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Brands: Not Just Craze but the New Fashion Mantra of the Youth with special reference to Patna

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Abstract : Brands are becoming very important factor of the corporate world today. The people today, especially the youth are attracted to various branded products available in the market. It is often perceived that the products of some reputed brands have the capacity to enhance the status, image and overall personality of the users. The youth have become aware about the importance of brands and for this media is responsible. The present study was conducted to gauge the

perception about the craze for fashionable things of different brands among the young students of Patna. This paper evaluates the concepts and terms related to brands such as types of brands, brand consciousness, brand awareness among youth, impact of brands etc.

Key words: Brand, International brands, Media.

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Introduction :

Brand consciousness is one of the major traits of the upcoming Indian youth. Young adults are nowadays one of the most attractive and appealing market segments for the companies. As the consciousness for brands among youth has spread like a forest fire, they want to go for branded goods like clothes, shoes, perfumes, eatables, accessories, and different types of gadgets.

The term 'Brand' refers to the name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's product distinct from those of other sellers (www.wikipedia.com). Any brand is a set of perception and image that represents the products of a company or services (www.economictimes.com). While many people refer to a brand as a logo,

tag line or audio jingle, the range of a brand is actually much larger.

Among youth, it becomes a style and status symbol. The signature wear of youth raises their confidence level and ego. The new generation known as Gen Y is willing to spend on the maintenance of a lavish lifestyle. Working class also prefers this as it enhances their personality and gives them sophisticated and professional look. The youth are associated with being free, happy, confident and culturally relevant. According to the survey of ASSOCHAM (Associated Chamber of Commerce And Industry of India) brand conscious urban teenagers, belonging to the upper middle – class segment, have been found to spend on an average of Rs.4,000 to Rs.5,000 every month to upgrade their wardrobes.

The youth of today is perhaps the most significant user of media. Media and promotion have been the sole reasons for the brand awareness and consciousness among the Gen Y. Social media and online shopping is the most recent trends among the youth. Flipkart, Amazon, Sanpdeal, etc. are the most famous online sites for shopping. Globalisation is also one of the important factors that influences the youth to go for brands as it gives varieties of options and wider market to shop.

With 1.2 billion people and the world's fourth largest economy, India has stabilised itself as one of world's faster growing economies. It accounted for 1.2% of world trade as of 2006 according to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). From the fashion apparel demand perspective, India has emerged as one of the most attractive destinations for American and European brands in the last 10 years and will continue to hold promise for the next 10 years. Therefore, it is a good option for spreading the market of branded goods.

Objectives :

At the backdrop of the above facts, the chief objectives of the present study are:

1. to examine the importance of various branded products selected and purchased by the young students of Patna;
2. to find out the preferred branded products and popular brands among the youth;
3. to inquire about the source of information and place of procurement of the different kinds of branded products;
4. to observe the impact of international brands on the local products; and
5. to examine the influence of branded products on the overall personality and image of the youth of Patna.

Hypotheses :

1. The city youth today prefer various branded products as they believe that the brands enhance their social status.
2. Because of globalisation, the availability of national and international brands has made the market a much wider place to choose from.
3. Media is one of the most influencing factors that has created brand craze among the youth.

Methodology :

The present study was undertaken in different colleges and showrooms of Patna for the key information as research instruments. The study bases itself on primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected by personal interview method. For this purpose 150 respondents (students) were asked relevant questions. In

addition, information and secondary data were obtained from various books, magazines and websites. On the basis of interview schedule, findings have been enumerated. In the end conclusion and suggestions have been presented.

Findings and Analysis :

On the basis of interview/ survey, we present the findings below

The following **Table – 1** represents the classification of 150 respondents in terms of their respective shares of income spent on purchasing different kinds of branded products. The findings reveal that 40% of the total number of respondents spent a major share of their earnings, 35.4% spent average share and another 20% minimal share on various branded products. In contrary, only 4.6% of them are not spending anything on branded items. This suggests that the youth are very much attracted to the various branded items available in the market and like to purchase them.

Table - 1

INCOME SPEND ON BRANDED PRODUCTS*

Share of income spent on branded products	No. of respondents	% share
Major share	60	40.00
Average share	53	35.40
Minimal share	30	20.00
None	07	04.60
Total	150	100

*Based on Sample Survey

The clothes, precisely the wide range of readymade garments of different brands, have emerged as the most preferred products among the young respondents of Patna as shown in the following **Table – 2**.

Table - 2

PREFERRED BRANDED PRODUCTS*

Products preferred by the respondents	No. of respondents	% share
Clothes	90	60.00
Shoes	30	20.00
Watches	18	12.00
Accessories	12	08.00
Total	150	100

*Based on Sample Survey

The young boys and girls for obvious reasons seem to prefer branded apparels, which is clear from the findings of the sample survey. 60% of the respondents like to purchase branded garments prior to all other products. Other than dresses, the youth have shown interest in buying shoes, watches and other kinds of accessories; such as belts, wallets, jewellery, cosmetics, under garments and so on. For 20% of the respondents, shoes have appeared to be the most preferred branded products; while 12% of them have shown inclination for watches and another 8% for various accessories respectively.

Table - 3

PREFERRED BRANDS OF CLOTHES/GARMENTS *

Brands preferred by the respondents	No. of respondents	% share
Killer	38	25.30
Levis	33	22.00
Lee	23	15.30
Raymond	15	10.00
Reid & Taylor	07	04.60
Others	30	20.00
Total	150	100

*Based on Sample Survey

As the garments and apparels have emerged as the most preferred branded products of the youth covered by the sample survey, an attempt has also been made to find out some popular garment brands among the young students. The brands like Killer, Levis and Lee have shown higher ranks in the popularity list of the young people; being preferred by 25.3%, 22% and 15.3% of the respondents respectively (**Table – 3**). Another 10% of them have shown preference for garments made by Raymond and 4.6% by Reid & Taylor. In addition, 20% of the young students have shown inclination to buy clothes of some other brands available in the market.

The following **Table – 4** shows the chief reasons behind selecting a particular branded product by the youth. The findings reveal that the young ones largely (precisely 60%) go for the image of a brand. It is the image that makes a product trustworthy. Apart from the brand image, the other reasons for brand preference among youth have emerged to be its capacity for status building, easy availability, the cost factor and packaging.

Table - 4

REASONS FOR BRAND PREFERENCE *

Reasons	No. of respondents	% share
Good and trusted image	90	60.00
Capacity to enhance status	30	20.00
Easy availability	15	10.00
Reasonable price	08	05.40
Attractive packaging	07	04.60
Total	150	100

*Based on Sample Survey

An effort has also been made in the study to find out the different sources of information regarding the various brands of products available in the market; and the findings are presented in the **Table – 5**.

Table - 5

SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT BRANDS *

Reasons	No. of respondents	% share
Media	60	40.00
Friends and relatives	45	30.00
Window shopping	38	25.40
Promotional marketing	07	04.60
Total	150	100

*Based on Sample Survey

The importance of media is widely accepted and for obvious reasons 40% of the students under review, seem to have gathered information about the concerned matter from different means of media. Apart from the media, 30% of the young respondents seem to have learnt from various branded items from their friends and relatives. In addition 25.4% of them have come to know about the brands while window shopping in markets and another 4.6% from the promotional marketing campaigns undertaken by the companies.

The findings of the field survey also reveal that the upcoming large shopping malls in the city are the most favoured place for the young ones for purchasing various branded products; as shown in the **Table – 6**. The share of youth purchasing in the malls appears to be much higher than the local markets, small shops and street markets.

Table - 6

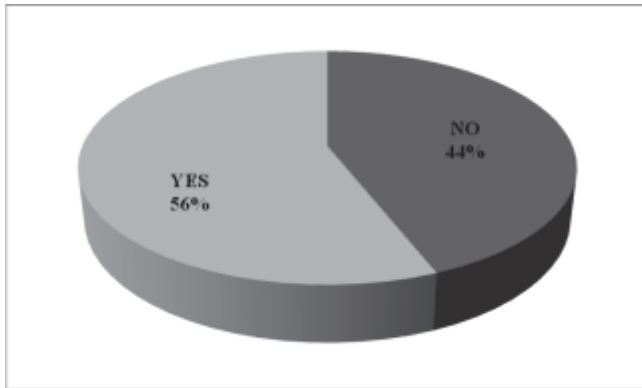
PLACE OF PURCHASING BRANDED PRODUCTS *

Place of purchasing	No. of respondents	% share
Big malls	78	52.00
Local markets	48	32.00
Small shops	15	10.00
Street market	09	06.00
Total	150	100

*Based on Sample Survey

More than half of the young students (56%) have agreed to the fact that the international brands have an impact on the local brands against 44%, who are of different opinion regarding this particular aspect (**Figure – 1**).

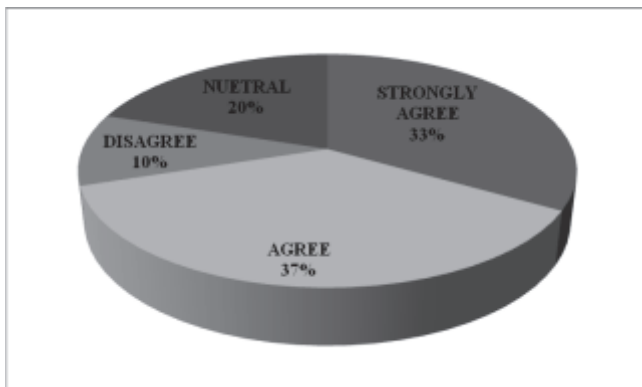
Figure - 1
IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL BRANDS ON LOCAL BRANDS *



*Based on Sample Survey

As far as the influence of the various branded products on the personal image and status of the youth is concerned, the findings of the study reveal that nearly 70% of the respondents have agreed to the fact (**Figure – 2**). On the other hand only 10% of the students of Patna do not agree with it, while 20% have remained neutral.

Figure - 2
IMPACT OF BRANDED PRODUCTS ON PERSONAL IMAGE *



*Based on Sample Survey

Findings and Conclusion :

The following major findings can be inferred from the study:

1. There is a great demand for different kinds of branded products among the youth and they spend a substantial share of their income on them.
2. Garments are the most preferred branded products of the youth of Patna; and they prefer the global brands available in the market.
3. Media plays a vital role in creating demand for brands among youth and influences 40% of them to buy branded products.
4. The word 'glocal' in marketing vocabularies mean global and local brands complimenting each other. In the end people want both global and local brands – brands that make them feel part of wider international community and brands that root them in their home culture.

Recommendation / Suggestion :

1. Media and promotions have been vital reasons for the brand awareness and consciousness among the youth. Hence, there is need for enhancing technology, processing, and advertising.
2. Local brands, Private brands and Home brands should make more effort to attract youth towards them. They can try for cool advertisement through media, attractive and attention gaining slogans, logo etc.
3. The uniqueness of brand names or sign, may attract the attention of the buyers and users.

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