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## CHANGE IN CONSUMER'S CHOICES FROM PAST TO PRESENTS

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**Abstract:** The structure of the markets and behaviour pattern of the consumers in India had completely changed from past to present. During those days very few products compared to the number of consumers who wanted them were available. Demand was so high that companies did not need to promote their products. After the Second World War, the size and character of markets changed, drastic improvement took place in the field of communication, information technology making the whole world as a global village. In the competitive environment the role of advertising becomes very important. Analysis also shows that the buying habit of the consumers, Even the eating habits of people are changing. Homemade meals are often replaced by food items bought from outside. Indian is now spending his money more liberally than ever before, and food and drink have changed today than ever before. Earthenware pots have yielded place to a variety of new kitchenware. Those days are over. International brands like Ray-Ban, Lotto and Wrangler, unavailable in India for long has now occupied market positions in the consumer's mind. People of India are influenced by western culture in their living, thinking and brooding styles.

**Introduction:** The structure of the markets and behaviour pattern of the consumers in India had completely changed between 1900 and 2000. It so happened due to industrialization, education, communication, application of information technology, and advertisement as a means of reconstruction after the devastating effects of the two world wars fought in the period. When we look back we find that, in the pre-industrial revolution days in India, each village used to be more or less a self-sufficient unit. The people in the villages used to fulfil the requirements of one another. The system of barter or exchange of goods for goods, used to take place, even after the system of buying goods against money became current. Moreover, there were travelling salesmen. Regional and periodical where people could sell their own products and buy commodities of their requirements. Goods used to be sold loose from bulk stock. Particular shops were popular. During those days very few products compared to the number of consumers who wanted them were available. Demand was so high that companies did not need to promote their products. After the Second World War, the size and character of markets changed enormously. There was a substantial increase in population, the disposable income of the average family registered an increase, and new industrial concerns sprang up rapidly. A great variety of new products and services strengthened the rapidly developing consumer market, and selling of products and services became unusually difficult because of the high intensity of competition. Abundant choices were made available to the consumers and the consumers began to occupy a place of unique importance. The industrial firms realised that it was not enough if they somehow succeeded in one-time sale of their products. Rather, they had to ensure that the consumers who purchased their products once came back again and

again to buy the same products. They made their products available at a price that was advantageous to the consumers. They also had to ensure that any complaint from the consumer about the product was attended to promptly. If the product needed replacing, it had to be replaced, if it required after sales servicing, it had to be provided. And that meant the emergence of marketing.

After the World War II drastic improvement took place in the field of communication, information technology making the whole world as a global village. Communication related activities services and business have proliferated to almost magical proportion changing our homes, our education system and our whole life style.

In the competitive environment the role of advertising becomes very important. Advertisement offers umpteen choices, better value, greater and improved products to the consumers. Consequently the products are widely available and easily accessible. Advertising informs consumers about product availability and their prices. Every product can be distinguished from its rivals with the help of advertising. Thus it helps the consumers in making choice. In the modern world advertising has there ability to influence life style.

Before the independence, no company was interested to invest their time and capital on the subjects like-collection of market related data, its review and marketing research; but now, a huge amount of capital is being invested on these problems. At present only those commodities are being advertised, which are likely to be sold and be capable to fulfill and satisfy the necessities of consumers. It is fraught with risk factor to produce and launch a product without studying the demand, market, or customer. This may entail the possibility of loss. The number of producers and their products is so huge that manually it was not possible to get the products to

the consumers. The producers resorted to the application of the modern selling techniques and communicate with the consumers through advertisements about their products.

Today, we are simply overwhelmed by the vast possibilities of the technology such as user friendly computers, global satellite communication, computer graphics, animation, and multimedia. The latest is the Internet. Earlier the customer had to walk few kilometers to buy something. But, now the idea of home-delivery has become true with the help of computers. Apart from increase in national income and per capita income, buying capacity of people has also increased. Number of below poverty population has also declined rapidly. Due to good income, expenses on commodities of personal use are also increasing gradually. Where the per capita expenses on food and drink were only Rs. 986 in 1981-82, it becomes Rs. 1572 in 1987-88. Per capita expenditure increased from Rs. 181 to Rs. 325 on shoes and garments; Rs. 92 to Rs. 234 on transportation and communication; Rs. 196 to 318 on rent, fuel and electricity. Buying capacity has also increased in purchasing of refrigerators, television, radio, bicycle, scooter, car, furniture, etc. Where as the number of refrigerators on per lakh population were only 13 in 1960-61, it increased to 255 in 1985-86. It means we can say that in the last few years' expenses on personal consumption has increased. Pressure of buying capacity obviously affects the industrial production. If the capacity of money expenditure will be exceeded, then industrial production will also be increased and the limit of market will also be expanded.

A number of durables as well as non-durables new products which were hitherto non-existent in the Indian market have now become a part of regular fare. Many of the older products acquired new strengths and new marketing dimension. The progression from traditional goods to sophisticated and modern goods has been the most striking development in the consumer goods sector. Other products, which have shown substantial, increase in rural marketing included sewing machines, mechanical and quartz wristwatches. An orchestration of several factors including increasing income level and a consequent rise in purchasing power, changing trends, people especially the middle-class have contributed to this increase.

Analysis also shows that the buying habit of the consumers, convenience food like instant coffee and noodles and now popular modern gadget like washing machines, the number of households going in for such items keeps increasing. Even the eating habits of people are changing. Home made meals are often replaced by food items bought from outside. With the nuclear family there is also a shift in the

housewife's attitude to cooking and meals she serves, and teenagers in the family are feeling the impact of shift in their family's meal pattern. More than everything else the average Indian is now spending his money more liberally than ever before, and food and drink have changed today than ever before. And it is this change in attitude that has primarily caused the growth of fast food/convenience food and soft drink in India. Even among the low income households there has been substantial change in the aspiration levels. These changes have been stimulated to some extent by exposure to TV- the exposure to the lifestyles of the well-to-do as depicted on TV as well as the products that are heavily advertised on.

The marketing environment of the rural market has been undergoing vast changes in the last two decades. For example- tape recorders or 'two-in-ones' were practically unheard of in the Indian rural market twenty years ago. Today, they are seen every where in rural areas, even in the remotest of hamlets. The spread of bicycles and subsequently two-wheelers has been almost in the nature of revolution. Even TV has entered the village homes in a big way. In the arena of clothing, there has been a remarkable change - preferences have shifted to blended fabrics, knitted apparels and readymade garments. Earthenware pots have yielded place to a variety of new kitchenware. Plastic products and stainless steel goods have become common consumer items. The change in every sphere is visible and palpable. Recent times have seen a steady increase in the purchasing capacity of the rural people. Contrary to popular belief the rural market is already consuming a variety of high priced consumer durables and other modern products. And more and more companies are today targeting the rural market.

The premium segment in most product categories in India is also growing, and growing fast. Through the '80s, the number of Indians traveling abroad has increased steadily. More dramatic has been the Satellite TV phenomenon which has brought foreign lands and products into Indian bedrooms. This has fuelled a desire for more and better goods and services. For the marketer, launching a premium product is often good strategy. The faster growing popular segment is usually dominated by the unorganised sector, and the organised sector marketer is at a serious disadvantage because of overheads and duties. The premium segment therefore is the most attractive growing rapidly, with fewer brands. No longer launch the Luxes or the Lifebuoys. Those days are over. Brands like Ariel is appealing to people whom are already using detergents by upgrading them. International brands like Ray-Ban, Lotto and Wrangler, unavailable in India for long has now occupied market positions in the consumer's mind. The brands Sony cover a huge

range of products from basic cassette players to really expensive high definition TV.

An interesting development is the emergence of a huge replacement market for several consumer durables, in refrigerators, in two wheelers, in TVs. A replacement buyer will obviously move up from his current model, in terms of both product features and benefits. Some product marketers like Videocon and BPL in refrigerators and LML in two-Wheelers are squarely aiming at this lot of consumers. Like western countries, now the social and personal values of Indian have also rapidly changed, the reason being the evolution of rampant materialism; extreme desire of growth; much requirement of physical luxury; social, economical, personal values and ideals.

People of India are influenced by western culture in their living, thinking and brooding styles. Knowingly or unknowingly people are getting far away from the

Indian life style “**Simple living and high thinking**”, and people who are financially capable have adopted the materialistic policy of “**Eat, drink and satisfy whim**”. People have attracted very soon towards the fine, splendour and latest designed garments, variety of pungent and delicious dishes, costly and shining shoes, cosmetics, and high-speed vehicles, modern and well developed domestic appliances and equipment of personal Luxury, and enjoyment through five star hotels and resorts, etc. The modern capable consumer has a desire for him and his family, well-furnished house, delicious and nutritious food and comfortable wearing and wants to be assured towards his future. Most peoples have adopted the materialism, and they have extreme desire to get the commodities, which can satisfy their physical and mental necessities.

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