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# A STUDY OF IMC MIX & CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SMALL CAR SEGMENT IN SATARA DISTRICT

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Abstract:Indian Auto Industry has undergone a noticeable transformation over a past few decades owing to presence of global auto manufacturers. As a result it is very interesting to understand what transformation took place in the buying behavior of consumers for automobile products with the help of small car segment in SATARA DISTRICT. Indian consumers have also become more selective and demanding. This can ensure bright prospects for Indian automobile Industry in days to come. This all can constitute a major challenge to every auto maker to attract consumers. Hence to create a distinctive image of one's products in the mind of consumers one has to make the best use of IMC Mix. Since the key to success of any business lies not only in having good products but also in being able to use an ideal communication mix that can modify consumer behavior in the favor of marketer. Thus it is believed that use of the ideal mix of IMC tools may help bring about desired change in consumers' buying behavior.

IMC is one of the crucial factors in the marketing efforts, responsible for product identification by the public & creating awareness among target customers for a firm's products. The reason for focusing on small car segment is that it has the largest contribution (i.e. almost 68%) amongst total vehicle segment.

**Keyword:** Consumer, Behavior, Car Segment, global auto.

### INTRODUCTION TO IMC MIX AND CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

This research would focus on Integrated Marketing Communication Mix which encompasses all communication activities including personal selling, advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotions and cyber marketing, adopted by different players in small car segments. The ultimate purpose of IMC Mix is to assist in the process of selling the product. An IMC Mix may not be called as an effective or successful unless it produces expected results i.e. increases product sales.

Customer is king of market. Company makes products and services on the basis customer's wants and needs. Customer satisfaction is first aim of any company. Sustained growth and higher profit are not only the product of high quality cars, but also convenience of customer attached to buying of cars and its satisfaction related with its services. Customer is most important visitor who visits our premises. Customer is not depend on company, company depend on customer. Sales of product and services increase then market share of company also increases. Consumer behavior can be defined as the decision process and physical activity that individuals engage in while evaluating, using or disposing goods and services. Hence, the study makes an attempt to know the changes in the small car market and buying motives of the buyers. This research also focuses on advertisement and different promotional tools adopted by different players in small car segment. The study is

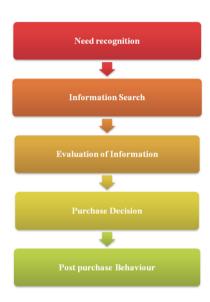
conducted by using the survey method or personal interview. With the help of information that is provided by the respondents from Satara DISTRICT, an interview schedule is prepared, it is administered on 200 randomly selected consumers. The study revealed the consumer buying behavior and source of information they use to make the purchase decision and importance given to Integrated Marketing Communication Mix.

Consumer Behavior Study is a kind of Market research technique used to understand the buyer and to create a customer through this understanding. Every buyer study has unfolded some new dimensions of discipline. The buyer behavior has been approached and analyzed from different angles and under different premises as well as performance of the Brand of products rather than concentrating on the products themselves. Only is studied any brand with good Brand loyalty, Brand awareness, and better perceived quality is likely to perform better. Consumer behavior study takes these parameters into consideration and consolidates the research and findings on this so as to provide valid results to the company in terms of competitors brand performance. In this research the questionnaire method was used to determine the buying preferences of cars.

#### STAGES OF THE CONSUMER BUYING PROCESS

Anup M. Mule And R. G. Phadtare, "A STUDY OF IMC MIX & CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SMALL CAR SEGMENT IN SATARA DISTRICT" Indian Streams Research Journal Vol-3, Issue-7 (Aug 2013): Online & Print

#### FIGURE NO. 1



Five Stages to the Consumer Buying Decision Process (For complex decisions). Actual purchasing is only one stage of the process. Not all decision processes lead to a purchase. All consumer decisions do not always include all 5 stages, determined by the degree of complexity...discussed next. The 5 stages are:

#### ${\bf 1.OBJECTIVES\,OF\,THE\,STUDY}$

In today's competitive world, the importance of IMC Mix cannot be ignored from a marketer's view point. IMC Mix plays a major role in present market conditions in making or modifying the consumers' purchase decision. The major objectives for this study would be as follows:

- 1.To study the impact of IMC Mix as a promotional tool in small car segment on consumer buying behavior.
- 2. To study the need analysis of consumers.
- 3. To analyze the consumer decision making process.
- 4.To find out the motivating factors for consumers in purchasing small cars.

#### 2.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has explored the impact of IMC Mix on consumer buying behavior with special reference to small car segment in SATARA DISTRICT. The potential findings and outcomes of the study would give an insight to small car manufacturers for creating as well as evaluating promotional strategies. It has also analyzed the effectiveness of IMC tools in relation to small car segment, in SATARA DISTRICT.

#### 3.SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study can reveal the consumer buying behavior and sources of information they use to make the purchase decision and importance given to evaluation criteria. The study would also help small car manufacturers to take care of significant factors while promoting or launching new products in the market.

## 4.NEED TO STUDY THE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

The buyer behavior gives an insight into the various factors which prompt him to purchase a particular product. If it is known that it is the packing or taste or habit or fashion which attracts the buyer then the producer will pay special attention to these attributes in his products also it is equally important in framing price policies. The buyer of some products buys only because particular products (articles) are cheaper than the competitive products (articles) available in the market. In such a case, the price of such product cannot be raised. On the other hand, some other products are purchased because it enhances the prestige and social status of persons. The price of such things can be raised easily or fixed higher. Some products are purchased under particular attitudes and emotion.

A study of buyer behavior is also vital in taking decisions regarding sales promotion. It enables the producers to know what motives that promotes the buyer to make purchase and the same are utilized in advertising media to awaken the desire of society to purchase. The marketer takes decisions regarding brand, packaging, discount, gifts, etc on the basis of buying behavior for promoting sales of the products also decisions regarding channels of distribution are taken on the basis of buying behavior. Thus study of buyer behavior plays is an important role in decision making.

#### 5.SAMPLING PLAN/SAMPLE DESIGN

While designing the logical questionnaire to collect primary data from the sample, the researcher has emphasized on three major issues as shown below;

#### **6.SAMPLING UNIT**

The target population is the place where there is presence of small car users. This can be a town or village from SATARA DISTRICT. The sampling unit is all small car users from the area under study.

#### 7.SAMPLE SIZE

There are approximately 2000 small cars in the SATARA DISTRICT, based on the information received from SATARA RTO. Thus the total population is 2000 small car users. For the purpose of collecting the first hand data, the researcher has considered 10% of the total population i.e. 200 small car users. Thus 200 small car users constitute a sample size for the study at hand. Equal number (25) of small car users of each major small car producer was contacted with the help of a questionnaire.

#### Sample distribution table is as follows.

Table No. H2

Car Maker	Strongly Agree		Agree Neutral		tral	Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	N %		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
MARUTI UDYOG LTD.	9	36%	4	16%	7	28%	4	16%	1	4%	25
TATA MOTORS	7	28%	5	20%	8	32%	5	20%	0	0%	25
HONDA MOTORS	5	20%	9	36%	4	16%	5	20%	2	08%	25
FIAT MOTORS	4	16%	5	20%	6	24%	6	24%	4	16%	25
HYUNDAI MOTORS	10	40%	3	12%	4	16%	5	20%	3	12%	25
NISSAN MOTORS	6	24%	4	16%	3	12%	9	36%	3	12%	25
TOYOTA MOTORS	11	44%	4	16%	5	20%	5	20%	0	0%	25
CHEVROLET	7	28%	6	24%	5	20%	2	08%	5	20%	25
TOTAL	59		40		42		41		18		200

#### Observed Frequencies:

Table No. H3

all Car Maker	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
ruti Udyog Ltd.	9	7	4	4	1	25
a Motors	7	8	5	5	0	25
nda Motors	9	5	4	5	2	25
t Motors	6	5	4	6	4	25
undai	10	5	4	3	3	25
san	9	4	3	6	3	25
yota	11	5	4	5	0	25
evrolet	7	6	5	2	5	25
al	68	45	33	36	18	200
al	68	45	33	36	18	İ

# Table No. H4 Expected Frequencies:

Small Car Maker	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Maruti Udyog Ltd.	8.5	5.625	4.125	4.5	2.25	25
Tata Motors	8.5	5.625	4.125	4.5	2.25	25
Honda Motors	8.5	5.625	4.125	4.5	2.25	25
Fiat Motors	8.5	5.625	4.125	4.5	2.25	25
Hyundai	8.5	5.625	4.125	4.5	2.25	25
Nissan	8.5	5.625	4.125	4.5	2.25	25
Toyota	8.5	5.625	4.125	4.5	2.25	25
Chevrolet	8.5	5.625	4.125	4.5	2.25	25
Total	68	45	33	36	18	200

P-value Table: H5,  $\alpha = 0.05$ 

P-value
0.891196362
0.439653863
0.995935452
0.61453801
0.896181193
0.816735789
0.538918866
0.264950373

Interpretation- It is apparent from P-value table that value of  $\alpha = 0.05$  which is smaller than values of P in the table above. Thus if P values are less than  $\alpha$  value which is 0.05 then we can reject H0. Hence we have to accept H0. Hence we accept the hypothesis that claims personal selling

Sr. No. Companies No. of Re

Sr. No.	Companies	No. of Respondents	
1	MARUTI UDYOG LTD.	25	
2.	TATA MOTORS	25	
3.	HONDA MOTORS	25	
4.	FIAT MOTORS	25	
5.	HYUNDAI MOTORS	25	
6.	NISSAN MOTORS	25	
7.	TOYOTA MOTORS	25	
8.	CHEVROLET	25	
Total Respondents		200	

#### SAMPLING TECHNIQUE/PROCEDURE

Data on cars sold over last 10 years i.e. from the year 2001 to 2011, is collected from SATARA RTO, showroom managers of respective small car manufacturers and personal references. The researcher has preferred to go for Convenience Sampling Method for data collection.

#### **Sampling Area**

The area which is considered for the purpose of present study is different clusters from SATARA DISTRICT.

#### Hypotheses

Following hypotheses were made on the onset of the project:

H01: All personal selling activities are perceived as honest by the target audiences.

H02: Sales promotions exert the greatest influence on consumer buying behavior.

#### DATAANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Companies and number of respondents

Table No. 01 Showing the sample size and customers of different automakers for data collection

Sr. No.	Companies	No. of Respondents	
1.	MARUTI UDYOG LTD.	25	
2.	TATA MOTORS	25	
3.	HONDA MOTORS	25	
4.	FIAT MOTORS	25	
5.	HYUNDAI MOTORS	25	
6.	NISSAN MOTORS	25	
7.	TOYOTA MOTORS	25	
8.	CHEVROLET	25	

#### Hypothesis testing 1

H0: Personal selling activities are perceived to be honest by the target customers.

Ha: Personal selling activities are perceived to be dishonest by the target customers.

Table No. H-1

Sr. No.	Companies	No. of Respondents	
1.	MARUTI UDYOG LTD.	25	
2.	TATA MOTORS	25	
3.	HONDA MOTORS	25	
4.	FIAT MOTORS	25	
5.	HYUNDAI MOTORS	25	
6.	NISSAN MOTORS	25	
7.	TOYOTA MOTORS	25	
8.	CHEVROLET	25	
Total Resp	ondents	200	

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activities are perceived to be honest by the target audiences. As a result we reject Ha that affirms personal selling activities are perceived to be dishonest by the target audiences.

#### Hypothesis testing 2

H0: Sales promotions exert the greatest influence on consumer buying behavior.

Ha: Sales promotions don't exert the greatest influence on consumer buying behavior.

Table No. H6

		Strongly Agree		ee	Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
MARUTI	9	36%	7	16%	4	28%	4	16%	1	4%	25
UDYOG LTD.											
TATA	7	28%	8	20%	5	32%	5	20%	0	0%	25
MOTORS											
HONDA	9	20%	5	36%	4	16%	5	20%	2	08%	25
MOTORS											
FIAT MOTORS	6	16%	5	20%	4	24%	6	24%	4	16%	25
HYUNDAI	10	40%	5	12%	4	16%	3	20%	3	12%	25
MOTORS											
NISSAN	9	24%	4	16%	3	12%	6	36%	3	12%	25
MOTORS						.,.					
TOYOTA	11	44%	5	16%	4	20%	5	20%	0	0%	25
MOTORS						,,,,		,,,,			
CHEVROLET	7	28%	6	24%	5	20%	2	08%	5	20%	25
TOTAL	59		40		42		41		18		200

Table No. H7 Observed Frequencies

Small Car Maker	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Maruti Udyog Ltd.	9	4	7	4	1	25
Tata Motors	7	5	8	5	0	25
Honda Motors	5	9	4	5	2	25
Fiat Motors	4	5	6	6	4	25
Hyundai	10	3	4	5	3	25
Nissan	6	4	3	9	3	25
Toyota	11	4	5	5	0	25
Chevrolet	7	6	5	2	5	25
Total	59	40	42	41	18	200

Table No. H8
Expected Frequencies

Small Car Maker	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Maruti Udyog Ltd.	7.375	5	5.25	5.125	2.25	25
Tata Motors	7.375	5	5.25	5.125	2.25	25
Honda Motors	7.375	5	5.25	5.125	2.25	25
Fiat Motors	7.375	5	5.25	5.125	2.25	25
Hyundai	7.375	5	5.25	5.125	2.25	25
Nissan	7.375	5	5.25	5.125	2.25	25
Toyota	7.375	5	5.25	5.125	2.25	25
Chevrolet	7.375	5	5.25	5.125	2.25	25
Total	59	40	42	41	18	200

P-Value Table: H9,  $\alpha = 0.05$ 

<b>Company Name</b>	P-Value			
Maruti Udyog Ltd.	0.720536641			
Tata Motors	0.446297039			
Honda Motors	0.367767822			
Fiat Motors	0.531068308			
Hyundai	0.683503214			
Nissan	0.330794269			
Toyota	0.373642754			
Chevrolet	0.239943031			

#### INTERPRETATION-

From Table: presented above, It is evident that value of  $\alpha = 0.05$  which is smaller than values of P in the table above. Thus if P values are less than  $\alpha$  value which is 0.05 then we can reject H0. Hence we have to accept H0. Hence we accept the hypothesis that claims sales promotion exerts the greatest influence on consumer buying behavior. As a result we reject Ha that affirms sales promotions don't exert the greatest influence on consumer buying behavior.

#### **FINDINGS**

In the light of the specified objectives of the research study and above discussion along with the analysis of the data collected, following was interpreted from the data found from the study undertaken:

Advertisement plays a major role in communicating information/specification about the product to existing as well as prospective buyers.

It is evident from the study that the most preferred media of advertising is the TV followed by the print-media and both together. This is clearly a sign of increasing materialism.

From the study it was found that people are mostly motivated by user life style, peer group and status factors to buy the small car.

Personal selling initiatives are perceived to be the most honest and appealing to those of other.

It has come to light that head of the family can have the greatest influence (44%) following the buyer (38%). Spouse and other members of the family don't have much influence on the choice of a car.

Regal (39%), wealthy (38%), stately (45%), sophisticated (38%) these are the personality traits consumers value the most while buying a car. As a result consumers often try to associate these traits of personality to the products they buy.

Status (33%) in the society is found to be a major motivating factor in deciding on a car followed by consumers' occupation and culture.

Peer group pressure (34%) is observed to be exerting moderate level of motivation on consumers' choice of a car. It is clear from the study that cars owned by consumers don't meet some the expectations to the satisfaction of consumers like after sales service (39%), maintenance cost (39%), resale value (33%), spaciousness (45%) and more importantly fuel efficiency.

Brand image (44%), design (51%) and cars that reveal the

status (40%) are some of the most important variables consumers consider and have the greatest influence on.

Price (16%) and fuel efficiency (16%) have got moderate level of influence on the choice of car.

It is evident that after deciding on choice of car consumers (52%) try to explore financial alternatives followed by down payment and other terms and conditions.

While evaluating choice of a car against competing brands consumers consider brand name (44%), price (38%), features (30%), maintenance cost (27%) and after sales service (22%) to the most.

While assessing the reliability of information consumers consider newspaper (38%) and company brochure (30%) as highly reliable sources of information following information given by company representatives.

T.V (40%) and Internet (50%) are considered to be the least reliable sources of information.

Most small car users have sought information from company representatives (33%) followed by mechanic advice (25%) and newspaper (21%).

Magazines (01%) and radio (02%) advertisements are the least referred sources of information by users of small cars. Significance of T.V (11%) seems to be moderate in securing information by buyers of small cars.

Most consumers have collected and evaluated information on at least 3-4 (45%) car models.

There are very least number of consumers who have collected information on more than 7 cars (8%), at the same time the number is significantly low who considered any brand before making a choice of a car.

Most car buyers tried to collect information on brands of Maruti Udyog Ltd (34%), who is a market leader in small car manufacturing followed by Tata Motors (28%) and Hyundai (12%).

SMS ads as a stimulus exert the least influence (46%) on the choice of a car.

Internet ads can exert moderate level (22%) of influence as a stimulus on the buying decision.

It is evident from the study that transit ads can create significant influence (32%) on the choice and buying behavior as a stimulus.

Pamphlet and leaflets have got very poor influence (45%) as a stimulus on the choice of a car.

Hoarding and billboard can exert moderate level (34%) of influence as a stimulus on buying behavior and choice of a

As a stimulus magazine (32%) and radio ads (28%) too exert moderate level of influence on buying behavior.

Newspaper (41%) and T.V ads (51%) create larger influence as a stimulus on the choice of a car.

Most consumers buy a car to satisfy the need of transportation (36%) followed by lifestyle (25%) and status needs (21%). As a result the chosen need very often pushes consumers toward products.

Frequent travel (28%) and status (24%) in the society can make consumers realize their need to a larger extent.

In total advertisement, sales promotion and publicity can have larger influence on the choice of a car.

Interaction brought about at forum (38%) and showroom (24%) is considered to be the most honest personal selling

activity by the users of small cars.

Publicity can have relative influence (19%) on the choice of a car. Most consumers (41%) wait for festive season to come to avail special discounts and gifts.

#### SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the study, the following suggestions are made:

1.Personal experience & word of mouth play a vital role in information search.

2. The criteria that ultimately play a significant role in the consumer buying decision are, Advertisement,

3. Product features, Quality, after sales services, acceleration & makers reputation. People seek to spread opinion by word of mouth emphasis could be shifted from motivational to awareness advertising.

4. Advertiser should take care of the significant factors like impression, eye-catching, creative, and honest & visibility etc. while designing and promoting the product.

5.Success of some small car manufacturers assures that ad campaigns have a lot to do with their success. People response definitely conveys that advertisement today definitely is a force to reckon with and utmost importance has to be given to them to assure success of a firm.

6. When it comes to increasing reputation or creating brand image for a small car, TV should be given superiority than any other medium what so ever.

7.Small car manufacturers need to work on their advertisements. There should be billboard advertisements for more coverage to increase brand recall in the local market.

8.Small car manufacturers need to have a Brand Ambassador for every brand. Everybody relates RANBIR KAPOOR with Nissan Micra, A.R. REHMAN with Toyota ETIOS. Similarly every small car brand needs to have someone to relate to.

9.Small car makers should work on their diesel model. Consumers who are conscious about the rising petrol prices would prefer good diesel models. In the long run diesel models will be more profitable.

10.Large part of the promotion in the respective states should be taken care of by the Company. Extensive consumer promotion should be done by the dealers in order to ensure greater penetration into the local market. Small car makers should employ mediums such as road shows and trade fairs.

#### CONCLUSION

Indian automobile sector is in full flow, which holds great future for an India. It has the potential to put India on the world map as a hub of global automobile activities. Standard of living of Indian people is increasing and more and more people find the need and demand for the four wheeler. Thus the sales of cars have been increasing in recent years in India. Foreign automobile companies find a good scope in Indian market. It is also important to satisfy all the needs and wants of customers. With these ideal conditions, it can be concluded on the basis of all the study conducted so far that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) plays a major role in promoting the various brands of small car manufactures among the customers. Advertising that

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distribute information to consumers can help them make well informed decisions as well as economic decisions than they would in absence of that. Information provides a positive economic service. Some advertising is more value than others along this dimension. Small car producers need to keep in mind the long term benefits consumers can draw out of their products instead of having narrow approach. Integrated Marketing Communication Mix is an extremely vital set of tools in the hands of car producers which has to be used for the benefit of car users and to society to a larger extent.

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