

**MBA- III semester, Specialisation- Marketing Management, Paper -
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BEHAVIOUR IN SERVICES**

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN SERVICES

INTRODUCTION-All of us buy different services for various reasons. One person may prefer to go to a restaurant for good food while the other may opt for an exclusive restaurant, for status. One person may prefer to read 'The Times of India' early in the morning, while the other may prefer to read the same newspaper after coming back from the office. There are women who don't go to beauty parlours at all, whereas there are others who go regularly. Similarly, there are many such examples telling us that people show different behaviour in buying and using different products and services.

The discipline of marketing which helps in developing a deeper insight in these behavioural differences is called "Buyer Behaviour". We have developed an appreciation that the meaning of marketing orientation is that a firm should aim all its efforts at satisfying its customers. And to keep customers satisfied it becomes essential to have a deeper knowledge regarding the behaviour of the buyer.

DECISION MAKING ROLES

It is being said, that for the purchase decision some other people might also be involved and they may have different roles to play. But generally, and more often for services, both individual or organizational, these roles are played by more than one person. For a marketing person, it is important to know who plays what role in the purchase decision, so as to adapt the service format and promotional efforts to these key players. Conceptually, the consumer decision making roles are best exhibited by the following example. At a confectionery shop visited by a family to buy bread, a child asks his parents for a candy. The child becomes the 'initiator'. The mother suggests that only one piece may be purchased of 'X' brand, she plays the role of 'influencer'. The father orders for one piece of 'X' brand and pays for it, playing the role of 'decider' and 'buyer'. Finally, the candy is eaten away by the child, which means that he plays the role of 'user'. In the purchase of any particular service six distinct roles are played. These are:

i) **Initiator:** The person who has a specific need and proposes to buy a particular service.

ii) **Influencer:** The person or the group of people who the decision maker refers to or who advise. These could be reference groups, both primary and secondary. It could be even secondary reference group like word of mouth or media, which can influence the decision maker.

iii) **Gatekeepers:** The person or organization or promotional material which act as a filter on the range of services which enter the decision choice set.

iv) **Decider:** The person who makes the buying decision, irrespective of whether he executes the purchase himself or not. He may instruct others to execute. It has been observed at times, more typically in house hold or family or individual related services, one member of the family may dominate in the purchase decision.

v) **Buyer:** The person who makes the actual purchase or makes bookings for a service like travel, hotel room, hospital, diagnostic lab, etc.

vi) **User:** The person who actually uses or consumes the product. It can be other than the buyer. In a number of services, it has been observed that users are also the influencers.