Chapter – III

An Overview of Handloom Products and Buyer Behaviour
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AN OVERVIEW OF HANDLOOM PRODUCTS AND BUYER BEHAVIOUR

Introduction

The Indian handloom products have a distinct place in the world of fabrics. This is not just a cloth material or traditional wear; it is symbolic to the Indian civilization, which is one of the oldest on the planet. India has a long tradition of excellence in making high quality of handloom products with extraordinary skills and craftsmanship. The Handloom sector is not only the past glory but also it plays a vital role even in the context of present Indian economy. The level of artistry and intricacy achieved in the handloom fabrics is unparalleled and beyond the scope of modern machinery. It represents diverse cultural ethos ranging from exquisite fabrics, which take months to weave, to popular items of mass production for daily use. Hand weaving is one of the richest and the most resilient media of ethnic expression. It provides employment for 12 million people and it is the second largest sector in the employment generation stands only next to agriculture. It provides direct employment to 6.5 million people in the country. Marketing has been recognized as being central to the growth and development of the handloom industry. Domestic marketing is important for providing linkage between the producer and the consumer to promote for marketing and sales of handloom products both inside and outside State. Therefore, strengthening of Handloom organizations for improvement in the Marketing and Export of handloom items, organization of festive fairs, exhibitions, digital advertisements etc. facilitate in the promotion of marketing of handloom products. The development of Information Technology in India has moved very fast. Marketing institutions are gaining the advantages from information technology activities and at the same time provide more benefits and opportunities especially in marketing services.

Handloom –Its Meaning

The word loom means a weaving machine, hence the word handloom means a machine on which weaving is done manually through hands. The weaving on
handloom is done through the intersection of warp and weft. The warp is a vertical thread wound on a roller and the weft is a thread at right angles to warp/horizontal thread. The master weaver known as Julaha used to throw the shuttle weft through the tightly stretched warp threads back and onward over and over again.

**Marketing of Handloom Products**

The marketing of handloom products is done by the weavers and middlemen. There are marketing organizations which provide facilities directly or indirectly for the marketing of handloom products. These organizations are Weavers Cooperative Societies, All India Handlooms Fabric Marketing Cooperative Societies, National Handloom Development Corporation, Association of Corporations and Apex Society for Handlooms. These organizations save the weavers from the corrupt middlemen and provide opportunities to sell their produce at competitive rates.

**History of Handlooms in India**

The handloom industry rolls its carpet back to the ancient times. The very first fragment of Indian handloom was excavated from the parts of Egypt. After that, finely woven and dyed cotton fabrics were found in MohenjoDaro (Indus Valley Civilization). There were some more excavations that speak of the golden history of Indian handloom. In fact, traditional handloom style has been one of the oldest forms. Prior to imperialism and colonization, all the natural fabrics (silk, cotton and jute) were hand-woven. And Khadi was among the prevalent materials at that point of time. Later on, the mechanical system created ways for the faster completion of spinning and weaving. After the introduction of machinery, the technicalities were given due care and the finesse came in a better way. This also helped the weavers, embroiders and hand-printers to create new designs. At the time of British, the export business of cotton and silk also started. This enabled the Indians to showcase the talent of their expertise in other countries also. Indian handloom created a special place for itself in India and abroad too. With so many varieties of handloom from different states, India has collected a precious wealth of innovation. After all, this has lead to the emergence of India as the most richly cultured country.
Handloom Industry in India

Handlooms have been known to India right from the historic ages. The use of fabrics, techniques created to make designer art pieces and expressing ethnicity through them has been an integral part of India’s base. Its power is such that Handloom industry constitutes around 14 percent of total preindustrial production and 30 percent of the total export business. Well, that’s not all; it is also the second largest industry in India with important segments, such as independent power looms, modern textile mills, handlooms and garments. This made the handlooms popular in foreign markets also and raised their demand and in return to this, handloom industry became one of the most important factors for the country’s economic growth. It is well-known that every state of India has the gift of handloom to offer, which lends them their individuality. Even, the texture and style of fabrics has been fascinating foreigners and increasing their knowledge about India’s cultural heritage. In fact, our handloom industry acts as a bridge between cultural differences. What lends exclusivity to the handloom industry in India is its technology of getting out beauty from the most intricate designs of all and exemplifying richness of the country.

From using hand spun machines to mechanical advances, the handloom industry has travelled a lot. With the help of mechanical looms and technology, the weavers and embroiders are able to manage tedious tasks with great efficiency. In order to boost this industry, Indian Government has also introduced various schemes for the benefit of weavers, farmers and fabric printers. On an overall basis, handloom industry of India has a sense of unity in diversity that makes it capable of capturing hearts and senses.

Handloom Trends & Traditions in India

The handloom industry acts as the backbone of Indian culture and tradition. With a huge variety of designs, printing techniques, weaving art and materials used, the field of Indian handloom has created magic all over the world. Each and every state of Indian Territory has a gift of designer handlooms to offer. Phulkari from Punjab, Chanderi from Madhya Pradesh, Tie and Die from Rajasthan and Gujarat, Ikats from Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, Daccai from West Bengal, Brocade from
Banaras and Jacquard from Uttar Pradesh are some of the jewels that have been dazzling all over the world.

Numerous designs and painted art on the handloom materials have adorned various houses. In fact, it shows that Indian artists and weavers have the knack of prevalent trends and the method of mingling them with traditionalist. After all, India has the potential to create specialized art forms; besides being an expert in conventional art forms. In India, embroidery, printing styles and weaving arts have been known since ages for their sheer classiness and creativity. In fact, the variety of weaving deals with rural, traditional and tribal styles that tends to lend variety to the handloom sector.

Being the second largest rural employment provider, it helps a lot of people in earning their living through the art living in them. The magic of Indian handloom is such that it has won wide acclaim and the popularity has spread over international boundaries also. This sector has created a huge market in foreign countries because of their originality and creativity.

**Present scenario**

To improve the current situation of handloom sector and to make the sector more competitive in current scenario, where market situation are changing very fast it is very necessary to design appropriate marketing strategies. Marketing is all about creating customer value and profitable customer relationships. To get a success in today’s competitive market place, handloom sector need to be a customer centered. It must capture customers from competitors, then keep and grow them by delivering greater value. The handloom sectors first understand the customer needs and wants before satisfying them. Thus, sound marketing requires a careful customer analysis. Marketing strategy for handlooms involves two key decisions: which customers it will serve (segmentation and targeting) And how it will create a value for them(differentiation and positioning )It defines the total market, then divides it into smaller segments, select the most promising segments and focuses on serving and satisfying the customers in these segments. Then, the handloom sector should design a marketing program –the four Ps –that delivers the intended value to targeted consumers. Hence, handloom sector should focus on the customer –driven marketing
strategy includes market segmentation (dividing a market into distinct groups of buyers who have different needs, characteristics or behaviors and who might require separate products or marketing programs), market targeting (the process of evaluating each market segment’s attractiveness and selecting one or more segments to enter), market positioning (arranging for a product to occupy a clear, distinctive and desirable place relative to competing products in the minds of target consumers) and differentiation (actually differentiating the market offering to create superior customer value) and developing an integrated marketing mix includes product (size and weight of the product, quality of the product, design of the product, brand name, features of the product and packaging etc.), price (basic price, discounts and credit etc.), promotion (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relation etc.) and Distribution/place (channels, coverage, logistics, locations, inventory and transportation etc.) to market the handloom products effectively. To find the best marketing strategy and mix, the handloom sector engages in marketing analysis, marketing planning, marketing implementation and marketing control.

Indian handloom has been the pride of India’s tradition and a representative of its cultural brilliance. In fact, handloom sector has been gaining significance since the ancient times, when it was discovered. The basic meaning of Indian handloom is creating designs by keeping traditions intact. And that’s the reason; this sector has always been in demand. In earlier times, the weavers, embroiders and printers used to do wonders with their skills manually. But, the development in this sector has given birth to various machines that are meant to simplify the tasks. From the ancient times till now, Indian handloom has travelled steadfastly in the direction of lessening gaps between countries. Being the second largest sector in the world and a bread earner of over 60 Lakh people in India, handloom sector has developed techniques to match the ongoing modernity. It is well known that traditional and customary handloom act as the base of every progress. The innovation in terms of mechanism has been done to meet the growing demands of contemporary styles. This has leaded the artists in making fusion dresses and prints on them.

The present outlook on Indian handloom says that it has carved a niche for itself in the world. Indeed, the foreigners always get attracted to the stylish prints, vibrant colors and bold embroiders that speaks of Indian tradition in detail. Well, this
sector has played a very good part in bringing the world close to Indian tradition. The people also get to know a lot of hard work and toil hidden in the wings of the bird of Indian handloom. Each and every part of Indian Territory brings the gift of their specialty to the world. One can check out Phulkari of Punjab, Bandhej print of Gujarat and Rajasthan, variety of pure silk in Assam, finest cotton saris from Bengal with gold and silver work and lots more. On an overall basis, Indian handloom has been growing and has now become a trademark that is stylizing the lives of crores.

**Export & Import Facet of Indian Handloom**

Indian handloom is crossing borders to be a part of foreign style also, not just in terms of popularity; but also for originality. This handloom sector has seen various developments to match its steps with the growing demands. No matter it is a foreign customer or Indian, the Indian handloom is strong enough to meet their requirements. In fact, it has become a fashion statement and is attracting designers also. The present trend in handloom sector is that of mingling old designs with new techniques and creating originality out of it. This has also leaded the Indian handloom markets to step out of their country. And that’s why; export of Indian handlooms is gaining momentum.

The Handloom emporiums and shops are steadfast in giving shape to the ideations of their customers. Moreover, this handloom sector is high in demand in foreign countries. The use of vibrant colors and traditions embroidered or painted on finest fabrics in India has been attracting foreign buyers. And this has leaded the manufacturers to export Indian handloom materials to other countries. On the other side of the front, some of the manufacturers import threads and modern style machinery or looms from other countries to enhance their work efficiency. Even, the first Jacquard weaving loom was made by Joseph Marie Jacquard in 1801.

In today’s scenario, computerized printing and weaving technologies are getting prevalent. And this has leaded the handloom manufacturers to fetch the modern computer embroidery machines from abroad. After all, it is the increasing demand for fineness and creativity that has enabled them to cross boundaries. And even, lessening of import and export duties has given a boost to this business.
Handloom Exhibitions in India

The handloom sector in India is one such plus point that showcases the true blend of artistic beauty and durability of materials. In fact, this field of creativity is the representative of traditional culture in India. From the time immemorial, various styles, patterns, fabrics and designs of handloom have been prevalent in India. Each and every state in India has some or the other specialty associated with it, which lends them their individuality. The magic of Indian handloom is such that it has attracted numerous fashion designers, who have used this art in creating exclusive designer clothes and fusion dresses. In doing so, they have maintained the richness of traditionality in Indian handloom.

Handloom Boards in India

It is the promotional concern and for establishing foreign markets that the Indian Government has set up various boards. The main task of such boards is to look after the production level, export and import facet, making schemes effective and providing necessary funds for the growth of handloom industry. Along with this, their work process also includes providing advice to the government on the matters of implementing new technologies or trends. All this helps in making the backbone of handloom industry ever more strong.

All India Handloom Board

This handloom board has been formed under the leadership of Ministry of Textiles and is responsible for advising government on the growth prospects of handloom industry. It also tends to create various methods in enhancing the strength of handloom sector.

All India Power loom Board

This board was also formed under the leadership of Ministry of Textiles. Its responsibility is to advise the central ministry in the matters of the growth of power loom business. Apart from this, it also tends to help the government in policy and scheme making for the growth of this sector. Presently, it has 29 members.
Cotton Advisory Board

It is the representative body of Government, industries and traders, which is constituted for advising Government on the matter of production, consumption and marketing of cotton. Along with this, it is also responsible for maintaining a liaison between cotton textile industry, cotton growers, trade and the government.

Central Wool Development Board

This board has been formed for overlooking the production and growth of wool and woolen industry as a whole. With the help of Central Government, it also tends to implement various schemes and plans for the development of this industry. Its headquarters are in Jodhpur and the board has 19 members.

Jute Advisory Board

The main task of Jute Advisory Board is to advise the government on the production and growth of jute and mesta. This board is reconstituted after every two years and presently has a membership of 20 people.

Central Silk Board

It has been constituted for promoting the growth and development of sericulture in India. The programs meant for the development of sericulture are, initially, organized by state governments and this central board extends all kinds of facilities and help for promoting it. Apart from this, it also helps in the research and development process of this field.

Handloom printing styles in India

The technique of printing is as old in India as the ancient times. In fact, this art form is the expression of traditions practiced since the time immemorial. It is the use of vibrant colors coupled with subtle designs that make the entire piece of handloom look so ethnic and vivacious. After all, every printing technique in India is associated with some or the other methods that are particular to few states only. Tie and Die is used in Gujarat and Rajasthan; Block Printing is practiced in Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Andhra Pradesh and Banaras; Batik Printing is famous in many part of India.
The printers use a lot of techniques to carve beauty in a cloth piece. It also depends on the kind of fabric used and its quality. From the older times till now, various approaches have been applied and development is carried out in terms of making newer machinery for printing. And this technique has enabled the artists to bring more and more finesse in the handloom products. It is the hard work of the artisans that makes the final product a masterpiece. With the wealth of so many printing technologies, India has been famous for its exclusivity and uniqueness in creative styles. The printers have been continuously experimenting with various traditional and contemporary styles of printing to carve a beautiful fusion out of it. And it is this fusion, which is getting a wide acclaim in the international market also. Not just this fusion; but, traditional trends still hold attention in abroad.

**Prominent Handloom Materials in India**

Handloom in India has always been center of attraction. It is because dressing styles have an essence of magnetism in them that people tend to adopt some or the other trend on every occasion. Moreover, there is some sort of exclusivity in each state’s handloom craft, whether it is printing technology or weaving style. And in all this, the importance of material lays in the way it is used for weaving or printing. Each and every material in India is a significant part of handloom industry. At some points, it is the sheer texture of material that creates magic; while at other levels, it is the softness of material that tends to hold attention.

From cotton to georgette, chiffon, silk, muslin, wool, crepe, Pashmina, synthetic and jute, handloom materials tends to give exclusivity to the whole piece of art. During carving an art on these materials, they are either used singly or are mingled with other material to create a wholesome effect. The style of Indian clothing is popular worldwide as it makes use of various kinds of handloom materials and creates something exclusive from it. Saree, salwarkameez, lehengacholi, sharara, skirts and churidar suits are some of the gifts that handloom department has given to us.

The relation of Indian clothing and handloom is ages old. From making a particular material to weaving it with threads or printing it, handloom materials undergo so many processes. After that, they are carved into stylish dresses for the
people to adorn their body. It is because of this that handloom department in India is taking care of every note over the developments.

**Prominent Handloom Materials in India**

- Silk
- Cotton
- Pashmina & Wool
- Chiffon
- Crepe
- Georgette
- Jute
- Muslin

**Handloom Products in India**

- Sarees
- Suits
- Kurtas
- Shawls
- Skirts
- LehangaCholi
- Dhotis
- Sherwanis
- KurtaPyjamas
- Jackets
- Caps
- Slippers
- Bed Linens
- Table Linen
- Cushion Covers
- Curtain
- Bags & Purses
- Carpets
- Mats
- File Covers
Problems in Marketing of Handloom Products

The problems in the field of marketing of handloom products, which are mostly existing because of current system’s drawbacks. There are few challenges for handloom because of changing market environment like globalization, industrialization and mechanization. Timely intervention from government is required for a bright future in the handloom sector.

Lack of availability of market information

There is no reliable information available regarding the marketing of handloom products. This creates hurdles at the market end resulting in unsatisfied customers. The weavers are unaware of the market demand and new designs & colours because of the lack of customer feedback. This hampers their creativity and innovation.

Lack of awareness about the product features

Handloom cloth is very soft and good for skin. It is non allergic synthetic fibres. The use of vegetable dye makes it health friendly. One of the greatest characteristic is its flexibility to adapt according to the customer’s choice. It is more preferable because of its fine quality and added embroidery. The customer should be totally aware of these qualities of handloom and should be able to differentiate from the rest. Hence, an awareness has to be generated in the customers mind regarding the advantages of the product.

Insufficient Promotion and Advertisement of Handloom

Handloom sector is far lagging behind in promotion and advertising of its product as compared to the textile sector. Generally, the promotion is only through exhibitions and fairs with limited outlets. Hence the customer purchases only when available and switches to the other competing product when it is unavailable. Therefore this sector needs a continuous promotion and regular advertising campaign to have a durable and effective impact of the handloom products on the customer.
Lack of Quality Standardization:

The handloom is famous for the production of the finest quality of cloth. It uses the unique selling proposition in many cases like carpets, furnishings and fine designs. But the quality and standardization of the product is not regularly mentioned. Hence a procedure is needed for checking the quality standards of the products like durability, shrinking etc., So that the customer is assured about this. Also the government should take initiative and conduct research on the related issues.

Improper Management of Handloom Logistics:

Handloom logistics should be done in a scientific way. There should be precise calculation of stock keeping and cost incurred in maintaining a huge stock. There should not be any blockaded of money and subsequently the interest burden. Generally inefficiency occurs in case of finished products supply. Due to lack of improper marketing, the huge stock is blocked with marketers. Some of the co-operatives end up in loss because of mismanagement. This can be minimized by introducing bar-coding, logistic tracking and fast information flow. This results in reducing greatly the cost of the end product.

Role of the NHDC in the supply of raw material:

The fundamental responsibility of the National Handloom Development Corporation is to ensure adequate supply of raw materials to the handloom sector. It is generally done through co-operatives at subsidized rates. These co-operatives cover only 30 percent of the total weavers and the rest are out of this fold. Subsidies and other beneficial schemes from state and central governments are also implemented through co-operatives. As a result majority of the weavers are not benefited. Government has made a provision through hank yarn obligation order. It states that 50 percent of cotton yarn produced in India should be in the form of hank yarn and should be supplied to the handloom sector. However this was never totally implemented. Hence there is a need for strict implementation of rules and regulations in this regard.
Tough Competition

Handloom sector is facing a tough competition from various players in the market. The competition is intensive in both inter sector (from mill, power looms etc.) and intra sector (from foreign countries like china, Bangladesh etc.). This increasing competition is the biggest challenge for the handloom sector.

Focus areas of Handloom production and products:

Significant production in handloom sector caters to the needs to women and the products are pre-dominantly sarees, dhotis, and other traditional fabrics. While there is still a huge market for these products, the competition in these and the changing lifestyles would necessitate the handloom sector to change its products and broaden its consumer profile from particular segments to almost all segments. Clusters such as Varanasi, Bhagalpur, Chirala and Kannoor have been at the forefront of these changes. Handloom clusters with such capacity to respond to market needs would be ahead of the clusters which are slow to react. The ability of the handloom clusters to change has to be enhanced and this is where the future lies.

Consumer base of the handloom sector has to widen to include products for young and old, men and women, class and the mass, high cost to the cheapest, intricate design to plain fabric and low production investment to high production investment. The response of the handloom sector to change in the last fifteen years has been very encouraging. This needs to be mapped and highlighted. Government has to encourage any positive change in the sector, which sustains the character and employment of handloom production. Handloom fabrics are an essential part of the heritage of India. It shows not only the richness and diversity of our country but also the artistry of the Indian weavers. Hand-woven fabrics are the products of Indian tradition and the inspiration sought from the cultural ethos by the weavers. The tradition of weaving cloth by hand constitutes one of the richest aspects of Indian culture and heritage. The artistry and intricacy achieved in handloom fabrics are unparalleled and unique. Weavers with their skilful blending of myths, faiths, symbols and imagery provide the fabric an appealing dynamism. The handloom is most ancient cottage industry in India. Its prevention for posterity ensure the preservation of our cultural heritage. Now it has become a mature industry. Handloom production is family based activity and is inseparable from the living atmosphere of the
handloom families. Handloom sector constitutes a distinct feature of the rich cultural heritage of India and plays a vital role in the economy of the country. The weavers are typical of rural Indians left behind by market forces, rapid development of industry. Handloom is the cultural heritage of our country and hence it is imperative to protect and promote this sector.

**Consumer Behaviour**

Consumer behaviour is the study of how individual customers, groups or organizations select, buy, use, and dispose ideas, goods, and services to satisfy their needs and wants. It refers to the actions of the consumers in the marketplace and the underlying motives for those actions. Consumer behaviour may be defined as the behaviour exhibited by people in planning, purchasing and using economic goods and services. Consumer behaviour refers to the decision making process by which consumers interact with their environment and the actions they take in the marketplace. It also consists of the factors influencing the consumer decisions and actions.

**Factors influencing consumer buying behaviour**

Several factors determine the buying behaviour of consumers, these factors may be classified as follows:

**Personal Factors**

These factors include unique to a particular person. Numerous personal factors influence purchase decisions.

**Demographics**

Individual characteristics such as age, sex, race, ethnicity, income, occupation and family life cycle are called demographics. Demographic factors also influence the extent to which a person uses product in a specific category.

**Life styles**

Life style means an individual’s pattern of living expressed through activities, interests and opinions. Lifestyle patterns include the ways people spend time the extent of their interaction with others, and their general outlook on life and living. People partly determine their own lifestyles and partly these are shaped by personality.
and demographics. Life styles have a strong impact on many aspects of buying behaviour. Life styles influence consumer’s product needs, brand preferences types of media used and how and where they shop.

**Situations**

Situations factors are influences resulting from circumstances, time and location that affect the consumer buying behaviour. Situation factors can shorten, lengthen or terminate the consumer decision process. These factors can be classified into five categories – physical surroundings, social surroundings, time perspective, task definition and antecedent states. Physical surroundings include location, store atmosphere, sounds, lighting, aromas and weather. Therefore marketers spend time and money to create physical settings conductive to making purchase decisions. Social surroundings refer to interaction of buyers with friends, relatives, sales people and other customers at the place of purchase. A product may be bought for personal family use or for a gift. The buyer’s antecedent states mean the momentary moods such as anchor, anxiety contentment or momentary conditions (such as fatigue, illness, cash rich). These moods and conditions can affect the person’s ability and desire to seek information, look for and evaluate alternatives and post purchase evaluations.

**Social Factors**

The factors that other people exert on buying behaviour are called factors. These factors are follows:

**Roles and family**

Role means their actions and activities that a person is supposed to perform. A person occupies several positions and, therefore he/she has many roles. Family influences may have a very direct impact on buying behaviour. Parents teach children how to cope with a variety of problems including those dealing with purchase decisions. The process through which a person acquires the knowledge and skills to function as a consumer is known as a consumer socialism. Female members of a family generally make buying decisions concerning household items like food, health care, laundry. The type of family decision – making used depends on the attitudes and
values of family members. Marketers must know who make the buying decisions in a family and who does the actual buying.

**Reference group**

A reference group is any group that exercises a positive or negative influence on a person’s attitudes, value, and behaviour. In general, there are three major types of reference groups: membership, aspirational, and disassociate. A membership reference group is one to which an individual actually belongs. An aspirational reference group is one to which an individual aspires to belong. A group that an individual does not wish to be associated with is a disassociate reference group. A reference group may serve as an individual, point of comparison and source of information.

**Opinion Leader**

The reference group member who provides information about a specific sphere that interests members of the group is called an opinion leader. An opinion leader is likely to be most influential when consumers have high product involvement but low product knowledge, when they share the attitudes and values of the opinion leader, and when the product details numerous and complicated.

**Social Classes**

A social class means an open group of individuals with similar social rank. Quite often people in a society are classified into upper, middle, and lower classes on the basis of their income and occupation. Consumers belonging to a particular social class tend to have common behavioural patterns. They may have similar attitudes and values. Social class has an impact on spending and saving habits. It determines to some extent the type, quality, and quantity of products that individuals buy and use.

**Culture and Subculture**

Culture is the aggregate of customs, beliefs, values, and objects that a society uses to cope with its environment and passes on to future generations. Culture permeates our daily life and therefore influences buying behaviour. Our culture determines what we want and where we reside and travel. It also influences how we buy and use products. Cultural changes affect marketing mix.
3. Psychological factors

Factors that operate within individuals and determine their general behaviour are as follows:

Perception

Perception is the process of selecting, organising and interpreting information to derive meaning. Different people perceive the same thing at the same time in different ways.

Motives

A motive means an internal force that orients a person’s activities towards need satisfaction. A set of motives affect a buyer’s actions. Motivates that influence where a person buys products on a regular basis are known as patronage motives. This includes location, price, variety, service and behaviour of sales people. Marketers use depth interviews, projects and other methods to know and understand motives of buyers.

Learning

Changes in an individual’s behaviour due to information and experience are called learning. A consumer tends to repeat purchase actions which create satisfaction. In experienced buyers use price as an indicator of quality more frequently than experienced buyers. Consumers learn through information advertisements, sales persons, friends and relatives. They also learn by buying and using products.

Attitudes

An attitude refers to an individual’s enduring evaluation, feelings and behavioural tendencies toward an object or idea. An individual’s attitudes remain generally stable and do not vary from moment to moment. Individuals acquire attitudes through experience and interactions with other people. Attitudes play a significant role in determining consumer behaviour.
Personality

Personality refers to a set of internal traits and distant behavioural tendencies that result in consistent patterns of behaviour. An individual’s personality is the outcome of heredity and personal experiences. It makes the individual unique. Some individuals are introverts, dogmatic, compulsive and ambitious while others are quiet opposite in nature. Personality influences the type of brand and products purchased.

Self – concept

Self-concept or self-image means a person’s perceptions or view of himself individuals develop and alter their self-concept through interactions of social and psychological dimensions. Research shows that a buyer purchases products that reflect and enhance the self-concept. A person’s self-concept may also influence selection product category and brand.

Roles in Buying Behaviour

- **Initiators:** People in the organisation who identify a problem or need that can be resolves with a purchase.
- **Users:** People in the organisation who actually use the product. In the case of a photocopier for a department, there may be many users. In the case of furniture for an office, there is a single user.
- **Influencers:** people who affect the buying decision, usually by helping to develop specifications for the product.
- **Buyers:** People with the authority and responsibility to select a supplier and negotiate contract terms. Medium-sized and large organisations generally give these duties to a purchasing department.
- **Deciders:** People with the formal or informal power to select or approve the selection of a supplier. If a purchase is technical, the purchasing department may rely on the expertise of an employee in the research or engineering group.
- **Gatekeepers:** People who control the flow of information into the buying centre. Such employees may include secretaries, technical experts and purchasing personnel.
Consumer Buying Process

This is an important process which has a vital role in consumer behaviour study. This is the first essential step to understand consumer behaviour. The objective of study of consumer buying process is to know how a consumer makes his decision regarding buying or not buying any commodity. In most cases, a decision involves the selection of an option from two are more attractive chaise. The consumer buying process of decision-making leading to a purchase function. It represents a problem-solving approach. The mechanism is the same as in any processing activity in which we supply some input followed by the processing activity and finally the output comes before us.

During the last two decades, numerous models of consumer behaviour depicting the buying process have been developed. All these models treat the consumer as a decision-maker who comes to the market place to solve his consumption problems and to achieve the satisfaction of his needs.

The simple model given above is composed of three stages—‘input, process and output’. Input is a stimulus. It is provided by two sets of stimulus variables, namely, the firm’s making efforts and the social environment. The firm’s marketing efforts are designed to positively expose, inform and influence consumers. These include product/service itself, advertising, price strategies, distribution network, and in fact all marketing function. The social environment serves as a non-commercial source of consumer information and influence which is not under the direct control of the firm. It includes reference groups and individuals, members of the family, social class and castes, culture, and the like. Both these stimulus variables influence consumers and the buying processes.

Stages of Buying Process

The buying process is composed of stages and is influenced by one’s psychological framework comprising the individual’s personality, motivations, perception and attitude.
For certain commodities, the buyer or consumer takes his buying decision immediately without much consideration. These are items of daily use. For some other commodities, mainly luxury or durable items, the consumer thinks much before taking a decision to purchase it. Sometimes, the consumer may also consult others. Generally, the purchaser passes through five distinct stages in taking a decision for purchasing a particular commodity. These stages are (i) Need arousal, (ii) Information search, (iii) Evaluation behaviour, (iv) Purchase decision, and (v) Post-purchase feelings.

**Need Recognition**

A buying process starts with needs arousal. A need can be activated through internal or external stimuli. The basic needs of a common man arise to a particular level and become a drive and he knows from his previous experience how to satisfy these needs like hunger, thirst, sex, etc. This is a case of internal stimulus. A need can also be aroused by an external stimulus such as the sight of new product in a shop while purchasing other usual products. There is a two-fold significance of need arousal stage to a marketer:

1. The marketer must identify the drive that might actually or potentially connect to the product class or brand and make the buyer feel that the product can satisfy his needs.

2. It also recognises that the need levels for the product fluctuate over time and are triggered by different cues. The marketer can arrange cues to conform better to the natural rhythms and timing of need arousal.

**Product Awareness / Information Search**

After need arousal, the consumer tries to solve it and gathers the sources and information about the product. Depending upon the intensity of need, it produces two states in an individual. The first state is called heightened attention when the consumer becomes more receptive to the information regarding the item he needs. He becomes alert to information bearing on the need and its gratification. If a consumer needs to purchase a television, he will pay more attention to TV advertisements. He keeps remembering the remarks made by friends and associates about TVs.
If need is more intense, the individual enters a state of active information search and he tries to collect more information about the product, its key attributes, qualities of various brands and about the outlets where they are available. There are four sources of consumer information:

- Personal source (family, friend, neighbours, etc).
- Commercial sources (advertisements, salesman, and dealers).
- Public sources (mass media, consumer-rating organizations)
- Experiential sources (handling, examining, using the product)

The marketers will find it worthwhile to study the consumers’ information sources whenever (a) a substantial percentage of the target market engages in search, and (b) the target market shows some stable patterns of using the respective information sources.

Identifying the information sources and their respective roles and importance calls for interviewing consumers about the sources of information. The findings can later on be used to plan the firm’s advertisements.

**Interest**

Interest may be viewed as a state of mind that exists when a consumer perceives a need and/or is aware of alternative products capable of satisfying that need. Consumer interest is indicated in the consumer’s willingness to seek further information about a product. At this stage the consumer is actively involved in the buying process and pays attention to the product. However, if he loses interest during this involvement, his/her attention will be diverted and the buying-decision process will break down.

**Evaluation and Intention**

Once interest in a product is aroused, a consumer enters the subsequent stages of evaluation and intention. The evaluation stage represents the stage of mental trial of the product. During this stage, the consumer assigns relative value-weights to different products/brands on the basis of accumulated stock of product information and draws conclusions about their relative satisfaction-giving potential value. After this evaluation, the consumer develops the intention either to purchase or reject the
product/brand. The final purchase will, however. Depend on the strength of the positive-intention that is intention to buy.

**Purchase Decision**

There are three more important considerations for taking the buying decision ;( a) attitude of others such as wife, relatives and friends. interestingly, it depends more upon the intensity of their negative attitude and the consumer's motivation to comply with the other persons wishes; (b) anticipated situational factors as expected family income, expected total cost of the product and the expected benefits of the product; and (c) unanticipated situational factors, like accidents, illness, etc

**Post-Purchase feelings**

If the product matches his expectations, the consumer is satisfied; if it exceeds, he is highly satisfied; and if it falls short of expectations, he is dissatisfied.

**OutPut**

Is the end-result of the inputs of consumer behaviour. It emerges after these inputs are duly processed by the consumer. Output is composed of purchase and post-purchase behaviour.

**Purchase**

Purchase is a consumer commitment for a product. It is the terminal stage in the buying decision process that completes transactions. It occurs either as a trial and or adoption. If a consumer is buying something for the first time, then from the behaviour viewpoint it may be regarded as a trial. This trial enables him to accumulate experience about the product purchase. It this experience is positive in terms of the satisfaction derived. Then repeat purchases may occur, otherwise not. However, repeat purchases will occur only when he is satisfied with its performance. But the possibility of a trial purchase is not available in all cases. In the case of consumer durables such as scooters, refrigerators and the like, a trial is not possible, because once a product is purchased, it has to be adopted and repeatedly used. Adoption means a consumer decision to commit to a full or further use of the product. In our example of housewife, the washing machine is not open for trial purchase; it will have be adopted only.
**Post-Purchase Behaviour**

Post-purchase behaviour refers to the behaviour of a consumer after his commitment to a product has been made. Out it originates consumer experience regarding the use of the product and is indicated in terms of satisfaction. This is behaviour is reflected in repeat purchases or abstinence from further purchase. If product-use experience indicates satisfaction, then repeat purchase will occur, otherwise not.