

# Factors Influencing Compulsive Buying Behaviour of the Children and Parents of Kolkata– A Literature Review

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## ABSTRACT

Shopping is a necessity in everyone's life. Mostly shopping is need based and sometimes it is a leisure activity and a form of entertainment. However, when the condition leads to extreme buying situation resulting into destructive and harmful activity then this is the result of Compulsive Buying Behaviour (CBB). Compulsive Buying Behaviour has become an alarming issue in the current societal structure all over the world among all the age groups. As described by Müller et al., (2015b) "Compulsive Buying Behaviour (CBB), otherwise known as shopping addiction, pathological buying or compulsive buying disorder, is a mental health condition characterized by the persistent, excessive, impulsive, and uncontrollable purchase of products in spite of severe psychological, social, occupational, financial consequences". There are various factors causing Compulsive Buying Behaviour which has in turn affected the children in various ways and in different aspects. As the Children are governed by their parents, they are also affected by the Compulsive Buying Behaviour which has differently affected their parenting. In this paper, we will identify the different factors which are influencing the mental, behavioural and attitudinal changes of the children and ultimately creating changes in their life. Children of the age group of 6 years to 13 years and their parents from Kolkata, West Bengal are studied. This is a conceptual paper and thorough literature review helps to identify the factors.

**Key Words:** Compulsive Buying Behaviour, Impulsive buying, Shopping Addiction, Parenting, Children.

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## INTRODUCTION

The term Compulsive Behaviour is known as a repetitive behaviour displayed by people under severe consequences. When the behaviour is characterised by the shopping addiction, it is then known as Compulsive Buying Behaviour (CBB). CBB displays buying disorder like irresistible shopping, excessive impulsive buying and uncontrollable purchase due to which one lands upon financial consequences. The objective of this study is to assess the impacting factors due to buying behaviour which are bringing mental, behavioural and attitudinal changes within the children and parents.

As already stated earlier, non-addicted people, shop based on their requirements, usefulness and needs, however a severe mental aspect is involved among the people with CBB. They mostly try to improve their mood, cope with stress, gain social approval and recognition, and improve their self-image and self-esteem. CBB is characterised with significant co-existence with psychiatric conditions that are also highly prevalent in other behavioural addictions (Mueller et al., 2010; Aboujaoude, 2014), such as mood disorders, anxiety disorders, substance use, other impulse control disorders, and eating disorders (Fernández-Aranda et al., 2006, 2008).

Therefore, it is very essential to know that why the children are succumbing to Compulsive Buying Behaviour? The result will be definitely be helpful in better parenting in future which will reduce the probability of **Compulsive Buying Disorder**. The study will also help to understand about the factors influencing the buying process of the Children and their parents and will assess the impacting factors due to buying behaviour which are bringing mental, behavioural and attitudinal changes within the children and parents.

This chapter contains review of literature related to consumer behaviour, buying decisions of children, factors that directly and indirectly influence the buying decisions of children and the emerging factors that have come to the fore-front during the study, in metro region. Children today are different from adults. They have a mind of their own, their own individual tastes, likes and dislikes, which also change rapidly due to a variety of products available in the market.

These young consumers in the age group of 6-14 years are also far better informed than their parents, since they are 'aware', having better access to a wider array of information channels like television, print media and internet. Another reason for studying children as consumers is their number which is very large. The sheer size of childhood segment requires immediate attention from marketers, as children directly or indirectly influence the buying behaviour of their parents even in areas where the child is not a consumer.

### **Objective**

The objective of this paper is to assess the impacting factors due to buying behaviour which are bringing mental, behavioural and attitudinal changes within the children and parents based upon literature review

### **METHODOLOGY**

Data mainly collected from secondary sources. Research work done by researchers all over the world on the similar topic has been referred. Extensive Literature review has been done to gather authentic data for this work.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to study conducted by Catlin Jenny, (2005) while working on "A Research Study, Marketing Mastermind", pester power is a means of children supplementing their own infinite spending power by commandeering that of their parents or other adults. Children may employ a number of tactics to coerce their parents into buying them what they want. This can unleash impulse spending and more pocket money in order to buy them what they want. Today's kids are more independent, sophisticated and confident than their predecessors and know exactly how to use pester power effectively.

SashidharAjitha, (2006) while he was studying on "Banking on Pester Power, Brand line," he revealed that children's channels are perceived as indispensable for kids and household brands. Kid's channels have come in handy for brands that want to approach kids and their parents in the hope that pester power will work. Be it cars, bike, paints, health drinks, detergents or shampoos, pester power drives home the sales.

Carter Meg, (1994), in his study about, Pester Power, Contemporary Issues in Marketing, has revealed that children greatly influence their parents even when it comes to buying the weekly groceries. According to a study undertaken by the children's channel, fathers spent 13 percent more when shopping with the children and mothers were far more resistant, although they quickly balanced the budget by dropping normal items from the shopping list to make room for unusual products bought at a child's request.

It is written in the Cover Story, Welcoming the New Age Indian Consumer, 4P's, Business and Marketing (2006) that the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) is touting India as the largest kid segment market in the world (worth a whopping Rs. 25,000 crore and growing at 25 percent) in. Kids are the 'new-age' customers and marketers across the world are devising unique ways to tap into their psyche. Sheer pester power of these teenagers sway their parent's purchase decisions in their favour. Due to their pester power, phones, apparel, food and other lifestyle goods to more serious products like cars, insurance, banks, all are clamouring to attract the kid's attention.

Kapoor Neeru, (2003) during his research on TV Advertising and Consumer Responses & Children's Buying Behaviour, observes that when getting things from parents become difficult, children resort to demanding, manipulating, nagging, and screaming. Sometimes they also resort to reasoning, sweet talk or even bargaining and negotiating for things in return to do something. In order to get what they want; they also create a scene in a mall or a big shop and often throw tantrums in front of guests. The end result is that, parents give in to their children's demands, which many times would be for unnecessary things.

According to a study undertaken by Cook Dan, (Children's Market for the Marketers), the real question haunting us today is, 'whether kids are using products or products are using kids?' The growing influence of children on their parents has become the targeting point for advertising campaigns. Children in their early childhood become more demanding and are influencing family purchase decisions. Children or to be precise, media massaged images of children now routinely and aggressively hawk almost any kind of product, from car tyres to vacations to refrigerators to apple juice, as advertisers make use of both 'cute appeal' and 'safety fears'.

Many studies have shown pervasive group influence on purchasing behaviour. Assael, Henry (2001), studied regarding Consumer Behaviour & Marketing Action. He said because of fear of ridicule, or expulsion from the group, teenagers respond to coercive power. At this age, kids want to emulate another's behaviour in order to be like him or at least appear like him. Peer pressure influences children's buying behaviour more than anything, particularly at this age.

Catlin Jenny (2005) observes that the new trend is that the teenagers don't want to be spotted buying 'uncool' food and drink products for the lunch box. Nowadays money is power to children and will have a bearing on how they are perceived by their peers in a world in which image is everything. Due to this, there is tendency for children's tastes to

change more rapidly than it once did, making them grow out of themes quickly. This puts greater onus on the manufacturer to come up with suitable theme that will grab and keep the attention of this fickle audience.

The cover story of USP Age has identified the 'alpha pup' as a kid, who is deemed by his peers to be the coolest in their school, neighbourhood or town. Today marketers are spending enough energy and resources to study this alpha pup, because the peer group is a determining factor in children's lives and the leaders of such peer groups have immense influence and power. The details are described in Cover Story, Welcoming the New Age Indian Consumer, 4P's, Business and Marketing (2006).

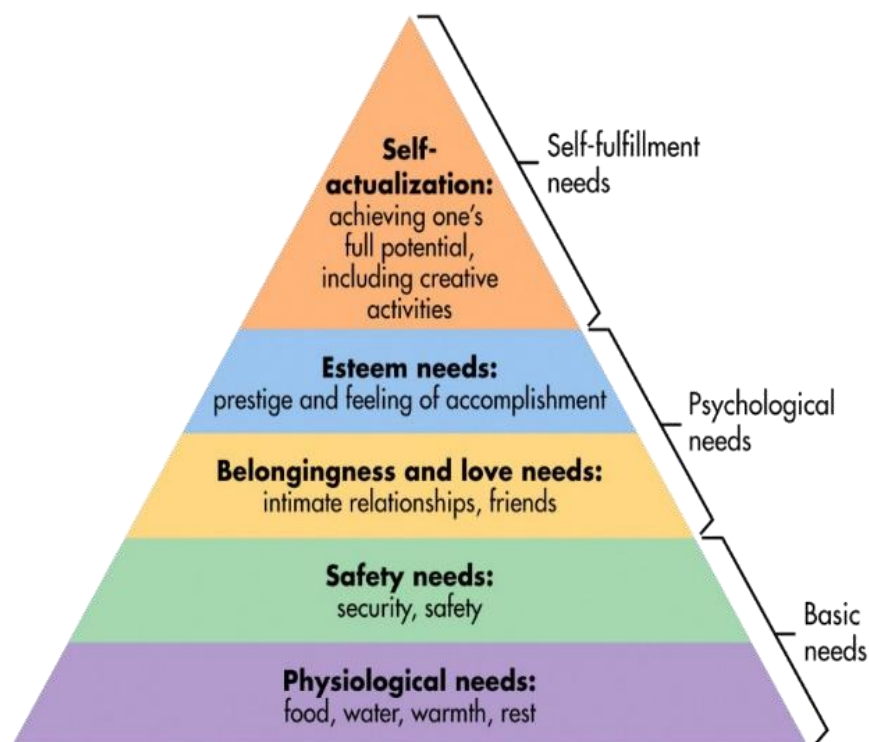
Sinha Amit Kumar (2006) reports in Brand Choices: Influence of Peers in Adolescent Preferences that peer pressures play an important role in influencing the children's buying behaviour. It is noticed that the tweens emulate the preferences of those whom they tend to look up to. Their behaviour, brand choices, spending pattern, choices related to music, games all show their desperate need to belong to a group. Hence the marketers are concentrating on these peer leaders who in turn will influence the subordinates.

Panigrahi Ipsitaa and Roy Bhavya (2008) in Longing to Belong, Education Times, have indicated that identity is the big question at the end of the day. The pressure of getting along with one's peers is so high, that a majority of tweens blindfolded follow their peers in order to gain support and confidence. To fit into the system, one has to be a part of it, and that's what draws everybody into a vicious circle. This vicious circle is difficult to break and hence following it, remains the only option.

A recent article, Kids Pocket Money Rises Six Times in 10 years, published in Mumbai Mirror (2008) that children receive hefty amount as parent choose to spend a part of their income on children questioning them. School children have different spending habits and tastes compared to their counterparts 10 years ago. Presently, kids spend 73 percent of the pocket money on sweets and chocolates and drinks. They also see an annual increment of 24 percent.

D'Souza William Charles (2008) said in Look who's talking, Mumbai Mirror, that Leading children's channel Cartoon Network covered 3000 Indian Kids -between 7-14 years across 14 cities. The survey titled 'New Generations' found that the average pocket money dispersed in Indian households translated to a grand total of Rs. 478 crores annually.

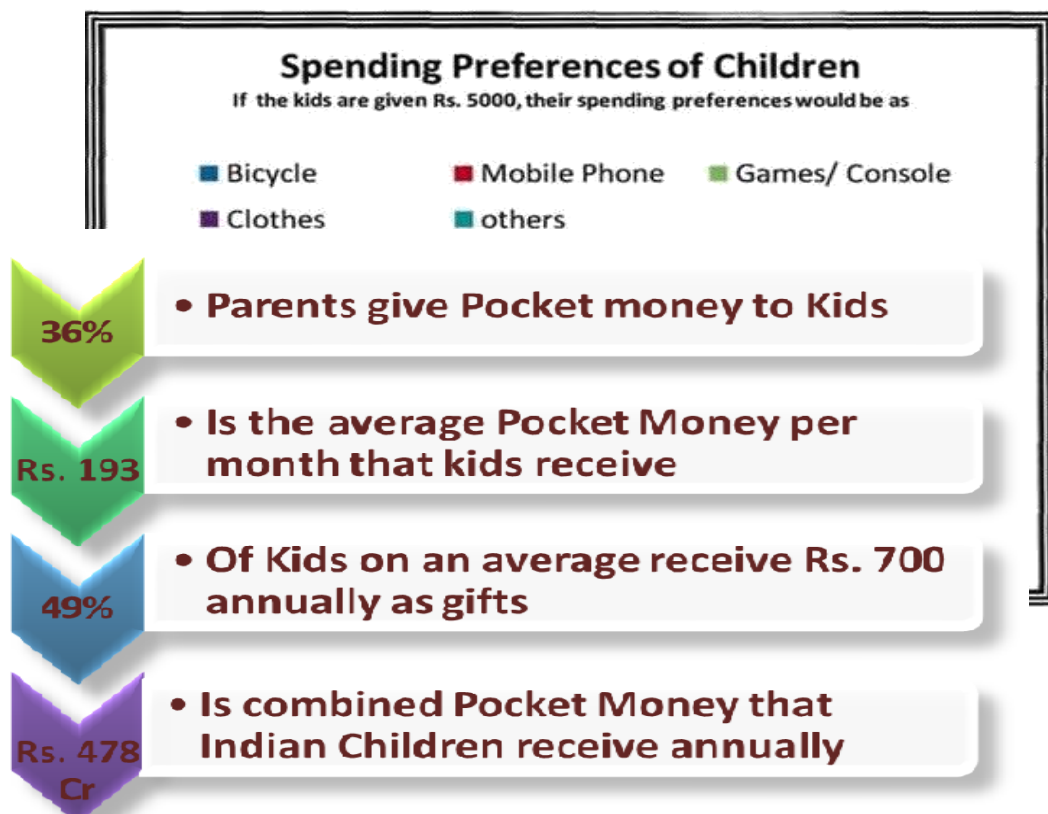
**MASLOW'S NEED HIERARCHY THEORY**



ERIC ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL THEORY

Stage	Age	Major Question	Virtue	Successful Outcome	Unsuccessful Outcome
Trust vs Mistrust	0-2 Years	Can I trust the world?	Hope	Children develop a trust on the world and on the people who care for them	Failure leads to distrust on the World and that others are dependable
Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt	2-4 Years	Can I do things by myself or depend on others?	Will	Children develop a sense of independence and personal control	Children are left with feelings of doubt and shame
Initiative vs Guilt	4-5 Years	Is it ok for me to do things?	Purpose	Kids develop a sense of purpose and motivation to try new things	Children are left with feelings of guilt and lack of initiative
Industry vs Inferiority	5-12 Years	How can I be good?	Competence	Success leads to feelings of competence	Failure leads to feelings of inferiority
Identity vs Role Confusion	12-19 Years	Who am I?	Fidelity	Teams develop a strong sense of self	Teams emerge from this stage
Intimacy vs Isolation	20-40 Years	Can I love and be loved?	Love	Adults form lasting relationship with others	Failure leads to feelings of loneliness and isolation
Generativity vs Stagnation	40-65 Years	What can I contribute to the world?	Care	Adults form a sense of competence when they contribute to the World	Failure leads to people feeling uninvolved with the World
Integrity vs Despair	65-Death	Was my life a good one?	Wisdom	Older adults feel a sense of wisdom on looking back on their lives	Failure leads people to look back on their lives with sorrow, bitterness and regret

SOME INSIGHTS

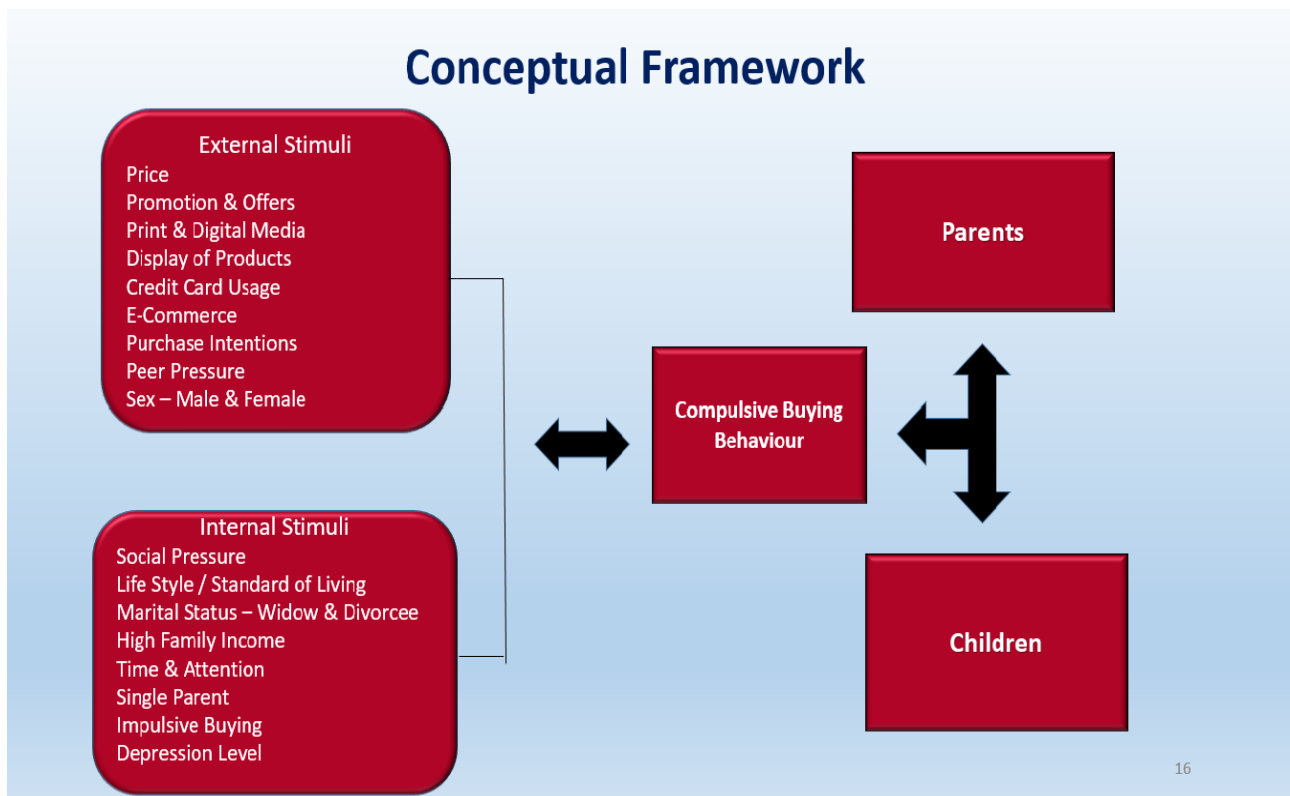


Source: Chart prepared from data inputs from Cartoon Networks survey titled “New Generations”

**Research Gap**

Based on the existing researches and review, it is found, no study was done on the factors which influence the Compulsive Buying Behaviour (CBB) of parents of the children and the children themselves between the age group age group of 6 years to 13 years. The scope of the above-mentioned research will be the various schools from Kolkata.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Factors Affecting Buying Behaviour**  
**Advertisement**

Advertisement plays a very important role in influencing buying behaviour of children and parents. It is a very powerful source of information for Children as they easily get exposed to different alluring items. Adverts also creates awareness about the commodities.

**Pocket money**

Pocket money enables the children to shop as per their own will and liking, without seeking permission from the immediate guardian. Therefore, introduction of pocket money has become an important cause for initiation of erratic shopping attitude within the children.

### **Price**

The competitive market always adopts different marketing skills and strategies to attract consumers. Price of the commodities is an important aspect of business strategies. Attractive items of affordable price influence the children to insist their parents to shop even if it is not required at that point of time.

### **Promotion & offers**

Like price, different promotional activities along with offers attract young immature mind towards unnecessary buying of unwanted things.

### **E-Commerce**

E commerce is an easy way to bring the shop at home. With a press of a button sitting at home, the world of market can be easily procured. Moreover, the discounted price in the online sites provokes the mind of the young and the adults.

### **Credit Card Usage**

Easy accessibility of products through Credit Card usage is another contributing factor for excessive, impulsive, and uncontrollable purchase.

### **Peer Pressure**

Influence from peers and friends results into irresistible buying. Sometimes Children wants to maintain their place among their friends by being at par in regards to dress and other products which attracts people.

### **Social Pressure**

Social pressure is one of those unique pushes that a rational consumer considers before an actual or a potential purchase of any good or service. Social pressure rightly puts pressure on the person or surrounding for any action, buying being the relevant one in this case. By this people gain social approval/recognition, and improve their self-image.

### **Life Style / Standard of Living**

Life Style or standard of living is typically influenced by his/her needs, wants and motivations and also by external factors such as culture family, reference group and social class.

### **Purchase Intention**

Strong purchase intentions result in irregular buying behaviour. This is evident in many instances

### **Time and Attention**

Lack of attention and neglect from the family, results in major psychological setback for the children as well as for the adults. People usually try to ventilate the neglect and relive the stress through shopping. Buyers make purchases in order to improve their mood and cope up with the stress, Parents who are unable to give time to their children compensate their own absence with variety of gifts.

### **High Family Income**

Huge inflow of money provokes unnecessary buying of products for no reason.

### **Single Parent**

Single parent tends to buy lot of unnecessary things to compensate the absence of the other parent.

### **Depression Level**

This is a mental condition or a psychological factor which results into Impulsive Buying Nature to recover from the state of depression.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the extensive literature review and the discussions, the gaps identified states that studies on the identification and analysis of factors which will influence the Compulsive Buying Behaviour (CBB) of the children within the age group of 6 years to 13 years have not been worked on. Moreover, Kolkata as the geographical location was also not selected earlier for research. A combination of these two aspects can be a scope of good research work.

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