Boone (2007) consumer behaviour is an act of obtaining and using goods that were determined by him during the process of buying.

The intervention of information and communication technology (ICT) in the market has brought out abundance changes in marketing services. Mobile phone one of most important invention of ICT and this device is extensively being utilized by the marketing agency to promote their products. The pattern of consumer purchasing behaviour has innovatively changed due to mass utilization of mobile phones in Indian market. This technology has changed the lifestyle of the people and now the people have been making use of mobile phones for online purchasing (Ling, 2008). Consequently, many social sites were developed and this has moulded the buying behaviour of the customers from physical purchasing to online purchasing (Sakthirama, 2013). But from security point of view, the people were hesitating to use mobile phones. Consequently, the users were taking online purchasing both in negative and positive ways. Mobile phones hence became major interruption in the society, although, many mobile companies claims and offers safety and security to the users. Hence, security concern was major issue and the companies have now developed more suitable and secure software on account of making the use of mobile in more rational and secure ways while purchasing (Taweerat, 2014; Sharma and Mishra, 2014). The scenario of buying behaviour of the consumer is thus largely influenced by the mobile phones. People can compare and have easy access to particular product of many companies and finally, purchased as per their needs, capacity and satisfaction (Shanthi and Kannaiah, 2015).

In recent years, the researchers have developed integrated models of consumer buying behaviour models. These models integrate the consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding the consumer's behaviour in the market place when purchasing a product or service, etc (Bashir and Kokas, 2015). The standard consumer buying behaviour broadly composed of five important components which are represented in following flow charts:



Source: Hansen (2005); Foret and Procházka (2007); Slanlon W J (2017) Fundamentals of Marketing ed McGraw Hill, Kogakusha, page no 131. Website: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-consumer-buying-behavior-definition-types-quiz.html>

Problem recognition is the first stage of the consumer behaviour. At this stage, the consumer do fix demand to buy a

good or service. At the second stage, he acquires the relevant knowledge about the product he needs. At the third stage, he evaluates the acquired information regarding the product and ensures the available funds and resources for its purchase. Untimely, the consumer decides to purchase good by taking into consideration the price and availability of good. At the last stage, the consumer decides whether the purchased good satisfies his wants or not.

Factors that influence consumer buying behaviour:

As discussed earlier, the consumer buying behaviour is a complex term and this is matter of concern of many business organizations. In present market structure, consumer’s satisfaction is the main concern of all business organizations. A plenty of researches have been carried out to find out the various factors that influence consumer buying behaviour in order to strengthen the market research. This section is an attempt to compile these studies which could be helpful for framing suitable policies measures. In general, the different factors that affecting consumer buying behaviour are categorized into two broad categories i.e. external factors and internal factors. With the passage of time, the numbers of factors have been adding on in these two categories as per wants, desires of the customer in general and demand of market in particular. On the basis of in-depth study of literatures, the general model of factors influencing consumer behaviour before the period of liberalization i.e. before 1993 has incorporated in figure-I in the form of flow chart for better understanding. Early models with respect to the factors affecting consumer behaviour were based on mixing up of one or more factors to be given in external and internal factors. Among external factors, the demographic, socio-economic and life style have been the important variables and draw more attention by the researchers (Engel et al 1972; Frank et al, 1972). Among internal factors, belief, attitude, intension and mental set up of the purchaser emerged as most important determinants of consumer behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Bettman, 1979). Demographic and socio-economic variables like age, income, occupation, family size, area of location, social class etc were the most widely used variables in the market research. These variables are popular variables for determining consumer buying behaviour because action of consumer to buy product greatly attributed with these variables (Beanne and Enis, 1988). The social and personal factors were identified as the major factors that contributed to the consumer behaviour. This model was tested by early authors (Beales *et al*, 1981; Laksman and Raj, 1985). Effectiveness of individual’s decision was highly recognised factor in favour of consumer buying behaviour (Engel *et al*, 1986). The research was further extended by Keller and Staellin in 1988 and added that decision effectiveness of buying a product could be enhanced by providing quality information of the product to rational consumer. Later on, more attention was paid to internal factors like attitude, personality, life style of the consumer etc (Ajzen, 1988: wells and Prensky, 1991). The world economy has been passing through high degree of competition during the period 1991 and taking into consideration the global competition, the researchers have developed more comprehensive models which include both the external and internal factors. Armstrong, 1991 has given more precise model by taking into account cultural, social set up and demographic factors as an external factors and attitude, perception, learning, personality and emotions as internal factors. In spite of liking a product, an individual could not make decision to buy it, because of being exposed to social pressure, personal and cultural influences in the society. The marketing strategies have achieved success only at a situation, when, not only, it changed the behaviour of consumer, but also effects the psychological condition of the consumer. Hence, there is need to develop more conducive models to understand the dynamics of consumer behaviour.

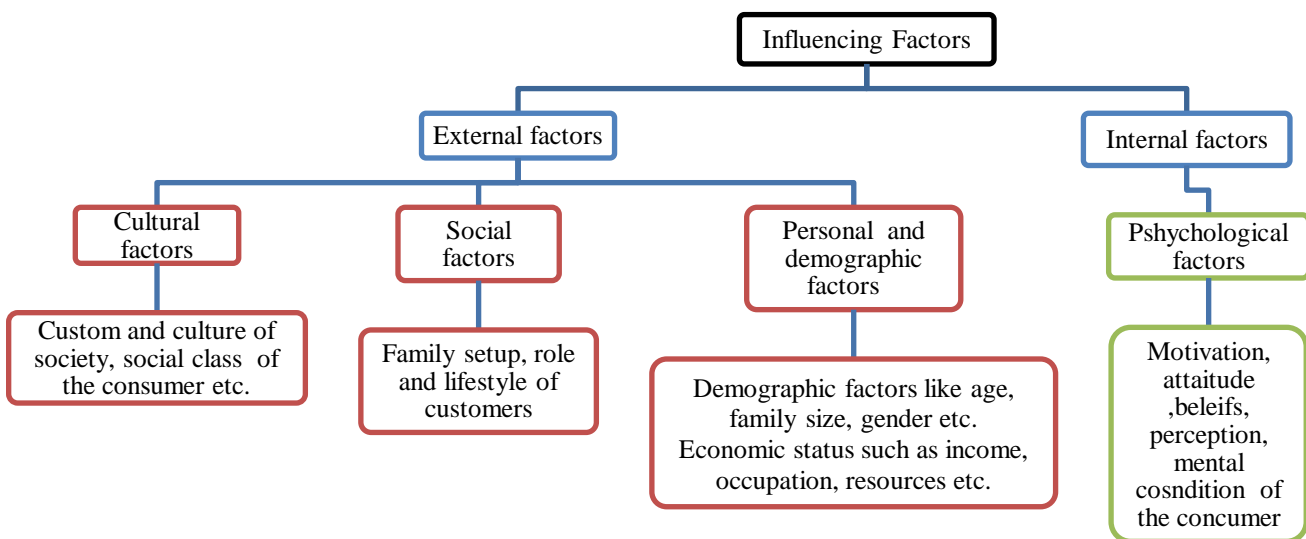


Figure1: General model of factors influencing consumer buying behaviour during pre-liberalization

period (before 1993)

After liberalization, the term consumer behaviour became more popular term for the commercial success of the companies. Thus, determination of consumer buying behaviour became an integral part of all marketing strategies in present market scenario. Gabbott and Hogg in 1994 realized that unless responses of the consumer regarding the problems associated with services are clarified, the consumer decision cannot be changed favourably in the purchasing process. Hence, marketers sought to be given more attention to understand the variables that influence the buyer's conduct with respect to buying decisions like when to buy, why to buy, what to buy, how to buy, whether to buy or not to buy. In decision making process, Heslop *et al* (2008) elaborated the consumer conducts into four categories namely logical conduct, ignorant conduct, erudite conduct and societal conduct. These conducts were concluded into two types of consumer conducts namely cognitive and experience directed has been determined by Dmitrovic and Vida in 2010. In the process of consumer buying behaviour two types of consumer conducts namely cognitive and experience directed has been determined by Dmitrovic and Vida in 2010. The former types of consumers were more sensible and reasonable, while the later types of consumers were more emotive to purchase goods.

The role of information and communication technology (ICT) in influencing consumer behaviour cannot be ignored. The approach of traditional selling of goods has been taken over by the online shopping. A large number of commercial websites of consumer goods have operating worldwide and developing confidence among buyers on account of secure and transparent transactions. The IT revolution has radically changed the nature of doing business and it transformed the basic concept of consumer buying behaviour into new shape. In the era of IT, companies are dealing with big customer base which are more active and knowledgeable (Lawson, 2000; Hawkins *et al.*, 2004). The online mode of trading eases the business activities by uploading product specification, product services etc. which could enhance the customer satisfaction. This in turn leads to improve the profitability and market share. On contrary, the customer can view and purchase the products while accessing internet facilities rather than visiting market place. Internet-based services considerably reduced the marketing cost and it develops diversity in the process of marketing process and enlarges the market area (Andrews *et al.*, 2007). Hence, purchasing decision of consumer, market strategy, reliability, consumer satisfaction etc were greatly influenced with the adoption of information technology (Norwal and Sachdeva, 2013).

Under present market situation, the earlier models of consumer buying behaviour have been replaced with more comprehensive and well tested models and summarized in Figure-II. These models are more concern to customer satisfaction. Despite, external and internal factors, the recent models taken into account the marketing aspects and responses of the buyer with regard to services of the product. The present scenario of global market has drawn the attention of researcher and marketers towards the interest and satisfaction level of consumer. Since, buyer, payer and user are three distinct segments of the consumer buying behaviour in the market, therefore, the present models have included responses and perception of the customer regarding the experience of the product and services, he bought and the perceived level of satisfaction therein (Kotler and Armstrong, 2007). There is a strong association between success of a company and market strategies that taking care of consumer's interest and preferences. Successful market strategies involve the active participation of the consumer to understand their buyer behaviour in the buying process (Kotler and Caslione, 2009). The basic idea and fundamental assumption of the consumer research is that consumer has purchased the product for their personal satisfaction rather than its primary uses. It does not mean that primary functions of the product are to be ignored by the buyer, but the contemporary role of the product is more accountable by the consumer (Solomon, 2004; Stávková *et al.*, 2008). The present models of consumer buying behaviour determines the relationship the relationship between several independent variables, such as cultural, social, personal, psychological and marketing mix factors, and consumer behaviour. The present model of consumer behaviour is the product of external factors, situation or level of buyer's mind and the responses of buyer (whether to buy or not to buy) in the decision process. On the basis of the nature and types of the factors, all factors that influencing consumer behaviour are brought under three broad categories i.e. external factors, internal factors and responses of the buyer (Fatimah, 2012; Narwal, 2013; Abdel *et al.*, 2017; Kim, 2017).

External factors:

These factors also denoted as external stimuli. More precisely, these are the factors which act as stimulator for the consumer and will affect the personal decision of the buyer in response to the buying of product in the decision process. These factors are further divided into marketing mix (Product, price, place, promotion etc) and other demographic/socio-economic variables (Kotler *et al.*, 2009).

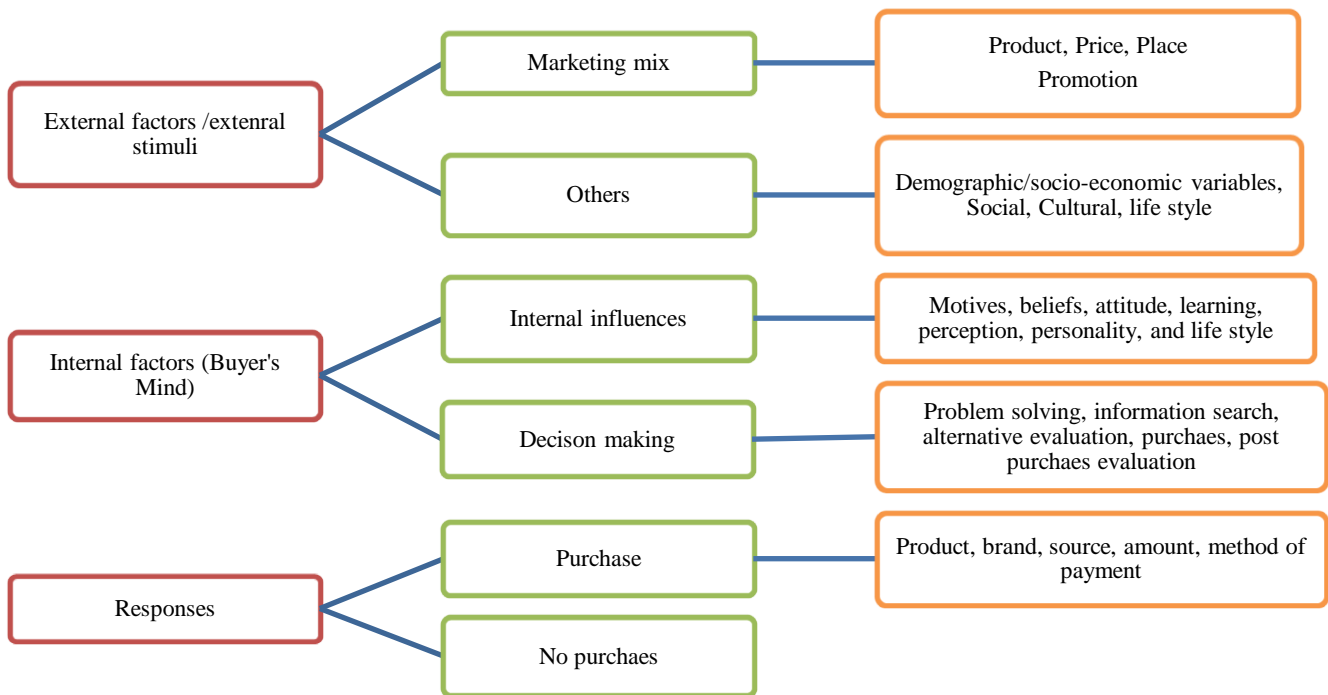


Figure II: Integrated model of factors influencing consumer buying behaviour during post-liberalization period (After 1993)

Internal factors:

These factors refer to situation of buyer’s mind while purchasing goods. Since, it is very difficult to predict the mind of the buyer in decision process, but it is adequate to identify main internal influences and primary stages of consumer to generate particular response of the buyer in decision process. Internal factors are further categorized into internal influences and the factors affecting decision making process of the consumer. This model is also termed as black box model of consumer behaviour which was developed by Warren *et al.* in 2002.

Response:

This is last stage of buying a product and this model includes factors that influence the response of the buyer whether to purchase or not to purchase the product.

The process of consumer buying behaviour has passed through these three stages to complete buying process. These three stages of the models are observed to be related to each other. The given model explored the behaviour and characteristics of the consumer which determine the buyer’s response in the buying process. This model of consumer behaviour is widely used by the marketers, firms and organization in recent years for their economic growth.

CONCLUSION:

Indian society is made up of many religion and languages. Different religion in India is characterized by their own, culture, customs and beliefs. Due to this religion diversity, the Indian society is differentiated into many strata or groups which significantly are significantly vary among each other. Despite societal differences, the people across the different parts of India would like to celebrate all customs, festivals and occasions by purchasing new clothes, ornamentals etc. But, the pattern of purchasing and consuming goods and services are different among these groups due to cultural differences. Taking into consideration all these facts, the research on consumer buying behaviour is an important component in the context of Indian society. The early concept of consumer buying behaviour was the decision of the consumer to buy and more attention was paid to understand the decision of the consumer. The concept of consumer buying behaviour have been strongly associated with their society, economic status, psychological and social set up during pre-liberalization period i.e. the period from 1970-1993. But the concept of consumer buying behaviour has drastically changed and more efforts were

made to identify the desires, wants and satisfaction of the customers after liberalization period i.e. 1993 onwards. Marketers were interested to find out the answer of questions like why consumer opposed to buy the product, why the consumer shown attitude while purchasing etc. The use of mobile phones in the post-liberalization period was the revolutionary invention in the field of marketing. The pattern of consumer purchasing behaviour has innovatively changed due to mass utilization of mobile phones in Indian market. Thus, the scenario of buying behaviour of the consumer is largely influenced by the mobile phones. The researcher has developed more rational models of consumer behaviour and recent developed model composed of all important components by taking into account the consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions of consumers in the market place when purchasing a product or service, etc. The role and implications of these models have been highly recognised by different organizations, marketers, traders etc. for setting up new avenues for economic and social growth of the economy in the context of Indian perspectives.

Based on evidences and empirical studies, it can be concluded that the most of the factors influences consumer buying behaviour was based on the external and internal environment of the consumer. Among external factors, the demographic, socio-economic and life style have been the important variables and draw more attention by the researchers, while belief, attitude, intension and mental set up of the purchaser emerged as most important determinants of consumer behaviour as an internal factors. Before pre-liberalization period, that demographic and socio-economic variables like age, income, occupation, family size, area of location, social class etc were the most widely used variables in the market research. But, after the period of post-liberalization more conducive and apprehensive type of models were developed to understand the dynamics of consumer behaviour. Technological advancement in the field information technology has made radical changes in the consumer buying behaviour. The consumer can view and purchase goods and services by accessing internet services while sitting in home. The mode of selling their products and services though online has been gaining popularity among companies. As a result, the big customer base using internet for shopping has been developed in the developing countries like India, which could be the good signal for growth of business in India. Internet based services has good scope in the future as significant amount of marketing cost can be reduced by this mode. Under the influence of technological advancement, the occurrence of significant changes taking place in consumer buying behaviour is common phenomenon in decision making process. Hence, the internet has become important component of marketing strategies in the era of modernization.

Under present market situation, the earlier models of consumer buying behaviour have been replaced with more comprehensive and well tested models. These models are more concern to customer satisfaction. Despite, external and internal factors, the recent models taken into account the marketing aspects and responses of the buyer with regard to services of the product. The present scenario of global market has drawn the attention of researcher and marketers towards the interest and satisfaction level of consumer. The present models of consumer buying behaviour determines the relationship between several independent variables, such as cultural, social, personal, psychological and marketing mix factors, and consumer behaviour. The present model of consumer behaviour is the product of external factors, situation or level of buyer's mind and the responses of buyer (whether to buy or not to buy) in the decision process. Hence, the nature of recent models of consumer behaviour is more comprehensive and apprehensive. These models are widely used by the marketers, firms and organization in recent years for their economic growth.

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