

Consumer perception about the male innerwear marketing essay



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These days consumers have started shopping for their innerwear online stated the reason of reluctance of male in buying their innerwear and majority of buying in the last decade of male innerwear was done by the other members of family (Alam, S & Bakar, Z, 2008). This step was taken in accordance of growing sensitivity of Indian male consumers towards owning a branded innerwear with a good online experience. In recent scenario, selling a innerwear to a consumer has become a uphill task for the marketers as while purchasing consumers take various accounts into consideration beyond brand name, these factors are comfort, style and value for money.

Various factors can be attributed to the sudden shift in the demand of consumers such as rising income levels, Urbanization, increasing awareness and higher penetration of organized sector. Consumers have specific attachment to the brand they wear as it signifies their personality, education level, way of thinking and association with brands. It is a positive sign for Indian textile industry as more of foreign giants are entering the market and consumers are getting an access to better products from around the world and consumers are provided with more alternatives in the fashion market. Branded innerwear provides effective comfort and styling that has led to the growth of apparel market in India not only in context of outerwear but also innerwear that has led to the emergence of this market(Ismail, Z & Masood, S & Tawab , Z , 2012).

Brands signify the personality traits of an individual, if we think of a consumer who drives ford and wears brand like wrangler and on other hand if we think of a consumer who drives Mercedes and wears juicy couture then we can figure out the difference between the two customers with former

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forming the image of a cowboy and rugged whereas the other one being professional and elite. Brands build loyalty amongst customers by brand name, packaging of product, decorativeness, price and longevity of style that provides customers with a broader base of evaluating a particular brand. Change in the customer perception towards male innerwear has also shifted due to the influence of role models on the consumers, these role models differ according to the mindset of consumers and can be anyone whom consumers admire or think of becoming like. Role models can be parents, celebrities, friends and reference groups for consumers. Consumers in order to become like their role models start purchasing products which are endorsed by celebrities and mass media. Parent acts as primary source of shaping perception about the buying patterns but as children grow their role models also changes and these youth start getting influenced by the celebrities and mass media. Youth associate themselves with the role models and buy the products endorsed by these celebrities in order to accommodate their personal life with features which they are lacking in actual life. . Celebrities have a deeper impact compared to parents as with the level of economic development, reduced attention from parents and more population becoming urban and the increased usage of mass media has increased the role of celebrities in the daily lives of youth.(Qadir, Z & Rafique, M, 2009)

Niche innerwear brands are changing the scenario of innerwear market in India. Not all male consumers want the same innerwear for all the activities , their usage differs according to the activities , some consumers need the innerwear for gym usage, some need it for sports, some need trendier

boxers for weekends. This need amongst customers forces the market leaders like Jockey and Calvin Klein to develop an extensive portfolio of underwear programs. Calvin Klein recently launched their X range of products supported with the ad campaigns of celebrities to influence youth providing 15 platforms for usage whereas ranging from trendier wear to active wear.

There is a huge margin between the business of male and female innerwear, when it comes to the number game female innerwear market exceeds male innerwear market by a huge margin . . . When it comes to money and revenue generated, it is not definitely with men, Victoria's secret sales alone are greater than the sales of all companies making underwear's for male.

Women's intimate apparel grossed 9.6 billion dollars that was three times more than revenues earned by male underwear industry. Out of this 9.6 billion, 4.2 billion dollars was accounted by Victoria's secret. This gap is expected to reduce given the growing sensitivity of male consumers and increase in the number of metro sexual in the urban market. Male consumers have started taking care of themselves and this acts as base for marketers to grow and expand in this market.(Don, M, 2006)

If a company is aspiring to capture market share in Indian market ignoring the rural market is in rude shock. Majority of the population stays in the rural areas and when it comes to selling branded innerwear in Indian market, it cannot be done ignoring the rural areas. Various marketers believe that customers in rural market are less demanding and can be satisfied easily have wrong notion and perception about rural customers. Many companies who have focused on the rural areas with a distinct range of products

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targeted for rural market have succeeded, like a Korean Company LG did by bringing its Sampoorna TV for rural customers. Strategies adopted by the marketer needs to be differentiated in rural areas from rural market as the education level, thinking level differs and marketers need to adapt accordingly. Rural customers does not necessarily want cheap product but wants quality products that are available at reasonable prices. Customers in rural areas are price sensitive so companies in order to adapt to the change must revive their strategies and bring a product range which establishes the brand in the mindset of the rural customers. Various companies are launching their range of innerwear products and diversifying from normal range of products to innerwear brand in accordance with the growing demand for branded innerwear. To sustain in market various companies are adopting different strategies to establish themselves in the minds of the customers. Some companies are focusing on the single set of products whereas certain companies are diversifying their products platform and increasing the range of products according to the need of customers. Some brands are creating demand for their product by capitalizing on the unexplored features. Latest company to enter the innerwear market is UV and W which is set to launch its range of organic innerwear for male. The concept is new and the products will be made with organic cotton. The product will be premium priced and brand has huge expectations from the product. Company is in market of knitted garments with a range of products from t-shirts, Bermudas and lowers. Company is claiming its product to be organic and believes that Indian customers need these kind of organic products given the level of pollution and toxicants.

Selling innerwear was not a business to boast about in last decade but now it has turned out a handy and attractive business for the marketers which is attracting a lot of new marketers to enter the business or diversify into this business. Various brands which have their establishment in Tirupur like dixcy Scott, Amul Macho, dollar and Rupa have a business of 4000 crores rupees and these brands are not reluctant in spending millions of rupees to get a brand ambassador of bollywood like Salman khan, Saif ali khan and Hrithik roshan.

So who has bought in the change in the mindset of consumers, is it the foreign players like calvin kien, Jockey or is it the local brands like Amul Macho, Dixcy scott and VIP. There are numerous reasons for the change in the belief and attitude of the adamant Indian male one of which is surely advertisements by Bollywood and impact of western culture with various multinational giants coming and entering market. Domestic companies are joining hands with foreign giants, recently Maxwell industries joined hands with French company eminence and their product will be named VIP eminence. Celebrity endorsements have had a huge impact on the sales of innerwear in the Indian market. It has completely changed the perception of Indian rigid and adamant customers who were reluctant in talking about innerwear in social circle. It is correct to say that celebrities influence purchase decision of customers but is it correct to sell the products which is of less need and prioritizing it of high need in front of the customers (Sutherland, M & Galloway, J, 1998). Most of the marketers in today's world do forced selling in which they derive consumers to buy the product and influence them whether it is required by customers or not. This can be well

applied to the apparel industry in which the major buying is happening because of aggressive selling and celebrity influence. Indian market is able to sell 300rs underwear to a customer who was not ready to pay even 50 Rs in the last decade, this major change can be attributed to factors like growing awareness, increased purchasing power but they cannot influence the customers to spend 500% more of their consumption on the innerwear. This is mainly due to aggressive selling of customers and celebrity endorsements and customers in order to become like their role models buy whatever is endorsed to them by their favorite celebrities.

Marketers have identified their target market as youth and they know this target market is guiding the growing sensitivity of male consumers. Recently Viacom 18 has launched innerwear targeting at youth naming their products as roadies which is a rage amongst youth. They have collaborated with genesis an innerwear maker for reaching customers effectively. This signifies the buying behavior differ according to age groups, youth are more focused towards styling and packaging of products whereas there are certain segments in the market which give priority to comfort and prices over styling and packaging of the product. It is still a matter of debate that who bought in change , local brands or international brands. Indian market faced a breakthrough when jockey entered Indian market and attracted Indian customers to wear branded innerwear, this step was followed by local players like Rupa and VIP which offered consumers with their premium range which provided features beyond comfort. These features were style, status symbol and longevity of innerwear. International brands overpowers local brands in terms of the overall quality and benefits provided to customers as

a brand which goes global and is internationally accepted tends to be perceived as high in quality standards. There are numerous factors which signify preference for international brands over local brands like status symbol of wearing an international brands, references by the peer group and relatives. These reference groups have a significant impact on the buying decisions of customers and if the reference group had a bad experience with a local brand then it will lead to a flow of information to the customers about not buying the product.

There are numerous reasons for the success of the innerwear market in India and it cannot be solely contributed to a single factor. Celebrity endorsements had a impact on sales in the economy segments of innerwear and not on the range. Another reason can be the openness of Indian male who were reluctant and careless in buying their personal innerwear some time back, but now with increased urbanization and increase in number of metro sexual who take care of themselves has changed the purchasing scenario of innerwear. Customers in order to look like their favorite celebrities and attain the look alike features end up using products which are endorsed by celebrities and this has led to change in the scenario of male innerwear.

Innerwear can be broadly classified into sub- economy, economy, middle, premium and super premium. 30 % of the market rests with middle segment which has shown growth over past few years.

There are numerous reason for the sudden shift in the buying behavior of consumers in case of branded male innerwear like increase in purchasing power, influence of celebrities, status symbol. No matter what the factors,

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this Shift in buying behavior has provided the marketers with ample opportunities to capitalize in this market.