



A Study of Buying Behavior of Consumer During COVID-19: An Overview

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Abstract: Nowadays, India is going through second wave of COVID-19, and it is very disastrous with compared first one, since March, 2020, Government of India imposed strict lockdown all over India, due to this countrywide lockdown, all the business organizations temporarily suspended their business operations, except goods and services comes under essential services. Essential goods and services include, Hospital, Medical, Grocery Shops, Milk Centers, Vegetables shops, banking sector, etc. e-commerce industry also suspended their business operations except essential goods and services. But the behavior of consumers has completely changed during the period of lockdown compared to behavior before COVID-19. Before lockdown, consumers behave in a relaxed mood, but after the news of strict lockdown, most of the consumers became aggressive towards buying all the required things including essential goods. All consumers rushed to the market and purchased groceries, medicines (including medicines of Vitamin C and Multivitamins), vegetables, alcohols, masks, sanitizers, all essential household supplies, etc. The consumers also think about cost cutting, savings, online transactions and cashless transactions and the most important thing is that the consumer focuses on the local market for fulfillment of his household needs from the local market. Apart from this, especially urban consumers fulfilled their needs of household supplies and medicine purchased from the e-commerce platform. Many customers use digital payment systems or cashless transactions while buying on online platforms, but in rural India most of the customers trust COD (Cash on delivery, with this many behavioral changes seen by the consumer of India. During the period of COVID-19 many negative and positive changes were seen in the behavior of the Indian consumer, therefore this paper mainly focuses on the negative and positive impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior.

Key Words: COVID-19, Consumer, Consumer Behavior, household supplies, e-commerce, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Currently, India is suffering from the second wave of COVID-19, this wave is very harmful and disastrous with compare to previous one, during the period of this pandemic every human being is scared and have lots stress, most of the people avoiding to go out, many businesses allow their staff to Work From Home (WFH), they working digitally from their home, online classes is going on, people just want to go out for their essential needs and household supplies. Many online or e-commerce platforms are also available for household supplies and essential goods and services in urban areas. The customers belong to urban areas and many from rural areas are also using digital payment options and also trying to go cashless and most of the customers from rural areas are trying to COD or POD (Cash on Delivery or Pay on Delivery). Apart from these most of the customers rely on the local business or store, many of them purchasing from Brick and Mortar Stores. The customers become health conscious and buy essential medicine required during the period like tablets of Vitamin C, Multivitamins, Paracetamols, etc. The customer also tries to reduce expenditure by fulfilling daily needs; they try to avoid buying costliest things and take a move towards saving money. Overall it is observed that, in the current scenario, the behavior of the customers has completely changed and moved towards shopping need based items or things.

Meaning and Definition

“Consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services, and how the consumer's emotions, attitudes and preferences affect buying behavior.”

-Wikipedia



“Consumer behavior is the act of an individual, group of individuals or persons or organizations towards the activities buying and selling of goods and services and consumer’s personal choices, psychological preferences, standard of living, earning capacity, cultural events, festivals, situations, etc. will affect the buying behavior of the customers”.

Sometimes, the current economic scenario or specific emergency or requirement might change the behavior of the customer, like the situation of COVID-19 Pandemic. The situation of COVID-19, completely changes the consumers buying behavior. During this period, consumer needs fulfill their basic or essential requirements like groceries, medicines, etc. instead of luxurious requirements.

2. SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This study is especially based on buying behavior of the consumer, during the period of COVID-19 pandemic. This study reflects the consumer preferences, choices, essential requirements, market conditions, availability of goods and services, during the period of lockdown, fulfillment of requirements, health hygiene, etc. Therefore this behavior leads to a decision of demand and supply of essential goods and services along health related services. To overcome the situation of pandemic as well as business financial criticalness.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To Study the buying behavior of the consumers in Pre-COVID-19 Pandemic
- To Study the buying behavior of the consumers during COVID-19 Pandemic
- To Study the buying behavior of the consumers in Post COVID-19 Pandemic first wave.
- To Study the buying behavior of the consumers during COVID-19 Pandemic of Second wave.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This paper is based on data collected from different sources, like observation of buying behavior of consumers and their choices, along with this also using secondary data from reliable sources.

5. IMPACT OF COVID-19 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR:

Since March, 2020, Government of India imposing strict country wide lockdown to overcome the situation occurrences, due to COVID-19, all the business enterprises temporarily suspends their business except business of essential goods and services and pharmaceutical products, essential goods and services, millions of labor losing their jobs, stopping their income. In this situation, it has become very difficult to fulfill basic needs of the family with very low income or less money. During the period of pandemic the behavior of consumers has completely changed and it focuses on fulfilling basic day-to-day needs only and for that purpose consumers only purchase grocery and essential goods. Apart from these they also buy health hygiene related or pharmaceutical products for medical emergencies. Along with this, the behavior of consumer has been changed in following way:

6. CHANGES IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR:

- **Fulfillment of Basic Needs:** During the period of pandemic, Indian consumers, mainly in the middle and lower class, fully focus on goods of daily needs; therefore they only purchase the essential goods and services from the market. Due to this pandemic the standard of living is completely changed and buying household supplies and reducing the use or expenditure of buying the costliest and luxurious item.
- **Health Conscious:** Due to this pandemic, almost all the households are aware about health and hygiene. Many of the people trying to go out for the activities of buying and selling, and trying to use or buying health related products and medicines as precautionary measures. Many of them buy “Kadha”, tablets of Vitamin C, Multivitamins, purchasing masks, sanitizers, etc.
- **Trust on Local Retailers:** As mentioned above, many consumers become cautious about their own health, and try to avoid going outside, therefore in this situation they rely on the local market and purchase essential goods and services from local market and local retailers.
- **Change in Transportation:** Due to this pandemic and during the period of pandemic many people are trying to avoid public transport to move from one place to another. Most of them use their own vehicle like Two Wheeler, Four Wheeler, etc. to go outside.
- **Less Enjoyment:** During the period of vacation as well as weekends many people are going outside or on tourist places for enjoyment at different places of India or outside India. But due to this COVID-19 pandemic, almost all the sources of transportation remain closed for public use. Meanwhile due to the unlocking of India, limited



sources of transportations are open but many people are afraid of infection of CORONA Virus. Apart from these the people are also trying to avoid getting together, parties, celebrations, etc. due to these they are also avoiding buying new things like clothes, shoes, jewellery, etc. these all things reflects that, people are also avoiding enjoyment and getting together or celebrating in a group.

- **Less Expectations:** Due to this pandemic, people are using local resources for fulfillment of their individual needs, and trying to fulfill from their local market and also trying to save money for different emergencies like medical, hospital, etc. therefore they are avoiding costliest items for their personal use. The people learn to live with fewer expectations.
- **Avoid Travelling:** Due to this pandemic and because of COVID-19 fear, many people are avoiding travelling out. Even after Unlock India, many people are scared to go out for tours and travels or travelling other personal purposes.
- **Cost cutting:** Nowadays every consumer is trying to bargain for cost cutting, and also trying to save money while purchasing the essential household supplies therefore they are trying to buy essential goods and services from local markets or local retailers. Apart from these, most of the consumers are trying to avoid unnecessary goods and services.
- **Saving:** Due to this pandemic every consumer is trying to spend less money and also trying to save money for future emergencies. During these days many people lose their jobs, stop earning, become unemployed, etc. and due to this condition there is no guarantee of getting a job in the nearest future. Therefore most customers try to spend money only for essential goods and services and save money for fulfilling future requirements.
- **Accepting Cashless transactions:** During the period of pandemic, one of the best things happened was that, most of the consumers diverted from hard cash to cashless transactions. These days, most consumers try to avoid using hard cash due to the fear of CORONA Virus, many people are afraid to accept hard cash. Therefore they prefer to do transactions through digital payment mode, while performing any transactions of shopping, they prefer cashless transactions. Nowadays, many consumers use Google Pay, PhonePe, Amazon Pay, PayTm, etc. Apart from these most of the businessmen provide option of QR code i.e. touch free payment.
- **Buying from E-commerce platform:** Due to this pandemic, many consumers diverted their shopping platform from the local market to e-commerce. While these days many consumers using digital mode for purchasing different essential goods and services, for these transactions, many of them using digital payment mode and many of them using COD (Cash on Delivery) option, even in rural many consumers using digital platform for buying different product because they are fulfilling the requirements of COVID-19 Appropriate Behavior for providing services. Nowadays, Amazon, Flipkart, Snapdeal, Myntra.com, etc. are major players of digital commerce.
- **Purchasing own Vehicle:** Due to this pandemic many people are afraid to use public transport facilities for mobilizing from one place to another. Due to the fear of CORONA Virus infection, many people use their own vehicle to move from one place to another or many others purchase their own.

From the above, it is found that, due to this pandemic, the behavior of Indian consumers has completely changed, they buy only necessity based goods and services, focus on health hygiene, transform from local to digital platform for buying essential goods and services with digital payment systems, etc.

7. CONCLUSIONS:

Finally, from the above study it is conclude that, Since March 2020, India has on restricted mode, therefore economy of India also serving different industries through restricted mode. Markets also have some restriction, most of the time and during these days most the markets have remain closed due second wave of the COVID-19 except markets of essential goods and services, banking sector, medical, pharmaceutical sector, etc. these shops also running with restricted mode. Pandemic is going through worst condition. In this situation, many consumers afraid to go market to buy essential goods and services, therefore they changed their buying behavior and concentrated especially on need based products and services instead of luxurious one. They are avoiding non-essential goods and services and trying to saving money. Also using digital mode of transaction while buying and paying money. In short consumers completely changed their buying behavior and they performing only need based transactions from local market, after these days they concentrated only on health hygiene, cost cutting and saving money and performing transaction with safe and secure mode.

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