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A STUDY ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS IN MUMBAI

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ABSTRACT

Pandemics like COVID-19 result in a disruption in the lifestyle and buying pattern of a consumer and adversely impact the global economy. Consumer purchase of country's own brand and the products manufactured in their own country plays a vital role in the GDP of that country and help in revival of the country's economy. The pandemic has impacted virtually all aspects of our lives. Some developments have been sudden and involuntary, such as social distancing, wearing masks, stopping public transport, restrictions on travel, etc. For others, it has merely accelerated the adoption of behaviours already gaining traction, such as the digitalisation of shopping, banking and more. Present study results reveal that during pandemic consumers have realized the importance of hygiene products, environment-friendly products, regional (local) products, and satisfaction beyond shopping; these factors determine their willingness to buy Indian brands (WBIB) made-in-India products. Further, post lockdown and post COVID era, consumers feel that buying Indian-made products and encouraging others to buy them would impact and revive the Indian economy constructively.

This study focuses on understanding the factors that influence consumer's buying behaviour and can aid marketing managers in planning appropriate promotion strategies to stimulate ethnocentric tendency, and cues can be provided to invoke a sense of economic nationalism in consumers when they buy products or services.

Keywords: Buying Behaviour, Covid-19, Economic Nationalism, Consumer Ethnocentrism, Sustainable Approach

INTRODUCTION

The world faced a unique challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic. China was the first country to face the mass spread of novel Coronavirus (Bennett, 2020) and promptly, the virus started spreading across the world. On 11 March 2020, the coronavirus epidemic was declared a 'pandemic' by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). In the absence of a vaccine to curb the spread of the highly contagious virus COVID-19, countries around the world were forced to take preventive measures in the form of imposing social distancing and declaring country-wide lockdowns (Kaplan et al., 2020). This restricted cross border travel, suspended production, and the global supply chain came to a halt. Social distancing was a very challenging task in India as it is the second most populated country in the world. To protect the population of 1.3 billion from infection, the Prime Minister of India announced 21 days of nationwide lockdown on 24 March 2020. The decision taken after 14 hours of voluntary public curfew on 22 March 2020, known as Janata (people) Curfew (The Economic Times, 2020).

During the first phase of coronavirus lockdown in India, citizens experienced unprecedented situations, leading to an unparalleled preference shift among consumers. Goods were classified into essential and non-essential goods; only essential goods were available to citizens, and there was no demand for lifestyle products (Economic Times, 2020). Another unique behaviour was noticed when people across the world expressed their