

Chapter I

Introduction

Cognitive and social psychologists are now learning that stimuli presented subliminally can have a considerable influence on psychological processes such as cognition, affection and emotional involvement. Studies have shown that people can be persuaded without their conscious evaluation that is to say their cognitive power is overshadowed by affection or by their emotions. This imbalance in cognition and affection forces consumer into irrational buying behaviour. The present study was conducted to explore the influences of subliminal messaging on consumers from different backgrounds. Their responses on cognition, affection, advertisement evaluation and advertisement involvement were compared to determine the type of behaviour they will show after being exposed to subliminal advertisements. The present chapter starts with brief introduction on consumer behaviour, subliminal advertisements and various psychological components.

1.1 An overview of consumer behaviour and advertising

Consumer behaviour describes how the buying process starts within an individual .It is about how individuals, groups and organizations think and then buy goods and services to satisfy themselves. The main focus of Consumer behaviour is to make an attempt to explain the decision-making processes within buyers. ^[1] It also includes study of customer characteristics such as demographical and behavioural variables in an attempt to

understand people's wants or needs. Not only this, there are other factors such as family, reference groups, and society in general that can shape consumer decision making. Some of the important factors that influence consumer behaviour are briefly discussed below:

1.1.1 Cultural factors

There are number of factors important to consumer behaviour which include both internal as well as external elements .Here external refers to factors such as Culture, Social System and other marketing stimuli while as internal refers to inner process within the consumer that can include cognition, affection, confusion, involvement etc. Culture is one of the external factors which is important in consumer buying .It is the culture that may stop an individual from purchasing a product but at the same time it is fundamental to the person's wants and needs .The best example of culture can be that of a child who acquires a set of values, perceptions and preferences through his family and society (Kotlar, 2009) [2].

1.1.2 What are cultural factors?

Cultural factors comprise set of values and ideologies of a particular community or group of individuals. Culture can shape the behaviour of an individual. The culture starts from the home itself. A child in the family learns and adopts the way of life through the pattern of his/her parents.

This process where an individual learns from his parents and relatives as a child becomes his culture. Family ties are still given importance in Asia including India where Children prefer to value their parents' decisions like choosing life partners and staying with their parents even after marriage which is not the case with the people living in foreign countries. People in foreign countries are brought up through different exposure, where most of them stay independently and hardly live with their parents. More old age homes are seen in foreign countries than in this part of the world ^[3]. Buying decision of an individual is significantly affected by cultural factors and every consumer has distinct sets of habits, beliefs and principles which he may have adopted from his/her family status and background.

Most of the students in Universities would prefer buying pant, shirt as compared to Kurta and shalwar that is used by students in Institutions of Islamic education called *Dar-ul-ulooms*. Similarly, during auspicious ceremonies and on holidays, male consumers would prefer Kurta over shirt in Northern India because of their cultural ethos. Most female consumers in North India prefer wearing formal dress like Salwar-Kameez as compared to female consumers in South India, who prefer wearing skirts and tops. In past, it was part of a culture that one had to wear traditional attire on marriages and this is what people used to follow for years .Similarly, people in Northern part of India take rice in huge amounts than the people from

rest of the India. In earlier times, culture would determine purchase privacy to a greater extent, as consumer would hide some of the categories of products from their elders giving due respect and importance to their age and seniority, which may not be the part of culture in present times. So culture plays an important role in consumer behaviour.

1.1.3 Subcultures

Consumer is a bundle of package and as mentioned above each culture has various sub dimensions known as sub culture which also influences buying behaviour of an individual. The sub dimensions of culture can include religion, age, location, gender, status etc.

1.1.3.1 Religion

Consumers in India come from different religious groups including Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism etc and consumer's buying decision can be influenced by his/her religion. Like Hindu bride gives high preference to red, maroon or a bright colour lehanga or saree which is not the case with Christian bride who prefer wearing a white gown on her wedding day. Muslims on the other hand, prefer to wear green or white on important occasions. Consumers from Muslim category do not eat pork as it is against their religious beliefs while at the same time Hindus do not mind eating it. A grown and old man in his sixties will not favour suitings that are too bright and colourful [4]. In other words, he will not prefer wearing

fashionable clothes, he would be willing to purchase something which is simpler and does not contradict his religious values. But contrary to it, it is different story with teenagers as they prefer fashionable clothes and have mostly aggressive buying behaviour. Widows in India prefer wearing white clothes and the Widow wearing bright colours is looked at with suspicion.

1.1.3.2 Status

Status means, socially defined position which can affect consumer buying behaviour as well. The three main categories of status are Upper Class, Middle Class and Lower Class. Generally, people from upper class spend more on luxurious and costlier items like expensive gadgets, cars, dresses etc and these expensive items further influence consumer behaviour to go for other rich brands in different categories such as suiting's, type of residence ,food products etc. The consumer from a lower class is hardly found spending money on costlier products because for him it is survival and sustainability that is important and not the luxurious life . Individuals from middle class are considered to be highly rational in buying decisions and are more interested in buying products which would make their future secure ^[5].

1.1.3.3 Gender (male/female)

Gender plays an important role in consumer buying particularly in irrational or impulsive buying as both male and female differ in Cognition and affection. The preference and perception of people is generally affected by the type of gender. In most of the cases, people generally make fun of males buying fairness creams as only females are expected to buy and use beauty products. The behaviour of male is considered to be strong and different from females. In this study, different components like cognition, affection, purchase intentions, ad involvement have been analysed across gender differences.

1.1.4 Social Factors

The social belongingness in terms of family, friends, neighbours and relatives in Asian continent is considered to be the most important factor in influencing the consumer behaviour .The importance of this factor can be understood by the fact that whenever consumer makes any purchase he would first call his parents, family members and friends to comment on how good or bad was the purchase? . And it is most likely that the consumer may reverse his/her decision if they don't recommend it. Social factors being important to consumer buying, the subject consumer behaviour tries to analyse these factors as well. Every individual wants to have people around him with whom he/she can talk and discuss various issues so as to have

solution and ideas. We all live in a society and everyone may feel it as responsibility to obey the undefined laws and regulations of the society [6].

Some of the Social Factors which influence the consumer buying decision are listed and discussed below :

1.1.4.1 Reference groups

Consumer is not alone as he has people around him who are important and influence his decision making .In other words, he is surrounded by the individuals with whom he always compare himself. Consumers value some people in the society who because of some traits and qualities become their role models and do influence their decision making. Besides it, other categories which comprise reference groups include co workers, family members, relatives, neighbours, friends and seniors at workplace (MSG Courses,2013). These are categorized into two types:

a. Primary Group :-

This group is also known as close group with whom an individual would always interact. Consumers find it hard to make any decision without the involvement of primary group. The sub categories of primary group include friends, family members, relatives and co workers.

All the sub categories under reference group influence the buying decisions of an individual because of the number of reasons which have been highlighted below:

They have the experience of having used the product or brand earlier. They are well aware about the product's features and quality. They with their knowledge can differentiate the features and specifications of one product from others. The following example clarifies it , Zubair planned to buy a laptop for himself. Very next day, he purchased a Dell laptop from nearby store. The one and only reason to purchase a Dell Laptop was because all his friends had purchased the same model and had reported positive feedback about the product and its features. Thus, it can be concluded that consumers do purchase the products on the basis of friend's recommendations .Married and unmarried individuals would differ in buying as married consumer will have a strong inclination about purchasing products which will benefit him and his family members which is not the case with unmarried consumer .Fashion is always at the back of bachelor and craze always determines his type of buying **(MSG Courses,2013)**.

The question of how Family is important in influencing the buying behaviour of a consumer.

A person living with his/her family scans the market through different corners as he would always buy something for his wife or children rather than only spending on himself. The consumer who has just got married would be keen in purchasing a car, house, household items, and furniture because of family concern [7]. Almost all the consumers pass through different stages and in different stages the buying behaviour is also different, what consumers prefer in early part of their life would entirely be different from what they seek in later stage of life.

b. Secondary Groups :-

This includes people who don't have direct relationship with the consumer. They meet on formal basis and the consumer may or may not interact with them on a regular basis. The different categories in secondary group include religious associations, political parties, clubs etc.

1.1.4.2 Role in the society

Most of the consumers play dual roles in their society and depending upon the group he/she is associated with, his buying need may also vary. Like an individual who is working as Chief Executive Officer with a multinational company is also someone's husband and he may have children and hence father's role as well. So the buying behaviour of such consumer will depend upon the role he plays in the society **(MSG Courses,2013)**.

1.1.5 Personal factors

Consumer behaviour helps us to understand the buying tendencies and spending patterns of consumers. As mentioned earlier, the buying behaviour of consumers does differ with respect to different factors, personality is also one of the factors which determines the buying pattern. Consumer behaviour involves deep analysis as to why or why not consumers buy some products and services ^[8]. The personal factor which includes occupation, age, economic conditions, life style and personality are all important in determining consumer buying behaviour.

1.1.5.1 Occupation

The job, an individual holds, plays an important role in influencing his/her buying decision. The consumer's occupation directly influences and determines the type of products and brands he would purchase. Dr. Zubair was holding the job of Chief Executive Officer in an organization while his friend Dr. Suhail, who retired as professor, is now working as a part time faculty in nearby private college. Zubair had preference for premium products whereas Dr. Suhail mostly preferred products which were not much expensive. This tells that Dr. Zubair was conscious about his attire including clothes he would be wearing, the perfume he would be using, the watch he wore whereas Dr. Suhail would hardly care about these things.

The above example illustrates the importance of occupation which one holds. Till the time, Dr. Zubair was holding the post of CEO, it was important for him to wear special brands that would look really elegant and unique. The people holding important positions within the organization such as CEO would not prefer to wear cheap labels and local brands at work.

The job one holds and nature of work does influence his/her buying decisions. Worker at shop level will hardly buy precious brands such as business suits or ties for himself. It would be irrational on the part of worker working at shop floor level to wear precious brands everyday during work. College students mostly prefer wearing casuals where as professionals are always interested in buying formals. The medical representative is always seen wearing casuals because it is the job that demands such dressing even if individual is not interested in such formal dresses (MSG Courses, 2013).

1.1.5.2 Age

Age plays an important role in defining consumer behaviour. Young consumers can be found involved in aggressive pattern of eating than the old aged consumers. Subliminal ads will have more impact on young consumers than on the old ones. As affection and cognition determines the type of buying whether irrational or rational, there are more chances that

consumers at the age of young adulthood would be prompted towards irrational buying as emotions in this category would be on higher side than the cognition after being exposed to external stimuli such as subliminal advertisements. It is a fact that the children and adolescents show higher purchase privacy than the matured and old ones which illustrates that age again plays an important role in defining consumer behaviour.

1.1.5.3 Economic condition

The type of purchase an individual makes also depends upon his/her economic conditions as well. The earnings per month determines how much to spend and how much to save? Consumers with higher earnings per month have the capacity and motivation towards expensive and premium brands where as individuals with lesser earnings known as middle and lower income groups would spend mostly on necessary and important items. An individual with low income can hardly be seen buying precious products and services. His demand would be for buying grocery products and items essential for his survival ^[9].

1.1.5.4 Lifestyle

Austrian psychologist, Alfred Adler came up with this term “Lifestyle” in 1929, which refers to the way the consumer or an individual likes to stay within a society. People having vulgar life style are seen involved in

aggressive buying. Also an individual living in posh locality will prefer branded products to maintain his/her status and image .So it becomes important for these consumers to wear branded clothes whereas for some individuals, they hardly care about brands. Thus an individual's lifestyle also forms an important part of consumer behaviour.

1.1.5 Personality

The consumers possess their own characteristics or personality traits which can affect their buying behaviour. A fitness freak would always look for fitness equipments whereas a music lover would happily spend on musical instruments, CDs, concerts, musical shows etc^[10]. A sports person is always seen keen to have better sports kit which would enable him/her to perform in better way, an academician always searches for books and resources to add to his knowledge economy.

1.2 External factors and subliminal advertisements

After having discussed some of the important elements that shape consumer buying decisions, the following section forms the important part of this research proposal.

1.2.1 External stimuli

External Stimuli means advertisements which may include different appeals used by advertising agencies such as fear to promote an immediate behaviour like eating healthier or quit smoking. Drinking and driving where some agencies promote fear factor so as to stop people drinking during driving. Humour makes consumers laugh and creates an emotional link with the product .A well executed humour appeal enhances recollection, evaluation, and intent to purchase the product ^[11]. It can also include rational appeal where focus remains to promote benefits associated with the product. It can also include bandwagon appeal where consumer is encouraged to purchase the particular product because everyone buys it, surragotive advertising is also used to promote illegal products.

1.2.2 Subliminal advertising and types of subliminal ads:

Apart from appeals mentioned above there are other appeals which are categorized into Subliminal advertising which can include half Sexual actions, Metaphor, Celebrity Endorsement, Back Ground Language, Cult feeling etc. Pornography and Sexual actions in advertisements may help promote a product but implications associated with such advertisements like inclination/excitement may tempt the young viewers to satisfy their biological needs through illicit relationships, causing anxiety and stress

which may force them to become drug addicts landing them in a vicious circle.

Hundreds of experiments conducted over the last 85 years have established that people are emotionally influenced by half sexual actions, metaphor in advertisements and through celebrity endorsement as well. This phenomenon is known as “subliminal persuasion without conscious evaluation”, subliminal messages like half sexual actions, metaphors are used in advertisements in such a way that consumers are influenced by its exposure when respondents don't actually recognise it. There has been continuous research in subliminal messages in biological sciences, psychology and other social science fields including management. A highly publicized study in 1950's by James Vicary, incorporated a subliminal message in an ad, “Drink Coke, Eat Pop Corn”, and the effect was increase in sales after movie at refreshment Box^[12].

Advertisements are not only important to advertiser but to a customer as well, as it is an important source of information for customers and technique of generating sales for advertisers .The advertisers have been always seen alert to catch the potential buyers unawareness by igniting their state of mind to feelings and emotions which prompt them to buy the product as the message contained therein is more addressed to psyche than the vision. Though there are a number of ways how advertisers can subliminally

persuade customers like Music in ads, the back ground language influence, love messages in advertisements, Social proof/cult feelings but there are certain messages which may conflict with the sound principles of business ethics. Therefore, certain aspects need to be addressed like how far is it reasonable to have so much pornography which is apparent in most of the advertisements, what about the half sexual actions ,how far is it ethical to use metaphor in advertisements and more importantly the question of celebrity endorsement .

Agencies use metaphor in advertisements where actions and messages shown are directed at something else than the product information e.g. in Hero Honda Igniter bike ad, an employee of a reputed company who has recently purchased Igniter is shown to have lured a female who incidentally happens to be his boss. The metaphor is that by purchasing Igniter you will be able to get hold of a girl friend and another case of metaphor is that you will not just be able to have a girl friend but you will be able to get hold of a celebrity which others die for. Celebrity endorsement mostly affects youth because of their vulnerability and it is believed that endorsements which promote fictitious and misleading information often affect consumer's behaviour or decisions about the product or service.

The subliminal tactics started way back in 1950's and it has been used for generating sales and also to bring changes in consumer behaviour.

Subliminal messages create anxiety and as a result of it, people tend to lessen this effect through smoking, drugs and over eating ^[21]. Subliminal persuasion occurs when you are able to successfully implant a message in the mind of a person or group of people whom you target for change without their conscious evaluation about the change, and encourage them to spread the idea organically to their associates. Subliminal persuasion is about getting people to change their minds, to change their beliefs, and to accept new information as not only being correct, but having the necessity to spread. Advertising, marketing, movie making, public relations, propaganda, negotiation, and religion all rely on subliminal persuasion(Davie Lakhani,2008) ^[13]. There are different categories of Subliminal Advertising and different ways of persuading people subliminally. The two important categories of subliminal persuasion are visual and auditory subliminal messages, but since in this research indirect approach of subliminal persuasion as mentioned by Davie Lakhani in his book “Subliminal seduction” has been used, so only Half Sexual Actions, Metaphor and Celebrity Endorsement will be discussed here.

1.2.2.1 Half –sexual actions:

Half Sexual actions in advertisements or movies are effective in arousing respondents’ feelings which then forces them towards undesirable or illegal relations. Few of the type of ads are discussed below:

1. **Ad of Mc Dowell's Kerala Club Soda:** In this advertisement a romantic and naked girl pulls a boat into the sea and paddles towards the lone lighthouse. The lighthouse is awesome! She walks up the stairs and her clothes fall off. It reveals a sexy tattoo on her thighs. She climbs up to the top to see a man drinking whisky. Oh hey, its water .They both make passionate love together. Total sex!

2. **Amul macho ad:** This is a vulgar ad in which a woman comes to the bank of river and makes suggestive and naughty movements that resemble making love.

3. **Hot international Topless ad of Bipasha basu & Vivek Oberoi for New York Lotto:** In this advertisement, bollywood super star Bipasha Basu topless bathing in a water sprinkled with rose petals in this New York Lotto TV commercial. Her husband, Vivek Oberoi, comes to pick her up from her palace in a royal manner. When Vivek sees Bipasha, he remembers his earlier intimate times with her. Somebody starts knocking and Vivek wakes up from his dream or is it? All this is possible with New York Lotto.

4. **Axe ads where they portrait that the girls show their sexual desire towards guys using such deodorants.**

The question that needs to be asked is, what is it that forces agencies to use such images, scenes, words and messages in advertisements .If we recall the basic aim of advertising, it is information sharing thereby making people aware about the products even in most of the cases agencies are not allowed

to go for comparative advertising. So the question that needs to be answered is why such representation in advertisements when we know the effects of such ads on respondents, which is to force them into irrational behaviour, undesirable sexual relations and destabilizing their state of mind in order they become addicted to drugs. It is not needed to prove but people need to ponder upon the fact that why romantic and naked girl moving towards lonely house is shown in ads, this really is total sex encouraging young generations to have sexual relations and if not married it puts them in vicious state where results could be either continuous illegal sexual relations through gang rape or by mutual consent and if not so then those exposed to such ads will try to leverage this need by the use of drugs.

Half sexual actions is one of the techniques used by agencies through which they are able to change the ideology of generations, their attitude, their value system and their behaviour altogether which is evident in present generations and in their behaviour as well.

1.2.2.2 Metaphor:

The American Heritage Dictionary defines metaphor as “A figure of speech in which a word or a phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate something else, thus making an implicit comparison, as in *a sea of troubles* or *All the world’s a stage* (Shakespeare).”

Metaphor works because it allows you to take complex ideas and make them understandable by replacing the troublesome piece with something that

people already understand. They can make the connection. People can regularly use metaphor in all their speaking and writing to become more persuasive. Metaphor is the fuel that combusts in the engine of persuasion. Advertising agencies also resort to use of metaphor in ads so as to persuade consumers towards their products when they are actually portraying something different like they may use products to get hold of others as shown in ads(Davie Lakhini,2008).Take the example of Hero Honda Igniter advertisement, though advertisement is about bike but in this advertisement there are certain things that should be taken into consideration like why in this advertisement an employee who has recently purchased Igniter is shown to have lured a female who incidentally happens to be his boss.

There are number of advertisements and one more such of type advertisement where metaphor is used is an Ad for shoe by Akshay Kumar where Akshay Kumar is shown using particular shoe which helps him attracting and kissing a girl .Such type of ads like that of Hero Honda Igniter , Shoe ad by Akshay Kumar induce irrationality among consumers as is evident from ad messages itself.

1.2.2.3 Celebrity endorsement:

There are two different definitions of celebrity endorser which are used in the literature. The definitions are:

“any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition

by appearing with it in an advertisement”^[14].

“A celebrity endorser is an individual who is known to the public (actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc.) For his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed”^[15].

For celebrity, it is important to choose an individual who is a known personality in the eyes of people. When the individual is famous, agencies use him/her as celebrity to endorse a product with an objective to increase the sale of the product.

Endorsement is the process of endorsing messages, ideas through high profile personalities because most of the consumers are ready to accept the ideas of their role models. Before coming to scene, hardly anyone could have heard Amitab Batchan but now a days he could be seen in advertisements promoting products and most of his followers are ready to accept his messages and ideas because his profile from being simple has changed to high profile personality with people remembering him most of the day while doing any action. The following example explains it further how subliminal persuasion can occur through celebrity endorsement.

New Ad of Mayur Suiting featuring Salman Khan: Makes girls curious about you, here celebrity Salman is promoting Mayur suitings and the process indirectly explained in this add is since Salman has used this product then there is no harm in using this product and also having used such product will make girls go after you as is shown in this advertisement.

Davie Lakhani has categorized Celebrity endorsement into Subliminal category and people do tend to make purchases without proper planning and has a lot to do in irrational decision making of a consumer.

1.2.3 Buyer characteristics

1.2.3.1 Affection

Emotions, feelings play an important part in consumer buying and this component of consumer behaviour can be triggered by exposing an individual to external stimuli and there are chances that consumer emotions may be triggered to irrational buying.

Affect has been conceptualized variously as feeling, emotion, preference, and attitude. The affective dimension reflects emotions which as said above may be triggered by irresistible urge to buy^[16].

1.2.3.2 Cognition

The cognitive dimension reflects self control with strong emphasis on rational buying provided affective dimensions don't overcome cognitive dimensions. When a consumer is exposed to subliminal ads such as mentioned above and is able to resist by controlling emotions, feelings, he/she is more likely to increase cognition which serves customer in making rational decisions.

1.2.3.3 Conceptual framework

Although research studies in the past have recognized that affective and cognitive elements do occur during consumer decision-making, but little attention has been paid on the impact of these dimensions. For a complete understanding of irrational consumer buying, attention needs to be directed towards these processes and their components as well. This study is based on conceptual framework of consumer irrational buying which is as a function of two higher order psychological processes i.e. affect and cognition, and two other components including Ad Involvement and Ad Confusion Component along with gender differences. The affective dimension reflects emotions which triggers irresistible urge to buy. The cognitive dimension reflects self control with strong emphasis on rational buying provided affective dimensions don't overcome cognitive dimensions. The overall power of each factor and the degree of influence between each component represents the ultimate outcome of whether or not an irrational buy emerges. As the emotional irresistible desire to buy competes and takes over the cognitive control of willpower, irrational buying takes place ^[17] (Youn, 2000).

1.2.3.4 Age and subliminal ads

Age plays an important role in defining consumer behaviour. Young consumers can be found involved in aggressive buying pattern of eating than

the old aged consumers. Subliminal advertisements can have more impact on young consumers than the old ones. As affection and cognition determines the type of buying whether irrational or rational, there are more chances that consumers at the age of young adulthood would be prompted towards irrational buying as emotions in young consumers tends to be on higher side than the cognition because of external stimuli which in this research is subliminal ads.

1.2.4 Buyer's response

Buyer's response shows impact of external stimuli such as advertisements on consumer behaviour which can include its impact on cognition and affection and other components of consumer behaviour .The type of response would determine the type of buying like if cognition is on higher side rational buying will occur and hence rational behaviour or it can lead to irrational buying behaviour if affection is on higher side ^[18]. When advertisements run on television, respondents may find themselves involved in actions shown in those ads and some children have done it in past as there have been number of deaths because of the involvement factor. Apart from this, when subliminal messages through metaphor, half sexual actions and celebrity endorsement run on television people are highly tempted towards those actions and messages shown in such ads, thus increase consumer's involvement and more the involvement, higher the irrationality.

As discussed earlier, Consumer behaviour consists of number of factors including inputs, extraneous variables and outputs where inputs can include various factors of the product such as price, quality, availability of services, external stimuli like advertisements. Extraneous variables can be categorised into importance of purchase, personality variables, Social Class, time pressure and financial status. Finally output includes purchase and post purchase behaviour. So the consumer behaviour depends on number of factors including both internal and external factors where both the factors play an important role in consumer buying behaviour but here in this research focus has been only on external stimulus that is subliminal ads and its impact on consumer buying.

1.2.4.1 Ad involvement component:

Ad Involvement component means the likely involvement of consumers in characters as shown in ads and more the involvement, higher would be impact of advertisements on consumer behaviour and consumer will more likely show irrational buying behaviour .The characters in ads are different ranging from simple to highly sexual. Well defined half sexual ads are highly effective in arousing consumer towards involvement because of being half completed leaves consumer's desire half full filled, as a result of it consumer looks for alternative ways of satisfying himself/herself. One such example of subliminal advertisement with high involvement factor is try our hard pack, where young woman is shown aggressively embracing towards a young man

but apart from it there is one more item in the advertisement that is Benson and Hedges Cigarette packet and thus the ad if you don't get satisfied try our hard pack , in other words, if you are not satisfied when you don't have any sexual intercourse then you can leverage this desire by the use of hard pack which is cigarettes in this case. That is why most of the young people are seen involved in drugs because their desire for sexual intercourse activated by subliminal ads does not get full filled and this illusion ultimately puts consumers into no mans land and hence they get involved into irrational buying behaviour and use drugs impulsively .They also get involved in social evils such as masterbation.

Most of advertisements involving half sexual actions ,sexual messages do tend to force subjects towards higher involvement creating undesirable needs in customers which inturn leads to irrational buying behaviour.

1.3 Need and significance of the study

Advertising is the part of marketing and is one of the important elements of promotion mix .The main objective of advertising is to inform and persuade customers to buy the products of a company. Advertising is an art of telling and selling. Advertising agencies invest a lot through time and money in creating advertisements so as to achieve desired results. Their aim remains to create the advertisements which are watchable and likeable by adding attractive elements to it. Advertisements are created in such a way so as to

have greater impact on cognition and affection. Consumer involvement is also vital in getting the desired impact so that customer's interest towards watching the advertisements should be enhanced. Different messages whether adopted for legal purpose or corrupting youth behaviour may be extremely helpful in enhancing viewer's interest. This study was conducted to know how the advertisements are perceived by the consumers, what is the impact of advertisements on components of consumer behaviour that is cognition, affection, purchase privacy, likely involvement, ad confusion and demographic variables as well. The aim of this research proposal was to find whether Subliminal messages do or do not tend to create differences in consumer behaviour. Since the subliminal advertising is blamed for promoting irrationality among youth viewers, from society point of view researcher felt responsibility to examine whether these ads affect consumer behaviour. Different consumer dimensions like cognition, affection, emotional involvement that can be triggered after exposure to subliminal advertisements were examined so as to see how consumers differ in their response to such advertisements as the degree of each component determines the type of behaviour that consumers may show in future.

1.4 Statement of the problem

An advertisement is a paid form of representation of goods and services so as to enable prospective customers to choose between various alternatives they

may like to purchase. The basic purpose of advertising is to inform, persuade, remind and the reinforcement of consumers. Ads play major role in providing relevant information and it is because of these ads we get newspaper at cheap rates. In order to attract customers and overcome the problem of 'advertisement avoidance' advertising agencies through research in advertising have been using techniques and are able to persuade customers to buy their products whether consciously or unconsciously, whether on need basis or because of exposure to external stimuli. Advertising through television medium combines different appeals like sexual appeals, humour, more rational appeals like eat healthy, don't drive while drinking. Besides it, they may also use different features like sight, sound and motion, appealing to the sense which results in high attention and high reach. The latest and controversial technique used by advertisement agencies is subliminal ads.

The aim of any advertisement is to have an impact on sales or persuade the consumers with or without their conscious evaluation. In order to corrupt the mind of the consumer, advertising agencies use messages which not only increases sales but have greater effect on components of consumer behaviour which at times forces consumer to go for irrational buying and even we see drastic changes in consumer altogether through the involvement in social evils. So the problem is impact on society and more importantly the

youth which are considered to be the nation builders but when they are subjected to a force/technique/ such as subliminal ads which is treated as dangerous invention after atomic bomb ,how would one think about the nation which is already under subliminal subjugation which leaves no stone unturned and forces youth towards undesirable behaviour like undesirable sexual relations, alcoholism, brown sugar addiction ,diversion from religion etc. So the need was felt to work on this issue and analyse whether advertisements are able to make any impact on components of consumer behaviour including cognition, affection, Ad Involvement, Ad Confusion, Purchase Intension, Purchase Privacy and Demographic Variables because that would help conceptualise whether subliminal ads are effective in persuading consumers without their conscious evaluation. The following research questions were considered for the study:

- a) Whether the effect of subliminal ads depends on gender difference?
- b) How consumers under different age groups differ in response to subliminal ads?
- c) How consumers from different residential backgrounds differ in response when exposed to subliminal ads?
- d) Whether consumers exposed to subliminal ads will show any Irrational buying/Compulsive Buying?
- e) How much involved and thrilled do people feel after being exposed

to subliminal ads?

f) What is likely impact on purchase intention?

1.5 Objectives of the study

Television is a medium which carries the messages to mass audience. Individuals differ in their evaluation through cognition, affection and involvement. The main objective of this study was to explore the behaviour of the consumers and their perception, determine their level of affection and cognition as the degree of both helps determine the type of behaviour (Almanda Leigh Coley, 2009), after they were exposed to subliminal advertisements. There has been long controversy regarding the impact of subliminal advertisements i.e. to say whether these kind of advertisements do actually affect the feeling component of an individual, whether it affects the cognitive part of a consumer whereby he/she then goes for compulsive buying. This research proposal explored some of the behavioural aspects of a consumer that can be affected by subliminal advertisements like feelings, likely involvement in depicted behaviour, believability in actions and ideas promoted through these advertisements, whether such advertisements create any confusion, compulsive buying habits if any, purchase intentions as well and with the help of comparative analysis across different components of consumer behaviour mentioned above, researcher was able to conclude whether this kind of exposure to subliminal ads leads irrational or rational behaviour. This study was conducted in Kashmir province of J&K,

and was undertaken in three major regions namely Central Kashmir, North and South Kashmir and respondents under study were youth from both the sexes in the age group of 18 to 35. The study was extended to educated youth whether employed, unemployed or undergoing process of education. The objectives of the study were:

1. To study the impact of subliminal ads on the cognition and affection of consumers.
2. To study the level of emotional involvement of target groups as a result of exposure to subliminal ads.
3. To analyse whether subliminal advertisements do possess a confusing effect.
4. To study likely purchase intentions of consumers after being exposed to subliminal ads.
5. To study whether different consumer groups being under subliminal exposure differ in compulsive buying decisions.

1.6 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were framed for this study:

1. **Ho:** Feelings and Cognition generated by subliminal ads are not effective in creating compulsive buying behaviour.
2. **Ho:** Subjects exposed to subliminal advertisements will report same affection (feelings) and cognition.
3. **Ho:** Male and female subjects exposed to subliminal advertisements do not report any significant difference in ad involvement Component.

4. **Ho:** Subjects of different age groups exposed to subliminal advertisements do not report any significant difference in ad involvement component.
5. **Ho:** Male Subjects exposed to subliminal messages in TV advertisements report same cognition and affection as that of female subjects.
6. **Ho:** Male and Female subjects exposed to Subliminal ads do not report any significant difference in ad confusion component.
7. **Ho:** Subjects of different age group exposed to subliminal ads do not report any significant difference in ad confusion component.
8. **Ho:** Subjects from different areas exposed to subliminal advertisements do not show any significant difference in purchase intentions.
9. **Ho:** Male and female respondents exposed to subliminal advertisements do not report any significant difference in compulsive buying.

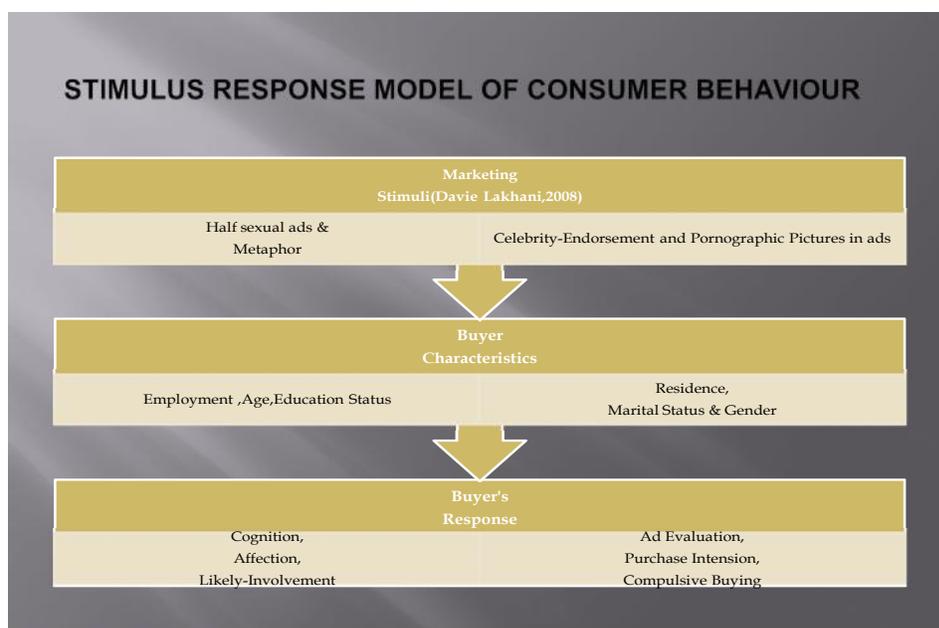
1.7 Scope of study

Consumer behaviour as mentioned earlier consists of number of factors including inputs, extraneous variables and outputs where inputs may include various factors of the product itself like price, quality, availability of services, external stimuli such as advertisements. Extraneous variables include importance of purchase, personality variables, Social Class, Time pressure and Financial Status. Finally output extends to purchase and post purchase behaviour. So the consumer behaviour depends on number of factors with both internal and external factors playing major role in consumer buying .Different approaches and models in the area of consumer

decision making have been adopted drawing on differing factors important to consumer decision making but the present study focused only on Proposed Model shown below(duplicate of Black Box Model) which is Stimulus Response Model so as to see the likely impact of external stimuli that is advertisement on consumer behaviour.

There has been long controversy regarding the impact of subliminal advertisements i.e. to say whether these kinds of advertisements do actually affect the feeling component of an individual, whether it affects the cognitive part of a customer whereby he/she then goes for irrational buying as cognitive and affective elements together influence to what extent emotions, feelings and/or reasons create irrationality or self-control.

Fig.1 Stimulus Response Model



The occurrence of irrational behaviour depends heavily on the degree of presence of these two elements i.e. affective (responsible for irrationality) dimension and cognitive dimension (responsible for self-control). The decrease or increase in the two components affects the overall buying process, if the intensity of one increases it takes over the other component which may lead to rational or irrational behaviour.

It is known fact that affective and cognitive dimensions do take place in consumer decision-making and it is interesting to understand how and why imbalance of each element works and leads to irrationality which is the basis for complete process of irrational buying. Adopting the same methodology this research proposal explored some of the behavioural aspects of a customer that can be affected by subliminal advertisements like cognitive and affective components of decision making as they relate to irrational buying behaviour. In addition, this study being different from previous studies also examined the ad involvement Component so as to determine the likely behaviour of respondents exposed to subliminal ads along with Ad confusion component to see how different consumers of subliminal ads differ in evaluating these advertisements .Comparison has been drawn between males and females in relation to factors including cognition, affection, ad involvement and ad confusion and demographics as well. It also includes comparison among respondents of different age group in relation with same

components as mentioned above i.e cognition, affection, ad involvement and ad confusion.

This study was conducted in Kashmir province of J&K, and data was obtained from three major regions namely Central Kashmir, North and South Kashmir and respondents under study were youth from both the sexes in the age group of 18 to 35. The study was extended to educated youth whether employed, unemployed or undergoing process of education.

Though there are certain clinical devices like Tachistoscope which may directly measure the impact of subliminal advertisements. However, in the area of behavioural sciences response from customers can be attained by using Developed Stimulus Instruments. In this research, developed questionnaire along with a case study was used. The questionnaire contained multiple choice questions on different components, whereas case study comprised of number of advertisements categorised as subliminal ads by Davie Lakhani in his book "Subliminal Persuasion". There are different factors that can affect consumer behaviour but the consumer decision making process where emotions overshadow cognitive abilities is known as irrational behaviour and the main purpose of this research proposal was to explore elements related to such behaviour. If consumers emotional capabilities are lesser than cognitive capabilities then consumer would make rational decisions and if his/her emotional capabilities overcome cognitive capabilities then whatever decisions consumer makes that would

be irrational and this irrational decision making may lead to compulsive buying and this may be because of internal factors or external stimuli like subliminal advertisements and here focus was only on the impact of external stimuli i.e subliminal advertisements.

1.8 Frame work of analysis

The core of the study being "consumer behaviour" after consumer being exposed to subliminal ads on television ",centres on major dependent variables viz. the cognition, affection generated by subliminal ads. The independent variables include age, sex, education, marital status, residence. Tables have been formed and the data has been analyzed by using the statistical tools like, percentage, analysis of variance and Mann Whitney U Test.

1.9 Limitations

Efforts have been made to make the study representative of the population and result oriented by choosing an optimal sample size but still the following limitations are felt:

1. Due to constraints of time and resources, the study could not be extended to uneducated youth of Kashmir province.
2. Some of the dimensions like personality and other psychological factors could not be studied as the size of the questionnaire was to be kept reasonable acceptable to the respondents.

3. The present study on subliminal ads and its impact on youth may not have generalizations on consumers of older age.
4. The study is limited only to the geographical location of Kashmir and the results may or may not be applicable elsewhere in the world. Hence, the generalization must be made with caution.
5. The unnoticed inhibition on the part of some consumers to divulge the true feelings which is a normal feature in such kind of surveys can a limitation of the study.

1.10 Chapter scheme

Chapter I INTRODUCTION & DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents an introduction to consumer behaviour, components of consumer behaviour, stimulus response model, external stimuli, television advertisements, subliminal advertisements, need and significance of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, scope of the study, framework of analysis, limitations and chapter scheme.

Chapter II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter included review of related literature from previous studies, research articles, research publications conducted in the field of consumer behaviour, components of consumer behaviour and subliminal advertisements. It also includes research Gap.

Chapter III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology used in the study is explained in this chapter. Research design, sampling method, sample sizes, sources of data, tools for data collection, statistical tools used for analysis are the sections of this chapter.

Chapter IV PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of the data. Results of the data analyzed were presented in tables and inferences drawn are also mentioned.

Chapter V SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

A summary of findings of the study is presented in this chapter. It also includes implications that can be undertaken by various stakeholders.

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