Lifestyle of Indian Middle Class Women: an Analytical Study
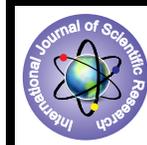
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INTRODUCTION

The contribution of women in decision making will increase with growing number of nuclear families, educated women and working women. The number of middle class working women will rise sharply. This will lead to introduction of women oriented products. As India has the potential to grow rapidly for some years to come, its emerging middle class will strengthen and reinforce its growth. The women consumers on one hand and the middle class on the other, together we can say middle class women in India would be a great target market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection method chosen was administration of survey . Sampling Technique was multistage sampling.

Sample Target included middle class women from Lucknow , Delhi and Mumbai and Calcutta and Jaipur. According to a report of NCAER middle class means a family with a household income between 3.4 lakhs to 17 lakhs. I have got the questionnaire filled by women who belong to a family with this annual household income. For this I chose the middle class colonies in the respective towns and got questionnaires filled by women there.

Sample Size: The sample size chosen is 1000. Tool: Research tool used is a questionnaire.

The research has been carried out with the objective to examine if there has been a change in the lifestyle of middle class women.

It is seen that annual personal income of women in the age group 21-40 is more than income of women above 40 years of age.

The results are presented according to different hypothesis framed .

H01 The preference to save money for future than spend most of it on present comfort is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:

As per the analysis of Chi-square test the calculated value of Chi-square with 95% level of confidence is 0.000 which is less than level of significance i.e. 0.05. The hypothesis is thus rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-

There is great change in their lifestyle of women as far as saving is concerned . The younger women do not wish to save while women in the above 40 age group give value to saving for future . This change of not saving for future but spending most of the money on present comfort as seen in women in the up to 40 age group indicates that women in the up to 40 age group would purchase more of products and services as compared to women in the 40 age group. Thus these women would drive consumption.

H02 The preference on spending on products having public view is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:

As per the analysis of Chi-square test the hypothesis is rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-

There is a change in the lifestyle of women as far as their outlook is concerned. Women in the up to 40 age group prefer spending on products having public view while this is not the case with most women in the above 40 age group. This shows the show off nature of nature of women in the up to 40 age group. This age group would drive consumption towards products which would catch the eye of people.

H03 The desire to have the latest model of mobile even if most of its features are not used is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:

As per the analysis of Chi-square test the calculated value of Chi-square with 95% level of confidence is 0.000 which is less than level of significance i.e. 0.05. The hypothesis is thus rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-

There is change in the lifestyle of women in the two age groups where women in the up to age group say that they must have the Latest model of mobile even if they don't use many of its high tech features while women in the above 40 age group do not feel so. This clearly indicates that women in the less than 40 age group have greater inclination towards showing off and do not want to save instead present for their present enjoyment while this aspect of lifestyle is quite different among women above as they are not spendthrift and would not buy products simply for show and for the sake of spending They would buy only when there is need.

H04 Wanting to have house in posh colony as compared to a place close to the market of work place is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:

As per the analysis of Chi-square test the calculated value of Chi-square with 95% level of confidence is 0.000 which is less than level of significance i.e. 0.05. The hypothesis is thus rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-

34.5% women in the 21-30 age group strongly agree and 30 women in the 31-40 age group agree to live in a posh colony as compared to a place close to the market or their workplace while 44.5% women strongly disagree and 68% women in the 51-60 age strongly disagree to it. Meaning thereby that women in the above 40 age group prefer a dwelling place to the market or workplace and the up to 40 age group prefer posh locality. If women now don't mind staying away from their workplace of the market means they would definitely own a vehicle to go to their work place or to the market which would not be such an important requirement of the women above 40 . More over staying away from the market would compel them to keep a servant which would once again age different from the lifestyle of women above 40.

H05 Getting sufficient time to do all household chores is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:
As per the analysis of Chi-square test the calculated value of Chi-square with 95% level of confidence is 0.000 which is less than level of significance. The hypothesis is thus rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-
48% women in the 31-40 age group strongly disagree to getting sufficient time to d all household chores while 45% women in the 41-50 age group strong agree and 67% women in the 51-60 age group strongly agree to getting sufficient time to do all household chores Since women in the up to less than 40 age group do not get sufficient time to do all household chores , they would resort to availing the services of maid servants and availing the hotel services.

H06 Relaxing as the maid looks after a considerable part of the work is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:
As per the analysis of Chi-square test the calculated value of Chi-square with 95% level of confidence is 0.000 which is less than level of significance i.e. 0.05. The hypothesis is thus rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-
Since majority of the women in the up to 40 age group relax as their maids looks after a considerable part of their work would indicate the increase in the consumption of domestic help in this younger age group.

H07 The thought that arranging events at home is old fashioned is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:
As per the analysis of Chi-square test the calculated value of Chi-square with 95% level of confidence is 0.000.The hypothesis is thus rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-
Since 47% women in the 31-40age group feel that arranging events at home is old fashioned show the trend towards consumption of hotel services and other places where events may be organised . This is not the case with the women in above 40 age since 4% women in the 41-50 age group and 68.5% women i the 51-60 age group strongly disagree to the thought that arranging events at home is old fashioned.

H08 Looking out for ease in usage while purchasing any product is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:
As per the analysis of Chi-square test the hypothesis is rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-
Since majority of the women in the 21-30 and 31-40 age group look out for ease in usage while purchasing products indicates there would be an increase in the consumption of products which would have an element of ease in usage among the up to 40 age group. These products may include all kitchen items and other household items. This is not the case with most of the women above 40 age group.

H09 The preference of getting dresses stitched as compared to buying ready made is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:
As per the analysis of Chi-square test, calculated value of Chi-square with 95% level of confidence is 0.000 which is less than level of significance. The hypothesis is rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-
Majority of the women in the above 40 age group prefer to get their dresses stitched while majority in the up to age group disagree to getting their dresses stitched as compared to buying ready made. Since the new trend is towards readymade dresses indicates the falling consumption of tailor services and increasing consumption of manufacturers who make readymade apparel.

H010 The feeling of high status on wearing branded outfit is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:
As per the analysis of Chi-square test the hypothesis is rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-
Most of the women in the less than 40 age group feel that wearing branded outfit gives them the feeling of high status. This is not the with women in the above 40 age group. It can thus be interpreted that there has been a change in the lifestyle of women as for women in the above 40 age group brand does not hold a great importance as compared to the importance it holds for the younger women .

H011 Frequently logging on to social networking sites is independent of the age of Indian middle class women.

FINDINGS:
As per the analysis of Chi-square test the calculated value of Chi-square with 95% level of confidence is 0.000 which is less than level of significance i.e. 0.05. The hypothesis is thus rejected.

INTERPRETATION:-
A vast majority of women in the up to age group frequently log on to social networking sites which is not such a frequent case with women in the above 40 age group. The social group is not confined to any geographical area but can extent to any part of the world. Since women consumers in the up to 40 age group are well aware of all the consumption trends in different parts of the worlds by being connected to social networking sites, they would have demands different from those who are not well connected on the social networking sites.

CONCLUSION
The lifestyle has changed and the extra money which the women in the 21-40 age group have is a means of displaying the women buyer's superior socio-economic status. This younger group of women consumers will account for a majority of luxury consumption. The women in the 21-40 age group will offer the biggest new growth opportunity.

We can conclude that there would be a shift in the consumption pattern of women which would become status directed. This consumption shift be more of hedonic in nature.

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