

P R E F A C E

Consumer behaviour research has emphasised almost exclusively the characteristics of the consumer; the actor. The issues that get usually investigated are the usership pattern of consumers as well as knowing psychographic and the demographics of those who use it. The problem is that behavioural tendencies revealed by different studies appear to be activated in specific situations. There may not always be a conclusive rationale behind the manifestation. As a result, situational research approach came into the limelight. The situational approach studies the situation under the assumption that it governs response more than the consumer characteristics. Either approach alone, however, is misleading. Consumer behaviour could best be viewed as the interaction of the actor and the situation including object attributes.

Notwithstanding the above developments, consumer action/behaviour remains a mystery. His/her choice can not be always explained and/or predicted. All that is now expected from the behavioural sciences and the consumer behaviour theories is an initial set of hypotheses on the likely relationship between consumer concepts and some specific marketing response.

Published research about consumer behaviour in India are marked by an absence. Therefore, to formulate the hypotheses of our present research, help of research evidences of the West and the common beliefs about Indian consumers has been taken. Our work, to make a beginning of the process of understanding the behaviour of consumers, has collected

data on a live situation in an Indian metropolis; Calcutta. The dimensions that have been studied in this research pertain to brand preference, perception and overt behaviour towards chosen five market related factors, price awareness as well as brand choice behaviour of select eight consumer non-durable products.

To tread along and learn from the developments of research works done, a review of literature of consumer behaviour has been made in chapter 2. This chapter also offers a critical evaluation of the theories/concepts/models of consumer behaviour research. The design, working hypotheses and the findings of our work are provided in chapters 3 & 4 respectively. Chapter 5 concludes with an analysis of the highlights and contains clues for further work.