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A STUDY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF KARBI TRADITIONAL COSTUMES

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ABSTRACT

Buying decision of an individual is influenced by various factors. An individual always goes through a process which leads him or her to arrive at a decision whether to buy a product or not. It is important for a marketer or manufacturer to know the factors which influence consumer behavior in purchasing a product. In recent years, traditional costumes have witnessed a substantial change in their designs and quality. Apart from those traditional designs, modern designs have come up which gives customers variety of choices in the market. Also, introduction of power looms offer identical traditional costumes at a price lower than handloom traditional costumes. However, customer responses on all the traditional costumes available in the market are not the same. It is found that consumers are driven by certain factors in making their decision in buying these products. On this line, this study is an attempt to study the buying behavior of the consumer in purchasing the traditional costumes of the Karbis. The Karbis are culturally rich and their traditional costumes are basically hand woven and artistic in nature. The study is descriptive in nature. A sample of 50 respondents is taken conveniently and information is collected through questionnaire. The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Introduction

Existence of an organization is fully dependent on consumers. Cochran (2006) has rightly pointed out that, the customer is the sole reason for an organization to exist. In marketing, It is widely accepted that a consumer is always considered as a "King". This is because the final purchase decision is always made by a customer. Durmaz, Çelik and Oruç, (2011) has pointed out that, a marketer may influence their buying behavior but not control. A sale generally takes place in the minds of the customer. Any sale is affected only when the buyer, after considering various factors thoroughly and if convinced that the purchase of a particular commodity will satisfy his need. Hence, consumer purchase decision and buying behavior is largely influenced by many external and internal factors and therefore, study of consumer behavior and their influence on buying behavior becomes necessary.

Consumer behavior is the mental, emotional and physical activities that people engage when selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy needs and desires (Wilkie, 1994, Pariest, Carter and Statt, 2013). Michael R.Solomon, & Nancy J.Rabolt (2004), on the other hand opines consumer behavior as the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups, select purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. According to Frank R.Kardes (2002), consumer behavior is the study of human or consumer responds to products, services and the marketing of products and services.

The Karbi Tribe and their Traditional Costumes

The Karbis are the important indigenous tribe in the North Eastern part of India mostly concentrated in the hilly districts of Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao. Ethnically, the Karbis belongs to Mongolian race and speak Tibeto-Burmese language. According to 2011 census the population of Karbi stands at 4,30,452 (Census of India, 2011).

The Karbis are rich in handloom and textiles traditionally having their own designs, motifs and colour patterns. Their handloom designs are based on such designs and motifs which are inspired from nature. Each of such designs and motifs has meanings and are culturally significant. Handloom in Karbi community is taken up mostly by women and can be undoubtedly regarded as the reservoir of the culture and tradition of the community. Their main weaving component is known as "*therang*". Costumes for men and women are completely different. Women apparels constitute *pini, pekok, vamkok* with a top covering the upper part of their body known as *choi*. The men apparels primarily consist of *choi-ik, choi-ang, chepan, poho, rikong* amongst others. *Peh-um and jamborong* are commonly used by both men and women. All these products are hand woven and even the color fabrics are prepared by their own using traditional methods. However, these days many machine made traditional costumes are available in the market, making a choice for a customer to either buy a handloom made or power loom manufactured costumes.

Review of Literature

Sproles and Kendall(1986) established a model to conceptualize consumer decision making behavior with eight consumer mental orientation variables namely, perfectionism consciousness, brand consciousness, novelty and fashion consciousness, impulsive and careless consumer, confused by over choice consumer, habitual and brand loyal consumer, recreational and hedonic shopping consciousness and price and value consciousness.

Teron (2012) observed that the Karbi loom to be continue to be in use as an important tool for producing a wide variety of textiles with intricate motive and design which undoubtedly formed the single most visible symbol of Karbi tradition, culture and identity.

Teron and Borthakur (2012) has discussed about the traditional Knowledge of Herbal dyes and cultural significance of color among the Karbi community. The study explains the wide knowledge and traditional techniques of preparing colour through different kinds of plants by the Karbi community.

Phukan (2012) in his article "Handloom weaving in Assam: Problems and Prospects" has observed various opportunities offered by handloom industry such as job creation, economic security, demand for handloom products in the international market. The author has also highlighted several problems faced by people engaged in handloom industry like obsolete design, low productivity, low value addition, dependence on master weavers, and no rewards for innovation, poor marketing and insufficient market linkage outside the state and because of such reason the present scenario of the state's handloom industry is "lukewarm". The author further mentioned that innovation in design to cope up with the latest market demand are not sufficient and have posed a threat to such indigenous industry. According to him, bringing together economically and educationally backward weaver under co-operative, ensuring supply of quality raw materials, providing promotional and marketing assistance will help the growth of such industry.

Durmaz (2014) study on "The influence of cultural factors on consumer buying behavior and an application in Turkey" found that most of the consumers in Turkey do shopping from related store (approximately 43 percent). Approximately half of the consumers know that the most important factor in buying goods and services are environment and friends (about 46%). Based on these results his study concluded that for the majority of survey, respondents' belief, culture and tradition are the most important factor (around 60 %). About more than half of the consumers believe that the most important factor in buying goods and services are job and occupational social group effect (about 54 percent).

Saluja (2016) in the study "Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Fashion Apparels- A Case of Delhi" has found out various attitude variables influencing consumer purchase intention. According to the study the consumers enjoy shopping mostly with their friends and family members and are largely influenced by their friends, family members, celebrities, magazines etc. Quality, comfort, brand are the main criteria's which effect their buying behavior towards fashion apparels. The study further suggests that the consumer is more

tend to ethnic and opts for other segments. However, demographic factors like gender, age, occupation and monthly income don't have any impact on buying behaviour of consumers towards fashion apparels.

It is found from the review of literature that various studies on Karbi Handloom and consumer behavior has been carried out. However, study on factors influencing the buying behavior of consumer in purchasing traditional costumes, particularly to that of a Karbi tribe has not been found. This study therefore, will throw some lights in identifying and studying those factors that are generally considered while buying traditional costumes of the Karbi Tribe.

Significance of Study

The Karbis are culturally and traditionally rich community. Their cultural and traditional richness can be seen from their designs, patterns and motifs that they use in their costumes. The Karbi community generally use handloom to produce their traditional costumes. They traditionally practice the process of dyeing fabrics on their own using locally available plants. However in the current scenario, machine made traditional costumes with identical designs and patterns are available in the market as an alternative to the handloom traditional costumes and customers have a larger choice in purchasing traditional costumes. The machine made traditional costumes are cheaper compared to handloom products. In this context, this study will help in understanding customers' interest in purchasing traditional costumes of the Karbis that influences their buying behaviour. Moreover, this study will also shed light on customers' perception towards the use of traditional costumes.

Objectives of the Study

This study pertains to the following objectives:

1. To study the buying behavior of customers in purchasing traditional costumes of the Karbis and
2. To study customer perception towards the use of traditional costumes.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature as its main objective is to find out the factors that influence the buying behavior of consumers in buying Karbi traditional costumes. To fulfill the objectives of the study a sample of 50 respondents is taken conveniently and information is collected through questionnaire. Questionnaires were sent through mails and the respondents were asked to return the same. Out of 50 questionnaires that were sent, 34 respondents replied back, the percentage of response being 68%. The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Findings and Discussion

Data collected from respondents are analysed in tabular form along with the percentage of response. Accordingly, Table No.1 below shows the demographic information of the respondents. Out of 34

respondents that responded to the questionnaire sent, 20 respondents, i.e. 58.8% are male and 14 respondents, i.e. 41.1 % are female.

According to the educational qualification of the respondents, 02 (5.8%) studied upto Class 10, 08 respondents (23.5%) are HS qualified, 10 respondents (29.4%) are graduates another 10 respondents (29.4%) are post graduates, 02 (5.8%) respondents are qualified above PG levels while 02 respondents (5.8%) are professionals.

Table No.1

Demographic Factors

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	20	58.8
Female	14	41.1
Total	**34**	**100**
Educational Level		
Upto Class 10	2	5.8
HS	8	23.5
Graduation	10	29.4
Post Graduate	10	29.4
Above P.G	2	5.8
Professional	2	5.8
Total	**34**	**100**
Occupation		
Housewife	2	5.8
Paid Employee	8	23.5
Business	2	5.8
Self-employed	8	23.5
Retired Person	0	0
Student	10	29.4
Others	4	11.7
Total	**34**	**100**
Monthly Household Income		
<10,000	10	29.4
10,000-20,000	12	35.2
20,000-30,000	2	5.8

30,000-40,000	6	17.6
>50,000	4	11.7
Total	**34**	**100**

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

The occupation of the respondents as seen from the table are 02 (5.8) respondents are housewife, 08 (23.5%) are paid employees, 02 (5.8%) are engaged in business, 08 (23.5%) are self employed, 10 (29.4%) are students and 04 (11.4%) respondents are engaged in other activities. There are no retired persons as respondents in the study.

Based on the annual income of the family, the table shows, 10 (29.4%) of the respondents' income fall below Rs. 10,000, 12 (35.2%) of the respondents' income is between Rs. 10,000-20,000 which is the highest income group in this case. Another 02 (5.8%) respondents income fall between Rs. 20,000-30,000, the income of 06 (17.6%) respondents falls between Rs. 30,000-40,000 while the income of 04 (11.4%) is above Rs. 50,000.

Table No.2 depicts the frequency of wearing traditional costumes by the respondents. It is generally viewed that, the higher the frequency of wearing, higher will be the purchase. Keeping this view in to consideration question has been asked to the respondents. Accordingly, the table shows that only 02 (5.8%) out of 34 respondents responded that they wear traditional costumes while going for work, which is the lowest amongst all other. On the other hand 30 respondents i.e. an overwhelming 88.2% of total respondents like to wear traditional costumes in festivals and cultural functions which are the highest. While 28 (82.3%) respondents wears traditional costumes during religious functions, 20 (58.8%) respondents wears during social functions and 12 (35.2%) of the respondents wear traditional costumes during political functions.

Table No2

Frequency of wearing Traditional CostumeS

Frequency of wearing	Yes (out of 34 respondents)	Percentage	No (out of 34 Respondents)	Percentage
While going to work	2	5.8	28	82.3
Festivals	30	88.2	4	11.7
Religious Functions	28	82.3	2	5.8
Social Functions	20	58.8	10	29.4
Cultural Functions	30	88.2	4	11.7
Political Functions	12	35.2	18	53

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

In order to find out customer preference in buying either Handloom Traditional costumes or Machine made traditional costumes, a question has been incorporated in the questionnaire and its response is shown below in Table No. 3. It is evident from the table that majority of the respondents, i.e. 18 (53%)

out of 34 prefers buying Handloom traditional costumes, while only 04(11.7) respondents prefers Machine made traditional costumes. Another 12 (35.2%) respondents prefer both handloom and machine made traditional costumes.

Table No.3

Customer Preference in Respect of Product Type

Product type	Frequency	Percentage
Handloom	18	53
Machine Made	4	11.7
Both	12	35.2
Total	**34**	**100**

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

Table No.4 below shows the comparative views of customer between Handloom and machine made traditional costumes. Some factors are included in the questionnaire and the respondents were asked to put their views based on the pre-mentioned factors.

Accordingly, in terms of durability, 30 (88.2%) respondents fell that handloom costumes are more durable than machine made traditional costumes. Only 02 (5.8%) responded machine made costumes being more durable than handloom costumes. Out of 34 respondents, 02 (5.8%) respondents have not responded here.

In terms of color reliability, 28 (67.6%) respondents feel that handloom costumes has more reliability and does not fade off easily compared to machine made traditional costumes. None of the respondents feel that machine made traditional costumes is reliable in terms of color than handloom costumes. Out of 34 respondents, 06 (17.6%) respondents have not responded here.

In terms of comfortability, 26(76.4%) respondents fell that handloom costumes are more comfortable than machine made traditional costumes. While 06(17.6%) responded machine made costumes being more comfortable than handloom costumes. Out of 34 respondents, 02 (5.8%) respondents have not responded here.

Table No 4

Comparative Views of Customers Regarding Handloom and Machine made Traditional Costumes

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Durability		
Handloom	30	88.2
Machine Made	2	5.8
Not Responded	2	5.8
Total	**34**	**100**
Color Reliability		

Handloom	28	67.6
Machine Made	0	0
Not Responded	6	17.6
Total	**34**	**100**
Comfortability		
Handloom	26	76.4
Machine Made Traditional costumes	6	17.6
Not Responded	2	5.8
Total	**34**	**100**
More Aesthetic		
Handloom	28	67.6
Machine Made Traditional costumes	0	0
Not Responded	6	17.6
Total	**34**	**100**

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

In terms of aesthetic values that are intact with traditional costumes, 28 (67.6%) respondents fell that the aesthetic values that are intact handloom costumes. None of the customers feel the presence of aesthetic values in machine made traditional costumes. Out of 34 respondents, 06(17.6%) respondents have not responded here.

Table No. 5

Preferences of customers in buying Karbi Traditional Costumes in respects of designs and motifs

Designs and motifs	Yes	%	No	%	Not responded	%	Total	%
Purely Traditional	22	64.7	8	23.5	4	11.7	**34**	**100**
Purely Modern	4	11.7	26	76.4	4	11.7	**34**	**100**
Modern with Traditional Motifs	30	88.2	4	11.7	0	0	**34**	**100**
Fashionable/ Designers wear	12	35.2	18	53	4	11.7	**34**	**100**

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

Table No.5 above shows the preferences of customers in buying Karbi Traditional costumes in respects of designs and motifs. It is evident from the table that, 22 (64.7%) out of total respondents prefers traditional costumes having purely traditional designs and motifs whereas, customers do not prefer traditional costumes with purely modern designs and motifs as seen from the table, i.e. 26 (76.4%) responded 'NO' to this. However, there is a trend of accepting modern designs with traditional motifs as seen from the table where 30 (88.2%) respondents responding 'YES' in this case. While 12 (35.2%) like designers traditional costumes. There are some respondents who have not responded as shown in the table.

Table No.6 below depicts the frequency or time span of buying traditional costumes by customers. Accordingly, a time period of different spans has been mentioned in the questionnaire as shown in the table below and the respondents have responded accordingly. It can be seen from the table that majority of the respondents purchase traditional costumes frequently. 20 (58.8%) responded that they purchase traditional costumes at least once a year. While, 10 (29.4%) purchase traditional costumes after a span of 2-3 years. There are no respondents buying traditional costumes for a span of 4-5 years, which means, customers does not wait long to buy new traditional costumes. 04 (11.7%) doesn't know the actual time span of their purchase.

Table No.6

Frequency of Purchasing Traditional Costumes

Time Span	Frequency	Percentage
0-1 Year	20	58.8
2-3 Years	10	29.4
4-5 Years	0	0
Don't Know	4	11.7
Total	**34**	**100**

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

Table No. 7

Average amount spent on buying traditional costumes annually

Average amount	Frequency	Percentage
<5000	16	47
5001-10,000	8	23.5
10,001-15,000	2	5.8
No Idea	8	23.5
Total	**34**	**100**

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

Table No.7 above is prepared to find out the average amount spent on buying traditional costumes annually. As seen from the table, majority of the respondents i.e. 16 (47%) out of 34 respondents spends below Rs. 5000 annually in buying traditional costumes. 08 (23.5%) spends between Rs. 5001-10,000

annually, 02 (5.8%) respondents spends between Rs.10,001-15,000 and 08 (23.5%) does not have idea of the amount spent on buying traditional costumes.

The main influencer in buying traditional costumes is shown below in Table No.8. 24 (70.5%) of the respondents are influenced by their family members and friends, while 12(35.2%) are influenced by exhibitions and fairs and another 16 (47%) are influenced by the stores attraction. Hence, it is evident from the analysis that, family and friends plays an important role in influencing purchase decision of traditional costumes.

Table No 8

Main Influencers in purchasing traditional costumes

Influencers	Frequency (out of 34 respondents)	Percentage
Family	24	70.5
Friends	24	70.5
Exhibitions and Fairs	12	35.2
Stores attraction	16	47

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

In order to know the customers response about various issues that are considered while traditional costumes, the following table no. 9 has been prepared. A scale of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) has been allotted against each statement and the respondents are asked to respond accordingly. Hence, the following responds have been availed.

Table No.9

Customers' response when enquired about various issues that are considered while buying traditional costumes

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I am Choosy regarding Color	-	-	8(23.5%)	10(29.4%)	16(47%)
I am concerned about the texture of the costume	-	-	6(17.6%)	14(41.1%)	12(35.2%)
I like to buy designer traditional costume	2(5.8%)	-	18(53%)	4(11.7%)	8(23.5%)
General Appearance of traditional costume attracts me	-	-	6(17.6%)	18(53%)	8(23.5%)
I am quality conscious	-	-	4(11.7%)	18(53%)	10(29.4%)

Price is a factor in purchasing traditional costumes	2(5.8%)	4(11.7%)	2(5.8%)	16(47%)	8(23.5%)

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

In order to know the customers response about the qualities they look for while buying traditional costumes, the following table no. 10 has been prepared. Like the above analysis a scale of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) has been allocated against each statement and the respondents are asked to respond accordingly. Hence, the following responds have been availed.

Table No.10

Customers' response when enquired about qualities they look for while buying traditional costumes

Qualities looked for	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Classy Look	-	2(5.8%)	2(5.8%)	18(53%)	10(29.4%)
Unique Design	-	-	6(17.6%)	20(58.8%)	6(17.6%)
Cultural and Traditional significance	-	-	-	8(23.5%)	16(47%)
Comfort	-	-	-	14(41.1%)	20(58.8%)
Value for Money	-	-	2(5.8%)	22(64.7%)	10(29.4%)
Longevity	-	-	6(17.6%)	18(53%)	8(23.5%)
Aesthetic Value	-	-	-	20(58.8%)	12(35.2%)

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

Table No.11 depicts buying of traditional costumes based on specific occasion. Accordingly, 22 (64.7%) buys traditional costumes during festivals, while 18(53%) buys during religious ceremony and another 8 (23.5%) buys seasonally and 22 (64.7%) buys during marriage ceremony. Hence, it is evident from the analysis that, demand of traditional costumes will be comparatively higher during festivals and marriage.

Table No. 11

Buying traditional costumes based on specific occasion

Occasion	Frequency	Percentage
Festival	22	64.7
Religious Ceremony	18	53
Seasonal	8	23.5
Marriage	22	64.7

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

Table No.12 below shows the source from where customers usually prefer buying traditional costumes. As evident from the table, 30 (88.2%) of the respondents prefer buying from retail outlet, 08 (23.5%) prefer buying from crafts and fairs, 16 (47%) prefers buying from exhibitions, 14 (41.1%) prefers buying from itinerant sellers. None of the respondents prefer buying from designers.

Table 12

Source from where customers usually prefer to buy traditional costumes

Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Retail Outlet	30	88.2
Craft and fairs	8	23.5
Exhibitions	16	47
Itinerant Sellers	14	41.1
Designers	0	0

Source: *Data obtained by researcher*

Future Research

This study has just touched the tip of the topic. The conclusions and findings are based on the data collected from the samples which is considerably small and the time span of the study is also less. Further research is recommended consisting larger sample size which will give more accurate findings on the topic.

Conclusion

This study has fulfilled the objectives of the study and could identify the various factors that influence the buying decision of a consumer while buying a Karbi Traditional costumes. From the above analysis it is clearly seen that customer consider various factors and prefer different quality of traditional costumes in respect of its make(handloom or machine made), designs, motifs, quality, price, etc. in buying Karbi Traditional costumes. Moreover, purchase of traditional costumes are also influenced by various occasions like, festivals, religious functions, marriage ceremony, while friends and family are the main influencers in buying Karbi Traditional costumes. Marketers and artisans should therefore, consider these factors while selling such traditional costumes to reap off the maximum benefits and create customer satisfaction.

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