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### **Who Is the Consumer?**

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Before you examine the role of the consumer in your marketing plan, make sure you understand exactly who the consumer is. People sometimes use the two terms interchangeably, but the term “consumer” has a more distinct definition compared to “customer.” A customer is simply a buyer, while a consumer is the individual who both buys and uses the product or service. A consumer is a customer, but a customer isn’t always a consumer in a business transaction. A consumer also is called the end user.

### **What is Consumer Behaviour ?**

Consumer Behaviour is a branch which deals with the various stages a consumer goes through before purchasing products or services for his end use.

### **What a consumer thinks when he goes out for shopping ?**

A marketer needs to first identify his target consumers and understand their lifestyles, psychologies, income, spending capabilities, mentalities to offer them the right product.

Individuals from lower income group would never be interested in buying expensive and luxurious products. He would first fulfill his basic physiological needs like food, air, water etc. Trying to sell a

Mercedes or a Rado watch to someone who finds it difficult to make ends meet would definitely be a disaster.

Kellogg's K special would hardly find any takers in the low income group. In this segment, individuals would be more interested in buying fresh fruits, vegetables, pulses which are necessary for their survival rather than spending on health supplements.

It is really essential for the marketers to understand the needs of consumers. Find out what they are actually looking for?

There are ideally two different ways which enable marketers to understand their consumers.

- Primary Research
- Secondary Research

**Primary Research** - Primary Research refers to a research methodology where marketers interact with consumers directly and gather as much information as they can. Information is generally collected through surveys, questionnaires, feedback forms, interviews etc.

**Secondary Research** - Secondary Research often refers to relying on information which has been collected by others at some point of time.

The background and family status of an individual also influence his/her buying behaviour.

Selling a laptop to an individual who is not much educated would be pointless. Remember consumers would show interest in your products only if they are of any use to them or their immediate family members. A low grade worker would never be interested in purchasing business suits or formal shirts.

Canned juices are a hit among middle and higher income group where individuals are really conscious about their health and fitness.

Individuals who live hand to mouth would never spend on sugar free tablets, health supplements, or for that matter “Diet Coke”.

It is also important to give complete information to end-users. Do not hide anything from them. It is not ethical. All tobacco products come with a warning. Individuals should be familiar with not only the benefits but also the side effects of the products.

**Marketers must also take into account:**

- Age group of consumers
- Geographical location
- Lifestyle of consumers
- Social Status of consumers

Funky designs, loud colours would be a hit among teenagers whereas middle aged and elderly people would prefer subtle colours and sophisticated designs.

Salwar Suits are extremely popular in North India whereas females prefer saris and skirt blouses in eastern and southern parts of India.

Individuals from posh localities and good jobs would show keen interest towards buying exclusive and unique products as compared to individuals who do not come from an affluent background.