

BUYING HABITS OF WOMEN CONSUMERS OF MEGHALAYA

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ABSTRACT

The present study emphasizes the buying habits of women consumers with regard to food item, clothing, cosmetics and consumer durables. It was found that certain factors influenced them while buying food and non food items. Taste, price and brand name were ranked I, II, & III respectively as the factors that were considered by the consumers while purchasing food items. But in case of clothes, cent per cent of the consumers considered quality (Rank I). It was encouraging to note that a vast majority of the respondents always read the label for Expire Date, Price, Brand Name, Manufacturing Date and Net Content.

Key words : Buying Habits, Buying Decision, Women, Consumers, Meghalaya

The urban habitants exclusively depend in the market and perhaps constitute the mainstay for most products in the country. In earlier times, products were less sophisticated and could be inspected before purchase. But now the conditions have changed. The market is literally overflowing with new products based on intricate technologies. In this modern world food consumer finds himself surrounded by instant foods, ready to eat foods, processed foods all packed in appealing colours, new brands and over all attractive labeling. Due to rapid advancement, varieties of detergents are coming up in the market with varied specifications to meet the needs and demands of the consumers. But there arises a lot of consumer problems when the products in real use do not come up to their expectations, similar situation arise when the consumer has to buy household appliances and fabrics (Khetarpaul and Grover 2000).

Today's man is very busy and is unable to spare time and energy to find out the facts. He just buys things through popularity of brand names, cost and availability from the shop where he has faith. Due to the ignorance, he is often deceived and cheated and does not get the real value of money.

Home becomes the primary unit of consumption where housewives are the primary consumer, buyers and invariably performed a vital economic role. Since habit influences the choice of consumers, while market

situations fluctuate, the consumers may not remake their decisions. This paper is an attempt to analyse the buying habits of Meghalaya and the factors influencing the buying decision especially of West Garo Hills, Tura.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, urban areas of Tura, West Garo Hills was selected purposively due to easy accessibility of investigator. A total of 50 respondents were interviewed randomly to get the required information.

A direct personal interview method was administered for the collection of data. The data were collected with the help of a structured schedule. The interview schedule was prepared keeping in view the objectives of the study. First part of the schedule included statements to evaluate the buying habits of women with regard to food and non food item. For that purpose some statements were formulated regarding buying habits of consumers consulting books, bulletins and related literature on consumers. And the second part of schedule was to determine the factors that influence the consumer buying habits. The data were analysed in terms of simple frequencies, percentages etc. To assess the factors that influence the consumer buying decision 3 points responses category e.g always, sometimes, never were given weightage of 3,2, and 1 respectively. The weight scores for each factor were calculated by summing up the scores obtained by the multiplication of percentages of each category with the given weightage. The factors were ranked according to the weight scores then Rank I was

given to highest weight scores then Rank II,III etc were given accordingly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Buying habits of women consumers were discussed in terms of buying habits of food items, non food items like clothing, cosmetics, and consumer durables.

Food items :

Data regarding extent of buying habits of food items in details are furnished in Table I. It was found that almost half of the consumers (50%) always prepare a shopping list; about 40% of the consumers go to a particular shop. Only 4% always preferred to buy from co-operative and govt. sales centre and 32% always buy from whole sellers. Majority (78%) of the consumers always bought food with quality seals. It was encouraging to note that a vast majority of the respondents always read the label for Expire Date (98%), Price (96%), Brand Name (78%), Manufacturing Date (72%) and Net Content (70%).

But in a study by Grover and Gupta (1993) revealed that while purchasing packaged commodities most of the consumers generally enquired and checked the price and manufacturers or brand name while other information as date of manufacture, expiry date and net weight was not given much attention.

Non food items (clothing) :

It is clearly indicated from the Table 2 that 64% of the consumers always checked for the care and maintenance required for the materials, 66% checked the workmanship of the garment. It may be due to limitation

of time and also to avoid taking care, they buy only those clothes which required less care. Majority 86% of the consumers always used to examine the quality of clothing material through their experience and 76% by texture, only 40% always used to look at the labels/tags. Majority 74% always purchased clothes that usually give long lasting satisfaction. It shows that women consumers consider durability before buying clothes. It was also found that the majority of urban consumers (64%) always compared the prices of clothes in the market and 66% always kept an eye in measurement.

Cosmetics :

Another item found common in the shopping list of women is the cosmetics and it was observed that all most all urban women (94%) always checked the quality of the products before purchasing (Table3). They always used to read the label for brand name (74%), expiry date (98%); (94%) always used to see the price before purchasing. Further 66% always had a habit of buying only of a particular brand. This makes clear that the women are sensible to quality of cosmetics and liked to be informed of various aspects related to quality of the cosmetics products and it may be because of their increasing interest in personal grooming.

Consumer durables :

From the Table 4 it is seen that 92% of the consumers always used to buy on the basis of cash payment. It can be supported by a study done by Das and Pathak on the buying habits of women consumers of Assam that consumer durable items were purchased by majority of

Table 1: Buying habits of women consumers, buying habits of food items

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Prepare a shopping list	25	50	19	38	6	12
Going to a particular shop	20	40	26	52	4	8
Buying from cooperative Govt. sales centre	2	4	22	44	26	52
Buying from wholesale	16	32	19	38	15	30
Checking the quality before making purchase	45	90	5	10	NIL	0
Buying food with quality seals	39	78	11	22	-	-
Read the labels for –						
Net content	35	70	15	30	NIL	0
Brand name	39	78	11	22	NIL	0
Manufacturing date	36	72	14	28	NIL	0
Expiry date	49	98	1	2	NIL	0
Price	48	96	2	4	NIL	0
Compare the price of the commodity	36	72	13	26	1	2

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Table 2: Buying habits of non food Items (Clothing)

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.						
Plan clothing purchase in advance	09	18	23	46	18	36
Buy clothes from authorized shop	05	10	39	78	06	12
Buy clothes from retail shops	41	82	08	16	01	02
Buy clothes from wholesale market	02	04	17	34	31	62
Checking the care & maintenance required for the materials	32	64	15	30	03	06
Checking the workmanship of the garment	33	66	14	28	03	06
Examine the quality of clothing material						
i. By texture	38	76	10	20	02	04
ii. By looking at the labels / tags	20	40	26	52	04	08
iii. Through experience	43	86	07	14	NIL	-
2. Economize Clothing Expenditure						
i. By purchasing from fair price shop	04	08	22	44	24	48
ii. By purchasing from clearance shop	03	06	26	52	21	42
iii. By purchasing from exhibition	03	06	34	68	13	26
iv. By purchasing from off season sale	03	06	26	52	21	42
3. Buying readymade clothes	34	68	16	32	NIL	-
4. Purchasing clothes that usually give long lasting satisfaction	38	76	12	24	NIL	-
5. Comparing the prices of clothes in the market	32	64	15	30	03	06
6. Keep eye in measurement	33	66	10	20	07	14

Table 3 : Buying habits of cosmetics products

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never		NA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Going to a particular shop	18	36	26	52	6	12	-	-
Checking the quality before making purchase	47	94	3	6	NIL	-	NIL	-
Read the label for-								
i. Net content	25	50	19	38	6	12	NIL	-
ii. Brand name	37	74	12	24	1	2	NIL	-
iii. Expiry date	49	98	1	2	NIL	-	NIL	-
iv. Manufacturing date	33	66	14	28	3	6	NIL	-
v. Price	47	94	3	6	NIL	-	NIL	-
Buying only of a particular brand	33	66	15	30	2	4	NIL	-

Table 4 : Buying habits of consumers durables

Statements	Always		Sometimes		Never		NA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Buying on the basis of cash payment	46	92	4	8	NIL	-	NIL	-
Installment Buying	3	6	33	66	14	28	NIL	-
Checking the I.S.I mark while buying consumer durables	26	52	11	22	13	26	NIL	-
Buying from reputed dealers	36	72	12	24	2	4	NIL	-
Seeing warranty/guarantee cards	48	96	2	4	NIL	-	NIL	-
Buying consumer durable goods by availing loan from the bank	NIL	-	42	84	7	14	1	2

families on cash basis. Fifty Two per cent always checked the ISI mark while buying consumer durables. It is also seen that 72% always bought consumer durables from reputed dealers, 96% always see warranty/guarantee cards. This indicates that the consumers know about the

achievement for a household.

Factors influencing the buying decision :

Certain factors always influence consumer buying decision whether it be a food or non-food item. Table 5

Table 5: Factors Influencing the Buying Decision of Food Items

Statements	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Wt.Score (%)	Rank
Taste	100	-	-	300	I
Price	80	20	-	280	II
Brand Name	54	42	04	250	III
Label	54	42	04	250	III
Time taken for preparation	44	54	02	242	IV
Easy availability	56	24	20	236	V
Health Status	40	56	04	236	V
Food Habit	44	42	14	230	VI
Promotional technique like free gift/offer/discount etc.	40	36	24	216	VII
Advertisement	30	48	22	208	VIII
Attractiveness of the packages	26	50	24	202	IX
Peer groups	06	58	36	170	X
Others	-	-	-	-	-

importance of warranty/guarantee cards and they have the faith in reputed dealers only when it is related to consumer durables because these are lifetime

gives insight into the factors that influenced buying decision of consumers with regard to packaged food item. Taste, Price, Brand Name and Label were ranked I, II, III &

Table 6: Factors Influencing the Buying Decision of Clothes

Statements	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Wt. Score (%)	Rank
Quality	100	-	-	300	I
Comfort	98	02	-	298	II
Colour	96	04	-	296	III
Texture	92	08	-	292	IV
Climate	90	10	-	290	V
Price	88	10	02	286	VI
Durability	86	14	-	286	VI
Occasion	66	32	02	264	VII
Availability	54	44	02	252	VIII
Ease of Care	50	48	02	248	IX
Profession	56	18	26	230	X
Advertisement	26	54	20	206	XI
Latest styles/fashion	32	42	26	206	XI
Reputation of the Brand	30	46	24	206	XI
Clothing Budget	26	48	26	200	XII
Habit	18	26	56	162	XIII
Social Recognition	12	32	56	156	XIV
Others	-	-	-	-	-

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Table 7 : Factors influencing the buying decision of cosmetics

Statements	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Wt.Score (%)	Rank
Suitability	96	2	2	294	I
Price of the product	76	24	-	276	II
Brand Name	74	22	4	270	III
Colour(in case of lipstick, nail polish)	76	12	12	264	IV
Place of Manufacture(Indian/Foreign)	66	20	14	252	V
Easy Availability.	50	44	6	244	VI
Availability of Money.	42	56	2	240	VII
Offers	58	20	20	234	VIII
Packaging	40	50	10	230	IX
Ingredients of the product	48	32	20	228	X
Advertisement	42	36	22	220	XI
Fashion	34	36	30	204	XII
Peer Group	6	50	44	162	XIII
Social Recognition	10	26	64	146	XIV
Others	-	-	-	-	-

IV respectively as the factors that were considered by the consumers. It may be due to the fact that consumers were mostly brand conscious and at the same time considered their budget so that their respective brands are of reasonable price according to their income level. Thus, today's consumer considers both quality and price as important factor while purchasing food items.

It was observed from the data presented in Table 6 that while buying clothes, cent per cent of the consumers considered quality (Rank I). The other important factors were the comfort (Rank II), Colour (Rank III), Texture (Rank IV) Climate (Rank V), Price and Durability (Rank IV).

Factors influencing the buying decision of Cosmetics

(Table 7) reveal that the consumers are mostly influenced by Suitability (Rank I), Price of the product (Rank II), Brand Name (Rank III), Colour (Rank IV) and Place of Manufacture (Rank V). This shows that consumers are aware that all the products available in the market may not suit them, they consider that the products should not harm their skin be it foreign made or an Indian they always want that the product should suit them, the price should be reasonable and it should be of good brand.

Regarding the factors influencing the buying decision of consumer durables (Table 8) it was seen that quality was ranked first by the consumers which was followed by both need and Latest Fashion (Rank II), Price (Rank III) Social Recognition (Rank IV) and Comfort

Table 8: Factors Influencing the Buying Decision of Consumer Durables

Statements	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)	Wt. Score (%)	Rank
Quality	100	-	-	300	I
Latest Fashion	98	2	-	298	II
Need	98	2	-	298	II
Price	94	6	-	294	III
Comfort	80	20	-	280	IV
Advertisement	66	26	8	258	V
Budget	58	34	8	250	VI
Promotional Technique like Discounts	58	30	12	246	VII
Social Recognition	22	38	40	182	VIII
Peer Group	4	28	62	130	IX
Others	-	-	-	-	-

(RankV).Thus it is seen that the consumers buy the consumer durables when they feel the need and at the same time they buy those Consumer Durables which are the Latest Fashion then only they consider the price of the product. It may be due to the fact that consumers durables are items that are purchased for lifetime so they wouldn't consider the price.

CONCLUSION

Observation from the study indicates that the buying habits are very important because a good habit can encourage better utilization of time and energy resources .Though the consumers have a habit of reading labels for net content, brand name, expiry date, manufacturing date, price etc but still there is a need to make the consumers develop other good buying habits like buying from Govt Sales Shop, Authorized shops, wholesale market. They can also be encouraged to economize their clothing expenditure by purchasing from fair price shop, clearance shop, exhibition, off season sale etc. We should teach the consumers to be an alert and vigilant buyer by teaching them what to buy? When to buy? Where to buy and how much to buy? For improving the buying habits

campaigning, meeting, seminar, demonstration, exhibition etc can be organized in such a way that women consumers are educated particularly.

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