CHAPTER 3

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR - AN OVERVIEW
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Consumer is the central theme of our marketing system. For a product to sell at all, with or without advertising, it must appeal to and satisfy some needs of consumers. Needs dominate the behaviour of the consumers. The manufacturer should identify the motives, which prompt them to purchase the product offered or he can offer the product wanted by them i.e a complete product satisfying their needs. Thus, it is a buying motive that prompts the buyer to buy the article. Such motives may be fear, desire for money, vanity, pride, fashion, possession, sex or romance, affection or comfort.

Behaviour of each individual differs. Each individual behaves in a particular manner as directed by his inner motive. The advertiser must identify the motives which govern the behaviour of the consuming public before going for the advertisement for his product. It helps the designing of an advertising programme. By studying the consumer behaviour, the advertiser of the advertising agency can take a decision about the media of advertisement appeal to be made, market segment where to advertise and the type of advertisement

Advertising is not a magic capable of causing people to buy things which they do not need or want. It simply helps people to rationalize purchases of products they want, but do not need in the strict economic sense. Thus, advertising simply transforms the want into the motive that motivates the buyer to purchase the product, the company offered if the product or the brand satisfies the need of the buyer. If wants or needs are stronger, the chance for its sale exists. If the product is capable of satisfying only the comparatively weak and less basic needs or wants, there is not so much advertising opportunity. The extent of advertising opportunity, thus, varies with the strength of the basic underlying needs or wants that are satisfied by the product or brand.
The consumer behaviour is subject to change over time due to social and cultural influences. It makes an attitude in the long run.¹

WHAT IS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR?

Consumer behaviour refers to the act of consuming goods or services. In the words of Michael, R. Solomon, “Consumer behaviour refers to the differential behaviour of persons over time as they acquire process and utilize information from various sources and settings in purchasing, consuming and communicating about brands, products and cluster of products”.²

The above definition emphasizes the interactions of persons with their environment. It highlights the temporal dimension of behaviour and identifies the general response types resulting from people interaction with the environment. The study of consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals make decision to spend their available resources on consumption related items. It includes the study of what consumers buy, why they buy, where they buy and how often they buy it. Consumer behaviour is an integral part of all business in a consumer-oriented society.

NATURE OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The nature of consumer behaviour can be analysed in three principal angles:

1. Steps in the process of buying
2. Persons concerned, directly or indirectly, in making of this decision.
3. The factors which determine the behaviour of consumers.
1. STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF BUYING

The decision by a consumer to buy involves active reasoning and this is manifested in the various stages a consumer undergoes while making a purchase decision. These stages are illustrated in the following figure:

**Fig. 3.1**

Process of Buying

- **Problem/Need recognition** → **Information search** → **Evaluation of alternatives** → **Purchase decision**
  - **Post purchase behaviour**

a) **Problem/Need Recognition**: The consumer recognizes some needs and wants or desire or problem, e.g. a consumer may feel the need of a fridge to preserve food, the need of a vehicle to move around conveniently, the need of a prestigious item for social status etc. Marketers/advertisers must find out which one of these stimulates the individual to initiate the purchase process.

b) **Information Search**: The consumer tries to collect information regarding various products/services. Information may be collected from magazines, catalogues, retailers, friends, family members, business associates etc. Marketers/advertisers should find out the source of information and their relative degree of importance to the consumer.

c) **Evaluation of Alternatives**: The various products/services (i.e. purchase alternatives) are evaluated by the consumer on the basis of some criteria. The criteria may include price, electricity
consumption in the case of a refrigerator, experts' opinion about the products, opinion of family members, friends etc. The marketer/advertiser must know which criteria the consumer will use in the purchase decision.

d) **Purchase Decision**: From among the purchase alternatives, the consumer makes the selection. It may be to buy or not to buy. If the decisions is to buy, then other additional decisions are: which type (brand) of refrigerator he must buy, from whom to buy and how the payment to be made and so on. The marketer, upto this stage, has tried every means to influence the purchase behaviour but the choice is purely consumer's

e) **Post Purchase Behaviour**: After making the purchase, the consumer will experience some degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The buyer of a new refrigerator, if satisfied, will feel happy about his purchase and say nice things about it. But if he is not satisfied, he may dissuade his friends from purchasing it or advice them not to commit the same mistake. How the consumer gets satisfaction/dissatisfaction is a crucial feedback for the marketer.³

### 2. **ROLE IN BUYING PROCESS**

There are differences in the roles played by different persons concerned in a buying decision. Kotler referred to five different roles that persons play in a buying decision process, namely:

a) **Initiator**: who first suggests or taught idea to buy the product.

b) **Influencers**: who carries some influence on the final decision
c) Decider : who ultimately determines any part or whole of buying decision.

d) Purchaser : who makes the actual purchase

e) User : who consumes or uses the product or service²

3. FACTORS DETERMINE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Modern marketing is consumer oriented. Consumer satisfaction required a thorough understanding of consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. The factors which determine the behaviour of consumers are as follows:

i) CULTURAL FACTORS

Cultural factors exert the broadest and deepest influence on consumer behaviour. The roles played by the buyer’s culture, sub – culture and social class are important

Culture

Culture is the most fundamental determinant of a person’s wants and behaviour. Every child acquires a set of values, perceptions, preferences and behaviours through his or her family and other key institutions.

Sub-Culture

Sub – culture provides more specific identification and socialization for its members. Sub – cultures include nationalities, religious, racial groups and geographical regions.
Social Class

Social classes are relatively homogeneous and enduring divisions in a society, which are hierarchically ordered and whose members share similar values, interests and behaviour.

ii) SOCIAL FACTORS

A consumer’s behaviour is influenced by such social factors as reference groups, family, roles and statuses.

Reference Groups

A person’s reference groups consist of all the groups that have a direct (fact to face) or indirect influence on the person’s attitude or behaviour.

Groups having a direct influence on a person are called membership groups.

Some membership groups are primary groups such as family, friends, neighbours and co–workers with whom the person interacts fairly, continuously and informally.

People also belong to secondary groups such as religious, professional and trade union groups.

People are also influenced by groups in which they are not members, groups to which a person would like to belong are called as peritoneal groups.

A dissociative group is one whose values or behaviour an individual rejects.
Marketers try to identify their target customers' reference groups. However, the level of reference – group influence varies among products and brands.

Manufacturers of products and brands where group influence is strong must determine how to reach and influence the opinion leaders in these reference groups.

An opinion leader is the person in informal product – related communications who offers advice or information about a specific product or product category such as which of several brands is best or how a particular product may be used (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997).\(^5\)

**Family**

According to Spiro (1963),\(^6\) the family is the most important consumer–buying organization in a society and it has been researched extensively (Wortzel 1980).\(^7\) Family member constitute the most influential primary reference group.

**Roles and Statuses**

A person participates in many groups throughout life – family, clubs, organisations. 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.
ii) PERSONAL FACTORS

A consumer’s behaviour is also influenced by personal characteristics. These include the consumer’s age and stage in the life cycle, occupation, economic circumstances, life style and personality and self-concept.

Age and Stage in the Life cycle

People buy different goods and services over their life time.

Occupation

A person’s occupation also influences his or her consumption pattern. Marketers try to identify the occupational groups that have above – average interest in their products and services.

Economic circumstances

Product choice is greatly affected by one’s economic circumstances. People’s economic circumstances consist of their spendable income, savings and assets, debts, borrowing power and attitude towards spending versus saving.

Life Style

A person’s life style is the person’s pattern of living in the world as expressed in the person’s activities, interests and opinions. Life style portrays the “whole person” interacting with his or her environment.
Fig. 3.2

Factors influencing Consumer Behaviour

- **Culture**
  - Reference Groups
  - Age and Life cycle stage
  - Occupation
  - Motivation
  - Perception
  - Learning
  - Consumer

- **Subculture**
  - Family
  - Economic circumstances
  - Life style

- **Social class statuses**
  - Personality & self concept
  - Beliefs & Attitudes


**Personality and Self-concept**

By personality, we mean a person’s distinguishing psychological characteristics that lead to relatively consistent and enduring responses to his or her environment (Kotler, 1998).  

**iv) PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS**

A person’s buying choices are influenced by four major psychological factors – motivation, perception, learning and beliefs and attitudes.

**Motivation**

A person has many needs at any given time. Some needs are biogenic: they arise from physiological states of tension such as hunger, thirst and discomfort. Other needs are psychogenic; they arise from psychological states of tension such as need for recognition and esteem or belonging.
Most of the psychogenic needs are not intense. Psychologists have developed theories of human motivation. Three of the best known – the theories of Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow and Frederick Herzberg – carry quite different implications for consumer analysis and marketing strategies.

**Perception**

A motivated person is ready to act. Perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world. People can emerge with different perceptions of the same object because of the three perpetual processes:

a) Selective attention

b) Selective distortion

c) Selective retention

a) **Selective attention**

People are exposed to a tremendous amount of daily stimuli. Selective attention is screening out of the stimuli.

b) **Selective distortion**

Selective distortion is people’s tendency to twist information into personal meanings and interpret information in a way that will support rather than challenge their preconceptions.

c) **Selective retention**

People will forget most of the things they learn, but will tend to retain information that supports their attitudes and beliefs.
Learning

When people act, they learn. Learning involves changes in an individual’s behaviour arising from experience.

Beliefs and Attitudes

Through doing and learning, people acquire beliefs and attitudes. This influences their buying behaviour.

A belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something, (Philip Kotler. 1997).9

An attitude is a person’s enduring favourable or unfavourable evaluations, emotional feelings and action tendencies towards some object or idea (Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey, 1962).10

ATTITUDE

In a consumer behaviour concept, an attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way with respect to a given object.

Characteristics of Attitude

Attitudes have several important characteristics or properties, namely: (i) have an object: (ii) have direction, intensity and degree: (iii) have structure and (iv) are learned.
The Functions of Attitude

The four functions of Attitude are:

a) The adjustment function

b) The ego – defensive function

c) The value expressive function

d) The knowledge function

a) The Adjustment Function

The adjustment function emphasizes the adaptive tendency of consumer. Consumers tend to adapt or adjust their attitudes to reflect the behaviour viewed as favourable by their friends and associates.

b) The – Ego–Defensive Function

The ego–defensive function refers to the human tendency to avoid situations or forces inconsistent with one’s ego or self image.

c) The Value Expressive Function

The value expressive function refers to those attitudes that reflect a consumers values, that is, attitudes that express to society those values that are consistent with the consumers self – image.

d) The Knowledge function

The knowledge function is to provide consistency and stability in the way an individual perceives the world around him.
Fig. 3.3

A simple representation of Tricomponent Attitude Model


TRI – COMPONENT ATTITUDE MODEL

The Tri – Component attitude model consist of three major components. They are: (Engel, Blackwell and Minard, 1993).\textsuperscript{11}

a) A cognitive component,

b) A affective component and

c) A conative component.

a) A Cognitive Component

The first component of the tri – component attitude model consists of a person’s cognition, that is, the knowledge and perceptions that are acquired by a combination of direct experience with the attitude object and related information from various sources. This knowledge and resulting perceptions commonly take the form of beliefs; that is, the consumer believes that the attitude – object possesses various attributes and the specific behaviour will lead to specific outcomes.
b) The Affective Component

A consumer’s emotions or feelings about a particular brand or product constitute the affective component of an attitude. These emotions and feelings are frequently treated by consumer researches or primarily evaluate in nature: that is, they capture an individual’s direct or global assessment of attitude object.

c) The Conative Component Behavioural

Conation, the final component of the tri-component attitude model, is concerned with the likelihood or tendency that an individual will undertake a specific action or behave in a particular way with regard to the attitude object. According to some interpretations, the component may include the actual behaviour itself.

Source of Attitude Development

(a) Personal experience, (b) Group Association and (c) Influential others

Attitude Theories and Models

Attitude theories primarily are concerned with how attitudes develop and change. Three of the more popular view points are founded on the general principle that the human mind strives to maintain harmony or consistency among currently perceived attitudes. According to Loudon 1993, if the mind perceives an inconsistency within its attitude structure, mental tensions develop to return the structure to a consistent state. The three classical theories based upon the consistency principle are: congruity balance and cognitive dissonance. Multi–attribute attitude theories are dealt with after the traditional theories.
### Congruity Theory

Strong attitudes are more difficult to change than the weak or moderate ones. Hence congruity principle is used frequently in marketing. The consumers stronger positive attitude towards a product brand exerts greater pull on his weaker negative attitude towards another product/brand.

**Fig : 3.4**

A simple diagram of the interrelationship of an attitude towards a product or brand and other psychological processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information &amp; Influences</th>
<th>Personality / Self concept</th>
<th>Other beliefs &amp; attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Direct experience
2. Groups (social, work, family, culture etc.,) Perception of information about product or brand Beliefs about product or brand Importance of beliefs about product attributes General attitude towards product or brand
3. Mass media
4. Contact with influential others

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Balance Theory

According to Balance Theory, a person perceives his or her environment in terms of trials. That is, a person views herself or himself as being involved in a triangular relationship in which all three elements (persons, ideas and things) have either positive (liking, favourable) or negative (disliking, unfavourable) relationships with each other. This relationship is termed as sentiment.

Cognitive Dissonance

The theory of cognitive dissonance was developed by Leon Festinger (1959).\textsuperscript{13} Festinger describes cognitive dissonance as a psychological state which results when a person perceives that two cognitions (thoughts), both of which he believes to be true, do not “fit” together, that is, they seem inconsistent. The resulting dissonance produces tensions, which serves to motivate the individual to being in harmony to inconsistent elements and thereby reduce psychological tension.

A person experiencing cognitive dissonance has three major ways to reduce it. They are: (a) Rationalization: (b) Seeking additional information that is supportive of or inconsistent with his behaviour: and (c) either eliminating or altering some of the dissonant elements, which can be accomplished by either forgetting or suppressing dissonant elements or by changing his attitude so that it is no longer dissonant with another attitude or behaviour. Each of these strategies may be used alone or in combinations.

Multi – Attribute attitude models

In recent years, the adequacy of earlier attitude theories and models has come under question. An important criticism has been the lack of attention to the complexity and interactions of attitude components. Rosenberg and Fishbein pioneered new models of attitudes, which have overcome many of the shortcomings of previous theories (Rosenberg 1956. Fishbein 1963, 1967).\textsuperscript{14}
Because marketers and consumer behaviorists have given more attention to the Fishbein Model, it will be reviewed here as an example of multi attribute attitude models (Woodside and Clokey 1974).15

Multi Attribute attitude models appeal to both consumer researches and marketing practitioners because they examine attitudes in terms of selected product attributes or beliefs. One of three Fishbein’s attitude model is considered below:

1. The attitude – towards object model
2. The attitude – towards behavioural model
3. Theory of reasoned – action model

**Fig. 3.5**

**A simplified version of the Theory of Reasoned Action Model**

| Beliefs that the behaviour leads to certain outcome | Attitude Towards the behaviour |
| Evaluation of the outcomes |
| Beliefs that specific referents think I should or should not perform the behaviour | Intention Behaviour |
| Subjective Norm |
| Motivation to comply with the specific referents |

The Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action builds on other research conducted by Fishbein and his associates. It represents a comprehensive integration of attitude components into a structure that is designed to lead to both better explanations and better prediction of behaviour (Mortin 1967). \(^\text{16}\)

Fig:3.5 is a depiction of the theory of a reasoned action. Working backward from behaviours, the model suggests that the best predictor of behaviour is the intention to act. If intention is measured, it is to look behind intention and consider the factors that led to intention, that is, the consumer’s attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norms.

The consumer attitude towards the behaviour can be directly measured with the beliefs that the behaviour leads to certain outcome and evaluation of outcomes.

As with attitude, we can get back to subjective norms and see beliefs that specific referents think they should or should not perform the behaviour and motivation to comply with the specific referents.

Consistent with the theory of reasoned action, an attitude is not linked to behaviour as strongly or as directly as intention is linked to behaviours.
Fig. 3.6

Relationship Between Attitudes, Intention and Behaviour

Stored Information

Evaluation of criteria

Attitude

Intention

Environmental Influences

Behaviour


Models of Consumer Behaviour

To understand clearly human actions in buying role, it is necessary to study various models of consumer behaviour. These models explain how a consumer searches and gets the information and goes on to make a decision for himself, for his family or for the organization. These are discussed briefly in the following pages:

Traditional Models of Consumers

The earliest comprehensive consumer models were actually devised by economists seeking to understand economic systems. Economics involves the
study of how scarce resources are allocated among unlimited wants and
needs. Its two major disciplines – Macro economics and Micro economics –
have each developed alternative views of consumers, partially because they
have undergone some modernization. These models still influence
contemporary views of consumers.

Microeconomic Model

The classical micro economic approach, developed early in the
nineteenth century, focused on the pattern of goods and prices in the entire
economy. It involved making a series of assumptions about the nature of the
‘average’ consumer and then developing a theory useful in explaining the
working of an economy, made up of many such people. Focus was placed on
the consumer’s act of purchase which, of course, is only a portion of what we
have defined as consumer behaviour. Consumers develop various needs and
preferences and how consumers rank these needs and preferences. Thus, micro
economist concentrated on explaining what consumers would purchase and in
what quantities these purchase would be made. The tastes and preferences,
leading to these purchases were assumed to be known already. Therefore,
micro economists chose to ignore why consumers develop various needs and
preferences and how consumers rank these needs and preferences.

Economists argued that perfect rational consumers will always purchase
the goods that provide them with the highest ratio of additional benefit to cost.
For any given good, this benefit/cost ratio can be expressed as a ratio to its
marginal utility to price (MU/p). Therefore, it can be shown that the consumer
would seek to achieve a situation where the following expression holds for any
number (n) of goods:

\[
\frac{MU_1}{P_1} = \frac{MU_2}{P_2} = \frac{MU_3}{P_3} = \ldots = \frac{MU_n}{P_n}
\]
If any one product’s ratio is greater than the others, the consumers can achieve greater satisfaction per dollar from it and will immediately purchase more of it, provided there is an adequate budget, the consumer will continue purchasing until the product’s declining marginal utility reduces its MU/P ratio to a position equal to all other ratios. Additional purchasing of that good will then stop.

**Macroeconomic viewpoints**

Microeconomics focuses on aggregate flows in the economy – the monetary value of goods and resources where they are directed and how they change over time. From such a focus, the macroeconomist draws conclusions about the behaviour of consumers who influence these flows. Although the discipline has not generated a full – unified model of consumers, it does offer a number of insights into their behaviour.

One interest centers on how consumers divide their income between consumption and savings. This deals with two economic facts of life: higher income families spend a smaller proportion of their disposal income than do lower – income families, but as economic progress, all income levels over time these proportions do not seem to change. That is, lower income groups do not significantly change the proportion of income devoted to spending as economic progress results in an increase in their income. The relative income hypothesis explains this apparent contradictions by arguing that their peer and social groups rather than their absolute income levels, mainly influence people’s consumption standards. Therefore, the proportion of a family’s income devoted to consumption is expected to change only when an income change places the family in a different social setting. This will not happen when all income levels are rising at the same time.
Another macroeconomic proposition, the permanent income hypothesis, explains why specific individuals are slow to change their consumption patterns even when their incomes do suddenly change. It proposes that consumers do not use actual income in any period to determine the amount of their consumption expenditures, but instead are influenced by their estimate of some average, long-term amount that can be consumed without reducing their accumulated wealth. Sudden increases or decreases in income are viewed by the consumer as temporary and therefore, are expected to have little influence on consumption activity.

A variety of other variables have been suggested by macro economists as influencing consumption patterns. Included as consumers’ pervious incomes, experiences, accumulated liquid assets and variations in taxes or credits. Although useful, these suggestions represent rather traditional approaches to studying consumers, stressing economic variables while tending to ignore the influence of psychological factors.

**Behavioural Economics**

The traditional economics focused on the results of economic behaviour (supply, quantity demanded, prices and the like) rather than the actual behaviour of consumers themselves. Behavioural influences on consumers were viewed as complicating factors which could be assumed to cancel each other out. George Katona found this approach lacking and argued that an appreciation of how psychological variables influence consumers could lead to a deeper understanding of the behaviour of economic agents. Katona’s viewpoint, now known as behavioural economics, was fostered by important changes, which occurred in our economy; especially after World War II. Rising income levels had given a large number of consumers’ significant discretionary income – spending power available after necessities had been purchased. In
short, our economy had changed from one characterized as “much for a few” to one described as “more for many”. 21

What made discretionary income so interesting to Katona and others is that it has become a very important component of our economic system since a healthy portion of it is devoted to the purchase of durable goods such as cars, stereos, washing machines and compact disk players. Because the cost of these items is usually high, consumers will tend to purchase them when they perceive the general economic climate and their personal situation as being favourable. Therefore, this important influence on our economy is somewhat volatile and is affected by consumers’ perceptions and economic expectations.

Katona’s behavioural economics perspective is shown in figure 3.7 below:

**Fig. 3.7**

**Katona’s Behavioural Economics Perspective**

Contemporary Models

As the study of consumer behaviour evolved into a distinct discipline, newer approaches were offered to describe and explain what influenced consumer behaviour. These contemporary views are quite different from previous models because of their concentration on the decision process that consumers engage in when deliberating about products and services. Therefore, contrary to the economic models, emphasis is placed on the mental activity that occurs before, during and after purchases are made.
A second distinguishing characteristic of contemporary models is their extensive borrowing from material developed in the behavioural sciences. In fact, most of the variables discussed in these models were originally identified in the fields of psychology and sociology.

A large number of contemporary consumer models have been developed, varying considerably in terms of their sophistication, precision, domain and scope. A few of the more widely quoted models are presented here.

**Nicosia Model**

Francesco Nicosia was one of the first consumer – behaviour modelers to shift focus from the act of purchase itself to the more complex decision process that consumers engage in about products and services. He presented his model in flow – chart format, resembling the steps in a computer program. Also, all variables are viewed as interacting, with none being inherently dependent or independent. Thus, the model describes a circular flow of influences where each component provides input to the next.

The model is viewed as representing a situation where a firm is designing communications (advertisements, products, etc) to deliver to consumers and consumer’s responses will influence subsequent actions of the firm. The model contains four major components or fields: (i) the firm’s attributes and outputs or communications and the consumer’s psychological attributes; (ii) the consumer’s search for and evaluation of the firm’s output and other available alternatives; (iii) the consumer’s motivated act of purchase, and (iv) the consumer’s storage or use of the product. Nicosia assumes that the consumer is seeking to fulfill specific goals and that initially there is no history between the consumer and the firm. So no positive or negative predispositions toward the firm exist in the consumer’s mind.
Howard – Sheth Model

This model serves as an integrating framework for a very sophisticated comprehensive theory of consumer behaviour.\textsuperscript{23} It should be noted that the authors actually use the term ‘buyer’ in their model to refer to industrial purchases as well as ultimate consumers. Thus, it can be seen that their interest was to develop a unified theory, useful for understanding a great variety of behaviours.

The model attempts to depict rational brand choice behaviour by buyers under conditions of incomplete information and limited abilities. The model borrows from learning theory concepts to explain brand choice behaviour over time as learning takes place and the buyer moves from extensive to routinized problem – solving behaviour. Four major components are involved (i) input variables; (ii) output variables; (iii) hypothetical constructs, and (iv) exogenous variables.

Engel – Blackwell – Miniard Model

It was originally developed in 1968 by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell and has gone through numerous revisions.\textsuperscript{24}

Most recently, Minard has contributed the model in conjunction with Engel and Blackwell.\textsuperscript{25} It stands as one of the most popular representations of customer behaviour.

The scheme depicts consumer behaviour as a decision process of five activities which occur overtime (i) motivation and need recognition; (ii) search for information; (iii) alternative evaluation; (iv) purchase and (v) outcomes. As shown in the model, variables are grouped into four general categories (a) stimulus inputs; (b) information processing; (c) decision process, and (d) variables influencing the decision process.
The Pavlovian Learning Model

According to this model, a consumer is conditioned by repetitive marketing media stimuli. The consumer responds by expressing these pre-conditioned wants and needs in the market place. “The designation of a pavlovian learning model has its origin in the experiments of the Russian psychologist Pavlov, who rang a bell each time before feeding a dog. Soon he was able to induce the dog to salivate by ringing the bell – whether or not food was supplied. Pavlov concluded that learning was largely an associated process and that a large component of behaviour was conditioned in this way.

Pavlovian learning model has four central concepts:

- Drive refers to impulses within the individual which implies action
- Cue is a stimulus in the environment that is related to the drive
- Response: the individual’s reaction towards the cue is known as response
- Reinforcement refers to any act that strengthens the cue – response relationship. It is directly related to the degree of satisfaction the response brings to the original drive. The best example of reinforcement can be the distribution of free samples.

Freudian psychoanalytic Model

This model describes the consumer as one who is controlled by subconscious drives. Man attempts to gratify his needs. Frustration leads him to perfect subtle means of satisfaction and guilt or shame causes him to express some of his more basis urges from his consciousness. In applying this model,
there have been many bizarre hypothesis about what may be in the buyers' mind when he makes certain purchases.

Freudian holds that motivational urges primarily are not conscious but are based upon subconscious love, hate and anxiety. According to him, the personality is made of the following three important dimensions:

- **Id.** A part of one's psyche that leads to strong drive and urges

- **Ego.** This part of only psyche is conscious planning centre that attempts to analyse consequences of an act and tries to reconcile with reality. Thus, it acts as equilibrating process.

- **Super ego.** It is concerned with person's conscious. Thus, it is highly rational part of one's psyche that aims to give morally right direction to his activities. It throws light on the moral issues involved in an act.

**Veblenian Social Psychological Model**

Veblenian model was formulated by Thorstein Vablen in 1899. This model views the consumer as a product of environmental conditioning. A person, an organization, or a nation is seldom an isolated unit. There exists hardly any example where a system is cut off from social interaction. According to Veblen, man is basically a social animal and therefore, his behaviour is largely influenced by his group members, culture, sub-cultures, social classes, reference groups, families are the various factor groups that can influence the buying decision of the consumers. The model explains the social identification process that systems use and response patterns found in social interaction. Thus, it is essential for a marketing manager to study carefully the particular social levels that influence the demand for his product.
The models, discussed above, are intended to explain certain key aspects of consumer behaviour. For the marketing manager, these models can provide a predictive analytical tool for a more effective mix of product, distribution and communication strategies.

**Diffusion of Innovation**

When a new product is introduced into the market, it goes through a gradual adoption process by consumers. Certain products get accepted by the majority of consumers at rapid rate, while others take a much longer time.

The diffusion process is the spread of new idea from its source of innovation to its ultimate users or adopters. Consumers go through five stages in the process of adopting a new product. They are:

(i) *Awareness*: The consumer becomes aware of information but lacks information on it.

(ii) *Interest*: The consumer is stimulated to seek information about the innovation.

(iii) *Evaluation*: The consumer considers whether it would be worthwhile to buy the innovation.

(iv) *Trial*: The consumer tries the innovation on a small scale.

(v) *Adoption*: The consumer decides to make free and regular use of innovation.

The Advertiser who really understands how consumers respond to the different product features, prices and advertising appeal has a great advantage over its competitors.
Consumers mind is like a black box, as marketers hardly get to know what really goes on inside the mind of consumer. Marketers appeal to the consumer through their product/service offerings and by using their marketing strategies.

**Fig. 3.8**

**The Black Box Model of the Consumer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Consumer the Black Box</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Products</td>
<td>□ Perception</td>
<td>□ Product choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Price levels</td>
<td>□ Learning</td>
<td>□ Brand choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Quality</td>
<td>□ Motivation</td>
<td>□ Quantity bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Advt. messages</td>
<td>□ Personality</td>
<td>□ Time of purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Distribution</td>
<td>□ Beliefs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Word of mouth</td>
<td>□ Attitudes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The input to the black box comprises competing products, price levels, quality, style, options, advertising messages and a word of mouth. The output is the consumer’s choice of a brand and quantity of and time of purchase. Hence, consumer behaviour is really a complex study. It involves an interplay of several factors like culture, social, personal and psychological factors. Most of these factors cannot be controlled by marketers. But they are useful in identifying and understanding the target consumers.

Consumer markets are vast compared with other markets. Consumer markets consist of innumerable consumers with unsatisfied wants. This gives an opportunity for a company to earn profit by satisfying unsatisfied wants.

Consumer orientation does not end just with understanding consumers and their roles. The crux of consumer orientation lies in understanding consumer behaviour in order to satisfy their needs.
Companies which fail to understand the changes that are occurring in consumer behaviour in today's market place are doomed to be less successful than they otherwise might be.

Behaviour of the consumer varies for durable and non-durable products. For the purpose of the study, three durables, such as television, washing machine and refrigerator have been chosen because repeated comparative ads are being given only for these three products in the print media. The researcher of this study has made an attempt to ascertain whether or not comparative ad has influenced the actual durable purchase behaviour of the consumers in the city of Chennai.
FOOT NOTES


13. **Festinger Leon,** (1957) Cognitive Dissonance


