



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CONSUMER'S BUYING BEHAVIOR; AN ANALYTICAL STUDY CARRIED OUT IN DISTRICT BHIWANI.

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at finding out impact of Covid-19 on Consumer behavior for the residents of district Bhiwani. The study has been conducted on 102 respondents from the different areas of Bhiwani (Haryana) through online mode using a simple modeling process involving respondents from different age groups. After collecting data through an online survey, it is analyzed to determine the value of individual estimates. The practical significance of this study is huge as the change in consumer behavior is going to impact fairly all industries; therefore it is important to study the changes in consumer behavior which could then help firms develop appropriate strategies for their businesses. The findings provide that more than 60% of the population feel change in their buying behavior after outbreak of Covid-19. However, more than one factor seems to affect their buying decision. All of these findings provide results for advertisers, retailers to formulate strategies based on current epidemic trends which could be applied further in the retail sector.

Key words- Online shopping, Pandemic, Consumer behavior, Digital Marketing, COVID-19

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID -19 pandemic has impacted the change in almost all spheres of life. People now have divergent views on how they lead their life post Covid. There has been a shift in how the supply chains used to work; consumers are also now viewing products not merely as want satisfying commodity.

Globally, there has been more than 10 percent growth in online shopping at all stages as per the report published by McKinsey, and consumers expect this to continue even if brick and mortar



stores open again. People now prefer large size packaged products/several units at a time over buying goods as per the daily needs.

Another factor that raises people's attention to this process of social segregation is regarding the delivery of products at their doorsteps. According to the latest news articles in India, with fear of COVID-19, people have cut down ordering products online due to fear of being affected through coming in contact with the delivery person but to what degree remains unpredictable. Let's see how Covid-19 has affected consumer buying behavior in district Bhiwani.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Covid-19 Consumer Research looks at changing of attitudes, behavior of consumers around the world as the world is adapting to a new reality during the coronavirus outbreak. The study was conducted during August 1-23 and September 2-28 and included 102 participants from Bhiwani district. This survey is repeated over and over again to track changes as the situation evolves.

In a rapidly changing world of global market competition, automation and democratic growth, digitalization must affect one's ability to access and use information effectively, so selecting people from different backgrounds and researching them proves to be a viable solution.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY/HYPOTHESIS

- To study the changes in the consumer's buying behavior in Bhiwani, in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic.
- To understand rich, complex, and detailed picture of consumer behavior during Covid-19 outbreak for the consumers of Bhiwani.
- To find correlation between increase in price and availability of goods amidst global pandemic.
- To find the impact of consumer awareness on consumer's buying behavior for the residents of Bhiwani district.

METHODOLOGY USED

(a) Process

We have used survey method, face to face interview method and questionnaire method to analyze the present study.

(b) Population

As this study is concerned with finding the consumer behavior for the people of Bhiwani, therefore people from different backgrounds and age groups were interviewed online and a few face-to-face interviews were conducted during the study.

FINDINGS

- **Gender**

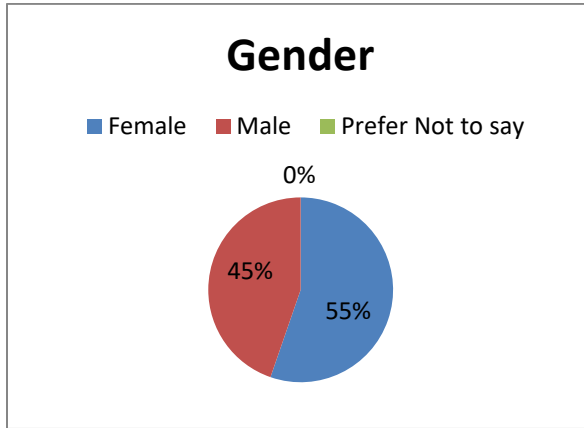


Figure 1 explains the sample distribution on the basis of gender. Out of 102 respondents, 55.3% were female and 44.7% were male.

- **Age Distribution**

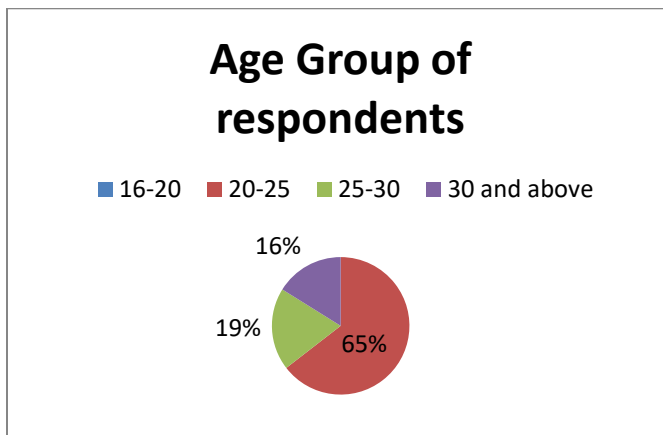


Figure 2 reveals that 64.9% of total respondents were in the age group of 20-25, 19% came from the age group of 25-30, and 16% came from the age group of 30 and above.

- Increase in price of commodities.

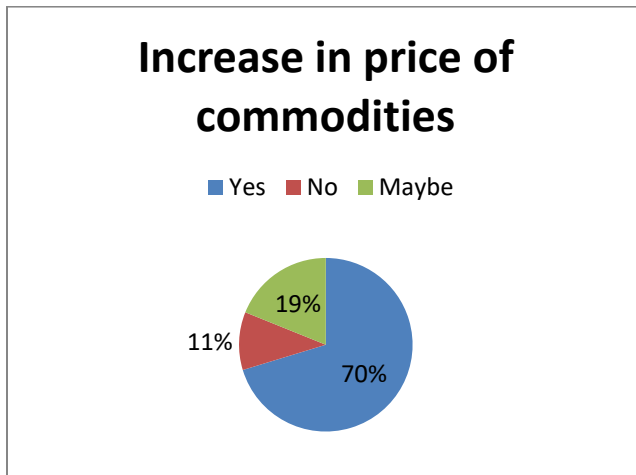


Figure 3 reveals that around 70 percent of people found increase in price of commodities after Covid-19 outbreak while around 10% people did not found any increase in price of commodities and around 20% of population isn't really sure about the price hike of commodities.

This means that more than half of the population saw rise in price of commodities after the Covid outbreak. As the supply chains were disrupted globally, which created temporary shortage of commodities, therefore increase in price was visible for almost all the commodities traded in the market.

- Shift towards online shopping methods.



Figure 4 reveals that around 46 percent of people have shifted to online methods of shopping while around 30 percent of people still prefer traditional methods of shopping, rest were unable to give satisfactory answer. This reveals serious implications for the firms who carry out their

business online. More so this will be the new normal in coming period but surely this is a huge incentive for the new businesses.

- Willingness to pay extra in name of maximum protection

Around 67 percent people surveyed confirm that they are *sometimes* willing to pay extra to sellers who claim to have maximum safety for delivery of products while around 10% people will always pay something extra for maximum safety during delivery and due to this reason so many businesses have started including keywords like no contact delivery, maximum protection, seamless contactless delivery as part of their marketing strategy.

- Continuation of Online shopping in Future

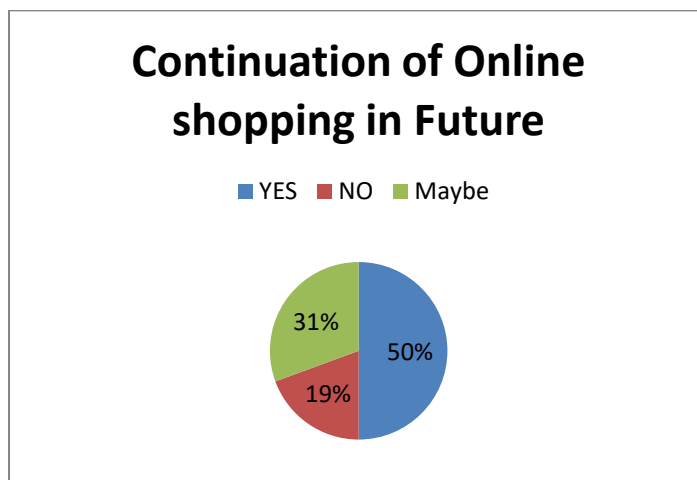


Figure 6 reveals that half the population surveyed in the research will consider shopping through online mode in future also even when things get normal. This means that there is greater incentive for businesses that carry out their business processes online.



- Around 73 percent population surveyed during the research think that they have seen rise in frauds related to fake advertising of goods in name of buzzwords like immunity



booster. At a time when there was absence of specific treatment for Covid-19, people rushed for temporary solutions like immunity boosting kits and readymade *kadha* which was being marketed by Pharmacy companies to raise immunity in the body and thus can prevent virus from entering into the system.

- Consumers now cater to fulfilling their basic needs while minimizing on non-essentials. They pay close attention to what they buy, strive to limit food waste and make healthy choices and care for the environment.
- Consumers have also reported decrease in their purchase of items from market as there was binding restrictions which were imposed on the residents of the country, people did not consider resuming their outdoor activities normally and hence people preferred having home-made food over readymade ones.
- With supply chains being disrupted globally, consumers had no other option but to buy what was easily available to them at that point, it forced them trying new products and new stores, hence a shock to big brands. Consumers also looked at proper sanitization, usage of masks and other measures being followed when deciding from where to shop.

CONCLUSION

In times like these, our basic need for life comes first. Not surprisingly, personal health is one of the most important consumer preferences, which is followed by family and friends. The outbreak of Covid has taken consumers out of their normal routine. Consumers are embracing new habits and behaviors that many think will continue in the future.

Consumers are keenly aware of what you are buying. They strive to limit food waste, deliberately buying more units at a time. Firms will need to make this a major part of its strategy (for example, by exploring new business models) and most brands have shown diversity in their marketing communications to influence consumer preferences.



Varied opinions regarding online shopping experience

Consumers are prioritizing over essential commodities and limiting non-essential items.

New business models are emerging

Consumers have moved from consuming unnecessary goods and services to storing essential items and making them last longer. And they think about their use more than ever. Now business needs to have their presence online and therefore we see new types of business models emerging where consumers can choose their products online without the hassle of visiting the store which surely adds the value to their business. And as a result businesses are rapidly changing their business strategies and product delivery to emerging consumer needs and styles that will distinguish themselves as long-term winners.

LIMITATIONS

Although the study was limited to people of a certain age and income group, a larger study could provide results that could not be commonly used. As a result of this limitation, extensive research conducted in a wide range of subject areas may yield different findings. Investigating the relationship between variables such as commodity prices and acquisitions of assets can help lead further research in this area.

The study was aimed at people from Bhiwani city, so there were certain geographical limitations attached to the study and hence should not be generalized. In the conduct of future studies, the level of consumer awareness, delays in online services and a significant increase in product prices during the COVID-19, exposure to illiterate people may differ from the findings and analysis of this study. Also, this study focuses on the Covid outbreak period in which citizens are placed, but as rest is allowed, preferences / prejudices may differ from the stated results as and when situation improves.

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