

YOUTH AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR- A STUDY AMONG THE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THRISSUR DISTRICT

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Abstract

Youth is considered as the asset of the nation. The future of our country is lies in the hands of the youth. Youth is a concept used to demarcate a particular stage in the life span development of an individual. The period in a person's life is considered formative in the creation of their identity. Beginning in 1900's the most frequent reason given for attending college had changed to make a lot of money. Out ranking reasons such as becoming an authority in a field or helping others in difficulty came. This statement directly correlates with the rise of materialism specifically the theological aspect. At this time CD players, digital media, personal computers and cellular phones all began to integrate into the affluent society's everyday life style. Companies and corporations have realised that rich consumers are the most attractive targets for marketing their products. The upper class tastes, life styles and preferences trickle down to become standard, which all consumers seek to emulate. The study of consumer behaviour as a separate marketing discipline began when marketers realised that consumers did not always act or react as marketing theory suggested by the world. Despite sometimes "me too" approach to fads and fashions, many consumers rebelled at using identical products they felt reflected their own special needs, personalities and life styles. Youth is the main target of the markets. They can be easily influenced by the outlook and novelty of the products. Most of them wanted to become trend setters rather than trend followers. Consumerism among youth increased due to various factors and various reference groups emerged in the scene. Over consumerism with out thinking about the current financial condition and future investment will hinder the growth and development of the individual in future.

Key words: Youth, consumer, consumerism, peer group, reference group, novelty

INTRODUCTION

India has the youngest population profile in different income segments and locations who influence the nation's economic growth to a very large extend. They occupy one of the most important rungs of the society. Youth is a diverse group, around the world the term youth, adolescent, teen-ager, young person are interchanged – often meaning the same though occasionally differentiated. Youth generally refers to a time of life that is neither childhood nor adulthood, but rather somewhere in between. Youth also identifies a particular mind set of attitude as "he is very youthful". The term youth is also related to being young. Robert Kennady said that the term youth demands the qualities of youth, not a time of life but a state of mind, temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a pre-dominance of courage over timidity of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease.

Youth has emerged as a distinct and powerful socio-demographic group in India. Youth is the most important asset and strength of the nation, they represent strength, vitality, vigour and are hope for the future of the nation. "Youth as the time of life when one is young, especially the period between childhood and maturity the early period of existence, growth or development". (Webster's New World Dictionary)

Demographic Details

Youth population projections (in millions) (source: Census of India 2001 C – Series Tables)

Age group	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026
Below 15 years	363	360	351	343	337	828
15-64	622	702	780	854	916	967
65+	42	52	66	78	94	116

Many scholars in marketing have tried to define consumer and consumer behaviour. A Consumer is a purchaser of goods and services for the personal satisfaction of themselves and other members of their households, as distinct from use to generate further income. (Oxford Dictionary of Economics). The view that

economic life should be organised for the benefit of consumers rather than producers. Because consumers are individuals while producers are mostly organised in firms, and consumers spread purchase over a much wider variety of goods and services that most firms produce consumers are mostly less well informed and less organized than the producers. Consumerism takes the view that where the interest of the consumers and producers clash, the law should be taken the side of the consumer protection.

Consumer behaviour is a complex, dynamic, multi dimensional process and all marketing decisions are based on assumptions about consumer behaviour. One theory of consumerism views consumers as having utility function showing the levels of satisfaction. (*Consumes Behaviour*, Prentice Hall of India Private Ltd 2002). They will derive from every possible sects of goods and services. Consumer behaviour is an integral part of human behaviour and cannot be separated from it. Leon.G.Schiffman and Leslie Lazar Kanuk explain consumer behaviour as the behaviour that consumers display in searching, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. The study of consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resource [money, time, effort] in the consumption of various items. (*Consumes Behaviour*, Prentice Hall of India Private Ltd 2002)

Youth is a concept used to demarcate a particular stage in the life span development of an individual. The period in a person's life is considered formative in the creation of their identity. Interdependence and independence are essential to an individual's sense of self and place with in social groups. Consequently sub cultures and peer groups which youth involve themselves in shaping a sense of identity. The sociology of youth culture has sought to understand the nature of this collective sense of identity, its relation to adult culture and societal structures. Youth culture can often seen permeated with oppositional defence, youth defining their identity, its relation to adult culture. This issue arising from these phenomena is whether youth culture challenges the dominant structures of society.

Consumerism is one of the most important phenomena influencing the entire society especially the most energetic group – youth. Youth behaviour now-a-days becomes consumer behaviour. Most of them are aware about the new products that are emerging in market. Youth is the category of society, who are ready to accept innovative ideas in society. Consumer behaviour is very much evident among the youth. Consumerism among youth is influenced by various factors like family, friends, culture, advertisements, social groups---etc. In shopping they are sometimes not even thinking about whether the items they are going to buy is useful for them or not. Opponents of consumerism argue that many luxuries and necessary consumer products are social signals allowing people to identify like minded individuals through the display of similar products. It is in the interest of the product advertisers and marketers that the consumer's needs and desires never be completely or permanently fulfilled. It is smarter for the marketer to sell the consumer a flashy trinket that will wear out and break quickly. It is even better for the product to be part of continuously changing fashion market, where items in a nearly new and good condition must be replaced to stay current with the latest trend.

Emulation is also a core component of 21st century consumerism. A general trend is that regular consumers seek to emulate those who are above them on the social hierarchy. The poor strive to imitate the rich and rich imitates celebrities and other icons.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Urbanization and industrialization made many changes in the over all structure of the society. The category of youth is very much influenced by this new movement. By youth we mean age interval beginning with puberty and sometimes extending into late twenties. Youth involves both biological growth and protracted training. It is a period in which the person becomes emotionally emancipated from parents but remains economically dependent upon them, an age when sexual drives have heightened, but many have been explicitly restrained late marriage. Youth is the main consumers of society. They are very much influenced by the novelty of the products. Mobile phones, i-pads, laptops, tablets are some of the mind blowing products of the youth. They are identity seeking and impressionable.

Advertisements, income of family, peer group are some of the important factors which influence the consumer behaviour of the youth. Monthly income of the parents, restrictions put by parents are deciding the consumption rate of youth. The dependent youth's consumption rate is decided by the pocket money that is given by the parents. Youth is giving very much importance to their peer-group. Most of the youth is trying to imitate the lifestyle and new trends of their friends. For youth peer group culture is more dominant than parental culture. Companies are using a lot of strategies to make people aware about their products and persuading them to buy those products.

Another factor which changed the consumption pattern of this youth is globalization. E- Commerce is an important example of this. Youth is the asset of the nation. Now a days consumption of junk food is very high. It affects the health of the youth. Over consumption will negatively affect the future investment and living condition of youth. This investigation is the need of the time and will help to understand the influence of various factors in the consumer behaviour of youth. This sociological study highlights the consumer behaviour of youth in Thrissur District.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the relationship between income and expenditure of youth for their purchase.
2. To find out the relationship between monthly income of the household and satisfaction in pocket money of youth.
3. To examine the role of income of the household in creating economic pressure on youth due to their consumption.
4. To identify the role of religion in the consumer behaviour of youth.
5. To find out the sex differences in consumption of products for religious practices.
6. To study the general consumer behaviour of youth
7. To find out the role of advertisement for increasing the consumption rate of youth.
8. To identify the relationship between promotional offers and purchase of youth.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The universe of the study is the college going youth in Thrissur district under the age group of 17-24. Sample size is 100 and the sampling technique is simple random sampling. A well designed questionnaire is prepared as the tool for data collection. Data was analyzed with the help of simple tables and cross tables. At first the data was coded and tabulated. The data analysis process give information about the details about different variables and their association

CONCLUSION

Youth in our country constitutes a critical input and a vast human resource, characterized by innovative approaches, idealism, development oriented positive attitudes. Youth represent our nation's best resource. The dynamic energy, creative activity and adventurous spirit of youth have provided the sinews for the existence of the society from time immemorial. A nation's progress is on the firm feet of youth. Youth is a bounding in their vigour, energy, enthusiasm and exuberance. Hence they want to assert themselves and play their part effectively and completely.

Treat youth as resources to be developed, rather than as problems to be managed. Work from their strengths, rather than from their weakness, and emphasis their competence and mastery, there by building their self-confidence, self-worth and ability to contribute. Don't label them as at risk, but rather as "at promise" (Swadener 7 Lubeck, 1995). Youth is the nation's best asset. The successful physical and mental development of a child depends upon proper training in thought. Failure in these, means inability to become mature adult. Youngsters have both enormous adaptive ability and a real joy in meeting changing circumstances. Youth living in a tremendous changing society. The development of the world and the innovative ideas are mainly adopted by youth especially the college students. The college students are fashion makers, they are attracted by the novelty of products. Most of the times when they buy anything they are not bothering about its usefulness. Over expenditure of the youth will affect their future savings and future life.

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