



A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO CULTURAL FACTORS & FASHION CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract:

Culture is being considered as prevalent determinant of consumer behaviour. Culture signifies the ways of living of people, their beliefs and customs, values and languages, technology, art etc and is reflected as the sum total of knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society.

India is the homeland of varied cultures raised over ages has remarkable impact on consumers buying behaviour.

India as a nation with its rich cultural heritage complemented with a fast growing economy, the study supposes great significance. The present study examines the relationship between socio-cultural factors and Fashion Consumer Behaviour. The study monitors the classification of cultural indicators, changes and its effect on buying habits of Indian Fashion consumers and grouping of cultural constituents into broad categories, suggests cultural indicators for strategy-making.

It is seen that socio-cultural changes and its effect on buying habits of Indian consumers have led to a visible change in the lifestyle of people and consequently the buying behaviour of Fashion Consumers in India.

Keywords: Socio cultural factors; consumer awareness; consumer behaviour; consumer responsibility

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As per APA dictionary, sociocultural factors refers to environmental settings that play a part in beneficial and adaptive behaviour and well-being or in maladaptive behaviour and the ethology of mental chaos and social pathology.

Culture is described as the sum total of conventions, attitudes, knowledge and values that effects an individual's thought process and behavior. Researches have shown that there is a strong connection between culture and consumer behavior as culture directs and directs people in problem solving.

Culture is a principal disposition of a society that distinguishes it from other cultural groups. The inherent elements of every culture are the values, language, myths, customs, rituals, laws, and the artifacts, or products that are transferred from one generation to the next (Lamb, Hair and Daniel, 2011).

Culture is the utmost underlying determinant of a person's wants and behavior. As we are aware that lower creatures are governed by instinct, human behavior is essentially acquired.

Socio-cultural factors play a significant role in influencing fashion consumer behavior. These factors encompass the broader societal and cultural context in which individuals live, and they shape people's perceptions, preferences, and choices regarding Fashion. Here are several ways in which socio-cultural factors impact fashion consumer behavior:

1.1 Cultural Values and Norms:

Different cultures have distinct values, norms, and traditions that influence fashion preferences. For example, conservative cultures may prefer modest and traditional clothing, while more liberal cultures may rapidly embrace avant-garde or experimental fashion thereby becoming active consumers for these Fashion styles

1.2 Social Influences:

Social groups and networks have a powerful impact on fashion choices. Fashion Influencers have become very powerful recently. People often look to their peers, friends, family, and celebrities for fashion inspiration. Trends may spread through social circles, and individuals may conform to group norms or rebel against them.

1.3 Media and Advertising:

Media, including television, movies, magazines, and social media, plays a fundamental role in shaping perceptions of fashion. Advertisements and fashion editorials influence consumer preferences by showcasing trends and creating ambitious imagery.

1.4 Cultural Subcultures:

Surrounded by larger cultures, there are often subcultures with distinct Fashion styles. Subcultures, such as hip-hop, punk, or gothic, can have a significant impact on fashion trends and consumer choices. Folks may associate themselves with a distinct subculture and adopt its associated fashion elements.

1.5 Cultural Changes and Movements:

Societal changes and movements, such as gender equality, environmental awareness, and body positivity, can impact fashion trends. Consumers are increasingly drawn to brands that align with their values

1.6 Cultural Symbolism:

Fashion often serves as a form of self-expression and statement. Clothing can be symbolic of identity, status, or affiliation with certain groups. Symbols and meanings attached to specific styles can vary across cultures and impact consumer choices.

1.7 Cultural Traditions and Rituals:

Cultural traditions and rituals, such as religious ceremonies, weddings, and festivals, have a significant impact on fashion choices. Consumers may seek specific types of clothing for these occasions, and cultural traditions may dictate certain dress codes.

1.8 Globalization:

Intensified globalization has led to the exchange of fashion ideas and styles across cultures. This can result in a blending of traditional and modern elements in fashion, as well as the adoption of international trends.

1.9 Cultural Shifts Towards Sustainability:

With raised perception of environmental concerns, research has explored how socio-cultural factors, such as a growing concern for sustainability, impact consumer choices in the fashion industry. Consumers are increasingly seeking eco-friendly and ethically produced clothing thereby making the concept a new fad

Every group of Fashion consumers has its own unique behavioural, social, cultural, demographic, and socio-economic attributes. These require a thorough study, understanding and analysis for effective product development. Assessments concerning market segmentation, value notion, product positioning as well as re-positioning and decisions concerning promotions are all based upon the evaluation of the connection between the lifestyle & demographic of the consumers

2.0 Objective

The objective of this study is:

- To investigate and study impact of Socio cultural activities on buying behavior of consumer for fashion clothing.
- To understand and appreciate the significance of Socio cultural factors on the behaviour of fashion consumers in delhi- NCR.

3.0 Literature review:

As per HemaPatil and Bblakkapa(2012), Culture and consumption have an exceptional relationship in current time. They have added that given this association and the fact that world economy is getting increasingly cross-cultural, an understanding of how culture effects consumer behaviour is critical, also culture is an influential force in regulating human behaviour.

Study by Booth & Shepherd (2011) reveals that cultural and economic factors, consumer's personality, attitudes, values and emotions touches decision making process of consumers

As per Speiers, Gundala and Singh (2014) consumer behaviour is influenced and motivated by factors such as culture, behaviour, lifestyle, income, attitudes, stimuli, feelings, information, ethnicity, family, values, available resources, opinions, experiences, peer groups and other groups.

Findings of Sethi and Chawla (2014) reveal that psychological, social and cultural factors, buyers characteristics influence the buying process of consumers. Blythe(2008) reveals that Culture, subculture and social class are proven to have insightful impacts on individual's behaviour since they are effective propagators in the configuration of attitudes, beliefs and values

As per the study conducted by Rucker and Galinsky(2009), the contribution of the Consumer with high socio-economic power may help create qualitatively unlike emotional motives for buying designer apparel that display exceptional consumption patterns,

Correspondingly, Kotler and Armstrong (2013) reflected that individuals in a specific society hold certain beliefs and values which tend to refuse change.

As stated by Wood (2008), consumers are swayed by culture and position at a particular time. Okach (2002) explores that cultural factors put forth the strongest and intense influence on consumer buying behavior. Kotler and Keller (2016) have elaborated that how individuals are socialized and as a result play an important role in their buying behavior. This is attributed to the fact that culture shapes an individual's values, perceptions, preferences and behavior. Wood (2008), has a related viewpoint that buyers from different cultural backgrounds approach buying from different perspectives. This is based on beliefs, values and preferences. Subculture groups also share comparable beliefs which influence consumer buying behavior. As a case, it may be quoted that teens are a distinctive universal subculture with shared interests in

pop music, fashion, media, television, smartphones, and the internet (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009).

Durmaz et al. (2011), in a study entitled "The impact of cultural factors on consumer purchasing behavior, experimental study" to examine empirically the impact of culture, subcultures and social classes in Turkey have on consumer behavior. Outcomes of this study revealed that culture, beliefs and traditions have the highest impact on consumer purchasing behavior, while the friends and social groups have less impact on buyer purchasing behavior.

A very significant factor influential in consumers' purchasing behavior includes socio-cultural factor, encompassing family, group, social class, peers and cultural makeup. It can be observed in everyday life that the culture and values gives direction to individuals' thoughts, behavior and attitudes and eventually affect consumers' cognizance of fashion and brand names. Similarly individuals from different social classes possess unlike opinions with respect to fashion and brand name products in their clothing purchasing behavior.

3.1 DATA & SOURCES OF DATA:

The study is empirical in nature.. The primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire. The sample selected is random and the size is 250, encompassing Fashion Consumers in delhi NCR

3.2 PLACE OF STUDY – Noida, Uttar Pradesh

3.3 **CONSENT** – obtained from participants who participated in responding to questionnaire.

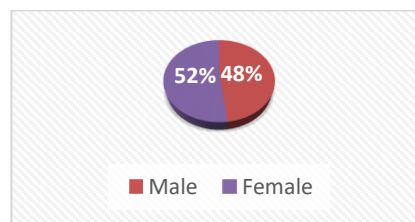
4.0 FINDINGS:

The study gave the following information:

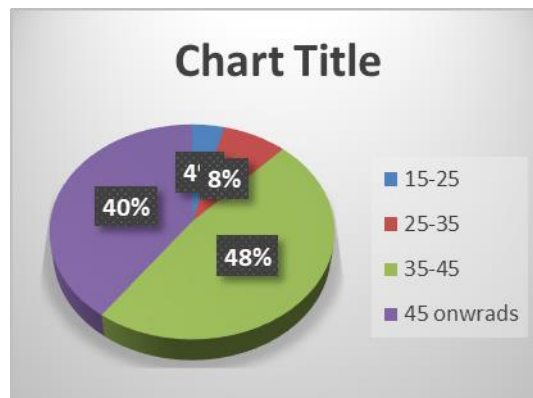
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	120	48%
Female	130	52%
Total	250	100%
Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-25	10	4%
25-35	20	8%
35-45	120	48%
45 onwrad	100	40%
Total	250	100%
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Intermediate	19	8%
Graduate	71	28%
Post Graduate	140	56%
Doctorate	20	8%
Total	250	100%

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	19	8%
Professional	12	5%
Service	98	39%
Self employed	94	38%
Homemakers	27	11%
Total	250	100%

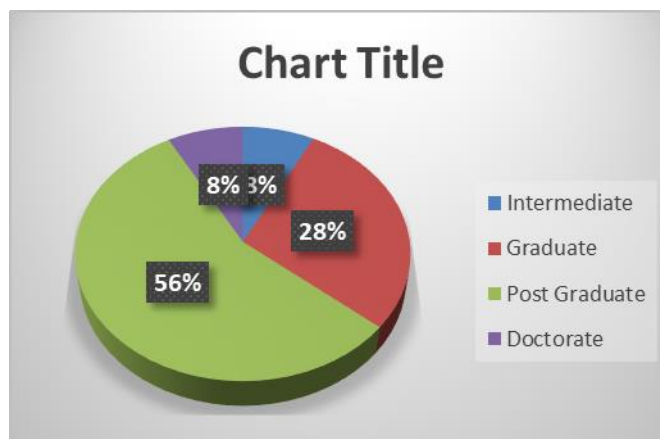
Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents



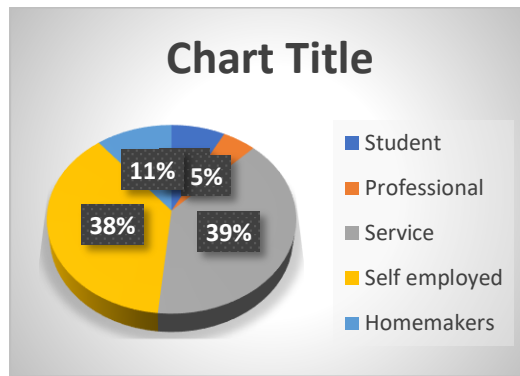
The data has been collected from 250 respondents. 48% are Male and 52% are Females.



4% of the respondents belong to the age group 15-25 yrs , 8% of the respondents belong to age group 25-35 yrs ,48% of the age group 35-45 yrs ad 40% belong to age group above 45 Years



Viewing at the categorical summary of array among consumers established on their educational qualification, study shows that 3% of the respondents are Intermediate,28% are graduates, followed by Post graduates (56%), only 8% are doctorates



The demographic profile of respondents reveals that 8% of respondents are students, 5% professionals in service, 39% are students, 38% are self-employed and 11% of respondents are Homemakers,

5.0 RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

H₀₁: There exists no significant relation amidst Socio cultural activities and Consumer buying behavior for fashion clothing.

H_{a1}: There exists a significant relation amidst Socio cultural activities and Consumer buying behavior for fashion clothing.

	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	SC ^b	.	Enter

- a. Dependent Variable: CB
- b. Requested variables were entered.

Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.786 ^a	.617	.616	31.896

a. Predictors: (Constant), SC

Here R Column represents the value of R, multiple Correlation coefficients. R may be regarded as one*1.

*1 Degree of characteristic of the prediction of dependent variable, in this case, CB with a value of 0.786, in this example indicates a Good level of prediction.

R² value known as coefficient of determination which is percentage of dependent variable's variance can be explained by the independent variables.

The variation of proportion technically is accounted for by the regression model in addition to the mean model.

Here R² is 0.617 indicating that our independent variables explain 61% variability of our dependent variable Consumer behavior.

Normally it is superior to see Adjusted R squared rather than R Squared and to see the standard error of regression instead of standard deviation of errors. These are unbiased estimators that are accurate as per sample size and number of coefficients estimated. It is relevant to mention that the Adjusted R squared, is always lesser than R squared but the difference is usually very small unless we are trying to estimate too many coefficients from too small a sample in the presence of too much noise.

If R squared is very close to 1 this is usually a bad sign rather than a good one. Typically adjusted R squared is only marginally lesser than R squared but it is probable for the Adjusted R-squared to be nil or negative if a model with inadequately informative variables is fitted to too small a sample of data.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	655038.862	1	655038.862	643.863	.000 ^b
	Residual	405925.498	399	1017.357		
	Total	1060964.359	400			

a. Dependent Variable: CB

b. Predictors: (Constant), SC

F ratio in ANOVA table checks if inclusive regression model is found suitable for the given data. Table displays that dependent variable F (1, 399) is being statistically significantly predicted by independent variable.

Here the p-value is $<.00001$. The result is significant at $P < 0.05$.

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	118.000	6.183		19.084	.000
	SC	3.840	.151	.786	25.374	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CB

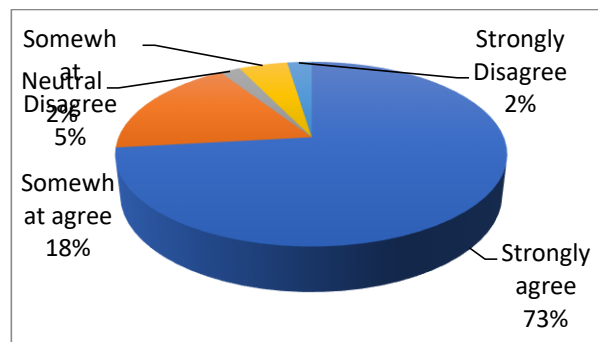
Unstandardized coefficient indicates the extent to which dependent variable varies with an independent variable keeping other independent variables persistent.

Consider the effect of socio-cultural movements, the standardized coefficient is equal to 3.840.

Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted and Null Hypothesis is rejected.

Question I The social events happening around me affect my shopping behavior positively

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	183	73%
Somewhat agree	44	18%
Neutral	5	2%
Somewhat Disagree	12	5%
Strongly Disagree	6	2%
	250	

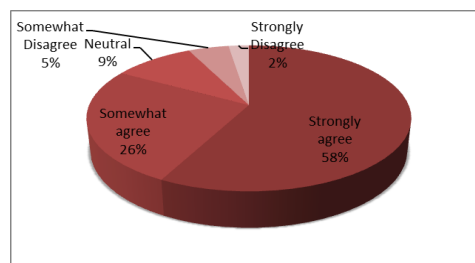


On asking the question, 73 % of the respondents strongly agree that social events occurring around affect their shopping behavior positively, 18% of the respondents somewhat agree, 2% are neutral, 5 % somewhat Disagree and 2% Strongly Disagree.

Hence the social events happening around consumers affect their shopping behavior positively

Question II The upcoming events persuade me to buy more of Fashion apparel & accessories

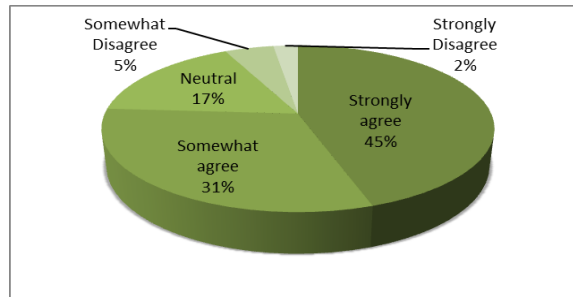
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	144	58%
Somewhat agree	64	26%
Neutral	24	10%
Somewhat Disagree	12	5%
Strongly Disagree	6	2%
	250	



Above mentioned information about the upcoming events persuading consumers to buy more of Fashion apparel & accessories revealed that 58% of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, 26% of the respondents somewhat agree, 10% are neutral, 5% somewhat Disagree and 2% Strongly Disagree. Hence the upcoming events persuade most of the consumers to buy more of Fashion apparel & accessories

Question III The culture influence my buying behavior

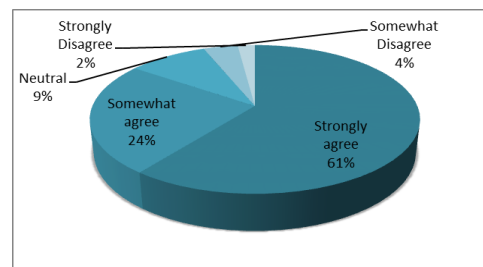
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	112	45%
Somewhat agree	78	31%
Neutral	42	17%
Somewhat Disagree	12	5%
Strongly Disagree	6	2%
	250	



On asking the question, 45% of the respondents strongly agree that the culture influences their buying behavior 31% of the respondents somewhat agree, 17% are neutral, 5% somewhat Disagree and 2 % Strongly Disagree. Hence the upcoming events generally persuade consumers to buy more of Fashion apparel & accessories

Statement IV . The social acceptance of Fashion products is important to me

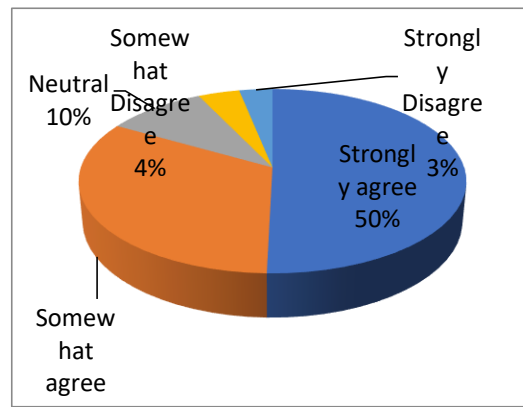
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	151	60%
Somewhat agree	61	24%
Neutral	23	9%
Somewhat Disagree	10	4%
Strongly Disagree	5	2%
	250	



Above mentioned information about the importance of social acceptance of Fashion products reveals that 60% of the respondents strongly agree to the statement , 24% of the respondents somewhat agree, 9% are neutral, 4 % somewhat Disagree and 2% Strongly Disagree. Hence the social acceptance of Fashion products is important to consumers

Statement V . I prefer products that promotes a social cause

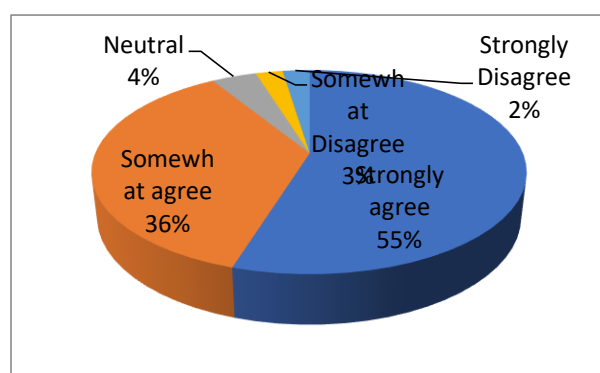
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	126	50%
Somewhat agree	82	33%
Neutral	24	10%
Somewhat Disagree	10	4%
Strongly Disagree	8	3%
	250	



On asking the question, 50% of the respondents strongly agree that they prefer products that promotes a social cause, 33% of the respondents somewhat agree, 10% are neutral, 4% somewhat Disagree and 3% Strongly Disagree. Study reveals that majority consumers prefer products that promotes a social cause

Statement VI. I have started using only “Made in India” fashion products

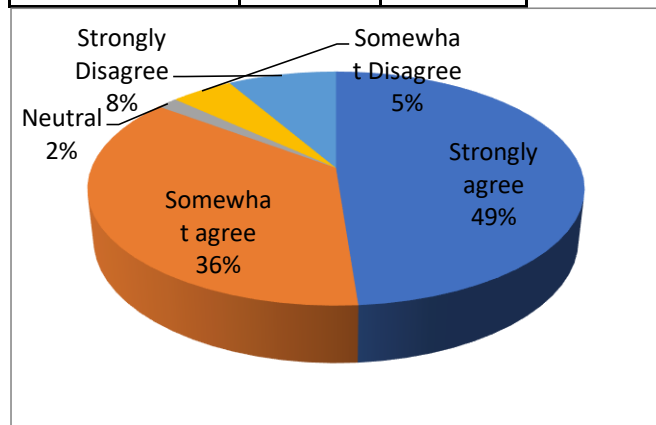
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	137	55%
Somewhat agree	91	36%
Neutral	10	4%
Somewhat Disagree	6	2%
Strongly Disagree	6	2%
	250	



55% of the respondents strongly agree that have started using only “Made in India” fashion products, 36% of the respondents somewhat agree, 4% are neutral, 4% somewhat Disagree and 2% Strongly Disagree. Hence majority of consumers have started using only “Made in India” fashion products

Statement VII I use fashion accessories that are not tested on animals.

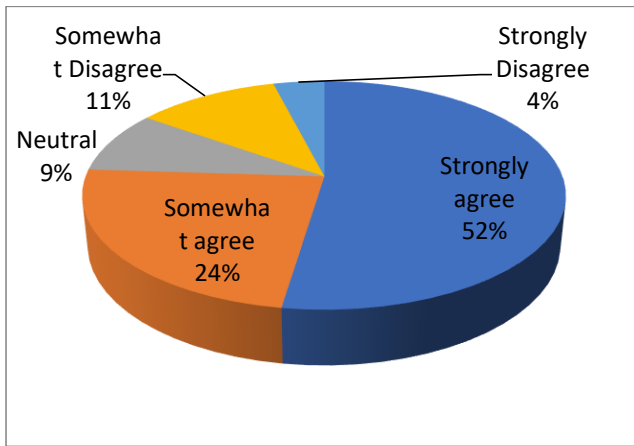
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	99	40%
Somewhat agree	68	27%
Neutral	42	17%
Somewhat Disagree	39	16%
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
	250	



On asking the question, 40% of the respondents strongly agree that they have started using only “Made in India” fashion products 27% of the respondents somewhat agree, 17% are neutral, 16% somewhat Disagree and 1% Strongly Disagree. Hence most consumers use fashion accessories that are not tested on animals.

Statement VIII With increasing awareness on environmental issues, I also have started using only eco friendly products.

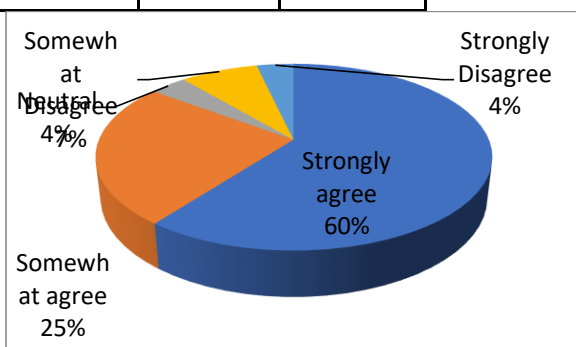
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	131	52%
Somewhat agree	59	24%
Neutral	22	9%
Somewhat Disagree	28	11%
Strongly Disagree	10	4%
	250	



52% of the respondents strongly agree that with increasing awareness on environmental issues, respondents have started using only eco friendly products., 24% of the respondents somewhat agree, 9% are neutral, 11% somewhat Disagree and 4% Strongly Disagree.Hence with increasing awareness on environmental issues, mass consumers have started using only eco friendly products.

Statement IX Suitability to my culture, belief, traditions and customs are the most important factors to govern my buying behavior towards fashion apparels & accessories

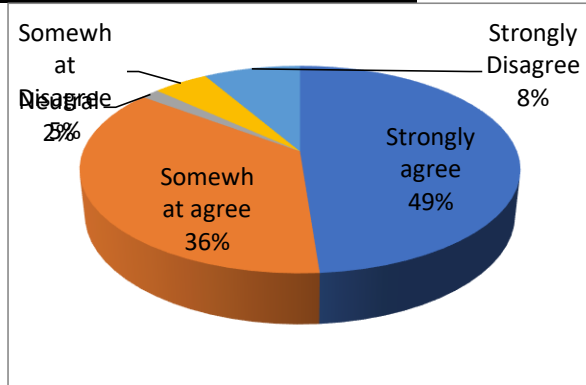
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	151	60%
Somewhat agree	62	25%
Neutral	9	4%
Somewhat Disagree	19	8%
Strongly Disagree	9	4%
	250	



60% of the respondents strongly agree that the most important factors to govern buying behavior towards fashion apparels & accessories is Suitability to culture, belief, traditions and customs . 25% of the respondents somewhat agree, 4% are neutral, 8% somewhat Disagree and 4% Strongly Disagree. Hence Suitability to culture, belief, traditions and customs are the most important factors to govern consumer buying behavior towards fashion apparels & accessories

Statement X In order to help small manufacturers, I have started purchasing fashion products from artisans and craftsmen.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	122	49%
Somewhat agree	91	36%
Neutral	4	2%
Somewhat Disagree	12	5%
Strongly Disagree	21	8%
	250	



49% of the respondents strongly agree that in order to help small manufacturers, they have started purchasing fashion products from artisans and craftsmen. 36% of the respondents somewhat agree to this, 2% are neutral, 5% somewhat Disagree and 8% Strongly Disagree on above. Hence, majority of consumers have started purchasing fashion products from artisans and craftsmen.

5.0 CONCLUSION:

The research accepts that there exists a significant relation amidst Socio cultural activities and Consumer buying behavior for fashion clothing. Most of the respondents have cited that social events occurring around consumers impact their shopping behavior positively. The upcoming events have been informed to persuade consumers to buy more of Fashion apparel & accessories. The culture has been suggested to influence the buying behavior of consumers.

Largely, respondents have cited that the social acceptance of Fashion products is very relevant to them. Majority of respondents have corresponded that products that promote a social cause are found to be relevant to consumers. Most of the respondents have started using only "Make in India" products. Most respondents have showed interest towards use of Fashion products whose Raw materials that are not tested on animals. With ascending perception on environmental issues, consumers initialized utilizing only eco-friendly products and marked preference towards sustainable products like Jute Bags. Many respondents have accepted that they have begun purchasing fashion products from artisans and craftsmen.

Though Fashion is a very modern but culture, belief, traditions, customs and contemporary issues have been reported to be having a major impact on consumer behavior in buying Fashion apparel from organized Fashion retail outlets. Hence the study proves that Purchase intention on fashion apparel is largely influenced by the socio-cultural movements that drive involvement with the products and message is accepted.

Future scope

In future the study may be used to identify potential gaps in consumer awareness and will be a guiding light for Fashion retailers. The findings of this study can contribute to a larger understanding of the intersection between consumer behaviour and Socio cultural activities.

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