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IMPACT OF E-TOYS ON CHILDREN HEALTH: A STUDY ON AWARENESS AMONG THE PARENTS'S OF SELECTED AREAS OF NANDED.

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ABSTRACT

There has been a rapid increase in the number of electronic toys being marketed for children. In current scenario the Indian toy market is flooded with Chinese toy imports and thereby the Indian toy manufacturers are being decimated as a result of dragon effect. This article explores what this latest trend might mean for the development, behaviour and play of very young children. Objectives of the study were to; history of e-toys, assess the awareness of impact of e-toys on children health among parents in selected areas of Nanded. Quantitative research approach and non experimental descriptive design was used for the study. A self developed structured questionnaire was the research tool. The research will help the Indian toys industry to know the areas of modification while competing with highly dominated Chinese toys in the market. The researcher has used both primary and secondary data for this research. The data analysis was done by using relevant descriptive statistics. Nearly 52% respondents are aware about the effects of e toys. Most of the respondents using non-branded e toys (41%). Maximum of respondents (35%) purchasing e toys for fun and entertainment. It is concluded that most of the parents are aware of the impact of e-toys on the health of their children and it is suggested that e-toys should be purchased as per the standards prescribed by the Govt. of India.

Key Words: E- Toys, Children, Behaviour, Health, Parents.

INTRODUCTION

“Let us sacrifice our today so that our children can have a better tomorrow.” –
A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

Childhood a process of development through stages of a child from birth. The child development is the growth of perceptual, emotional, intellectual, behavioral capabilities and functioning during childhood. The term child hood denote that period in the human life from the acquisition of language at two years to the onset teenage. The physical and psychological development of the children needs special attention and care. Children during their group absorb the entire learning from the surroundings they are in. Character of the children can be renewed during their child hood stage. A toy is any object that can be used for play and to gain knowledge. Toys are usually associated with children. Many items are designed to serve as toys, but products produced for other purposes can also be used as toys. Another consideration is interactive digital entertainment, such as a video game. The origin of toys is pre-historic; dolls representing birds, animals, and others, as well as representations of tools used by adults are readily found at archaeological sites. The origin of the word “toy” is unknown, but it is believed that it was first used in the 14th century. Electronic toys keep a child entertained with lights, sounds, and pictures. Small children can learn about cause and effect from them. When they push a button, they get a specified response from the toy. When they push a different button, they get a different response. Electronic toys may offer several different activities, but there is only one way to play. E-toys are a child-friendly. E-toys often reward a child with a funny sound or other response when they do something correctly. Often it is not and that is one of the reasons that some experts prefer non-electronic toys.



HISTORY OF TOYS

Objects with human and animal forms that may have been toys have been found in deposits from ancient Sumer dating to 2600 BC. The earliest-known written historical mention of a toy comes from about 500 BC in a Greek reference to yo-yos made from wood, metal, or painted terra-cotta. It is believed, however, that the yo-yo originated in China at a much earlier date. In addition, the kite, still a popular plaything in China, existed as a toy there at least as early as 1000 BC. In India, clay animal-figures on wheels and other animal toys date to about 2500 BC. Later, brass and bronze horses and elephants were common playthings among Indian children from wealthy families. Play with toys follows two main directions: imitative and instructive. The earliest types of play probably developed from the instinct for self-preservation. In many human cultures one of the first things taught to the young was the use of weapons, and the simple stick or club was the prototype of later military instruments of play, such as swords and guns. Most games and sports requiring physical action derived from practice of the skills used in warfare and hunting; nevertheless, the instruments of the game or sport, such as the small bow and arrow given to a boy in ancient Rome for training, were regarded not as toys but as weapons. By the middle Ages, war-related objects—such as miniature soldiers and weapons—were considered to be toys, however. In modern times the latest developments in warfare are represented among contemporary toys, as are those weapons and war machines fantasized in science fiction and motion pictures.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Electronic toys were not only just toys, but also can educate as well as entertain. It is true that some of these e-toys are simply for entertainment, but more and more firms are adding some type of educational value to most of their e-toys. Again, parents must know what is the best for the children because there are many variety of e-toys in the market that offer many things, besides, the cost of electronic toys and games can vary greatly, from a few rupees to a few hundred rupees. Companies say they need to create more compelling electronic toys as children become more sophisticated and have more choices when it comes to playing and entertaining themselves, from video games to consumer electronics gadgets like digital music players and cell phones. But are these really good enough for our children development? Do parents are aware of the harmful impact of e-toys on the children health?

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is restricted related to the awareness of parents about the impact of e-toys on children health. The study is limited to four areas of Nanded. The study is conducted during summer vacations 2016.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study about toys and their history.
2. To study about types of e-toys available in the Nanded.
3. To study the advantages and disadvantages using e-toys by children on health.
4. To study the awareness of impact of e-toys on children health among parents in selected areas of Nanded.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sources of data collection:

The data, which is collected for the purpose of study, is divided into 2 bases:

Primary sources:

The primary data comprises information survey of "Impact of e-toys on children health: a study on awareness among the parents of selected areas of Nanded." 120 respondents have been selected in order to explore the information from respondents of four areas of Nanded directly from respondent with the help of structured questionnaires.

Secondary sources:

The secondary data has been collected from book, internet, research reports, articles from news papers and websites.



Research Design

- a. **Research type:** Descriptive method was employed to collect the data from the prospective parents.
- b. **Sampling frame:** The parents of four areas of Handed city.
- c. **Sampling unit:** parents who purchase e-toys for their children
- d. **Sampling method:** The sampling method used here is probability sampling in which systematic random sampling has been used. (List collected from vaccination centres of the four local areas under study.)
- e. **Sample size:** A sample of 120 parents has been selected.
- f. **Instrument:** This work is carried out through self-administered questionnaires, personal interview.
- g. **Data Analysis Tools:** Data is analysed by using charts, graphs by using SPSS package.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Kumar (2003) the study revealed that the majority of the consumers were highly enlightened and were concerned about the quality of the products. He also revealed that the consumers, uniformly in urban and rural areas, desired to have quality products at reasonable prices and trusted more on the advice of the retailers.

Vikas Saraf (2003) in his study has found that brands are successful because the people prefer branded products to ordinary products. In addition to the psychological factors, brands give consumers the means whereby they can make choice and judgements. Customers can then rely on chosen brands to guarantee standard quality and services. People believe that the brand itself is something that changes consumer behaviour.

Rajashree Ajith (2005) in the study "Potential of Entertainment Marketing in India with Special Reference to Children", the study found that there was a significant difference between the percentages of children who have branded toys, who know about branded toys and who like branded toys. The analysis reveals that the Barbie range of toys manufactured and marketed by Leo-mattel is the favourite toy of 40.4 % of female children and 4.78 % of male children. The analysis also shows that 53.53 % of children like Indian toys rather than foreign toys. The percentage of distribution of toy marketers with respect to adhering to safety guidelines was analysed. Only 30% of toy marketers conform to safety guidelines, while 20% of the toy marketers try to conform to safety guidelines. Of the remaining, 30% do not conform to any safety guidelines. The remaining 20% did not respond in this regard. 30 % of toy marketers offer benefit to their customers. Small gifts like book, toy etc. and guarantee/warranty for specific periods are the other benefits offered. 20 % of toy marketers offer after-sale replacement of defective items.

Levin & Rosenquest, (2001) argue that toys made from natural materials, especially wood, and traditional toys, such as dolls or trucks, are often promoted as leading to acceptable types of play.

Rand, (1995). Children use toys in ways that are counter to producer's intentions.

Fairy Dharawat & Nabamita Chatterjee, Crafting an exciting in-store ambience and creating product awareness among consumers, seems to be the key strategy of toy brands and retailers to stand out in this burgeoning market.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No. 1
Purchase of E- toys

S. No	Place of Purchase	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Supermarket	08	06.60
2	Online	32	26.65
3	Exclusive Toys Stores	50	41.66
4	Street Vendors	16	13.33
5	Gift Shops/ General Stores	14	11.66
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Majority of the respondents prefer to purchase the toys from toy stores i.e. 43%. 26% respondents purchase from online and 1% from street vendors. 11% are willing to purchase from gift shops and general stores. Only 9% of purchase toys from supermarkets.

Table No. 2

Types of E Toys

S.No	Types of E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Dolls (Animals, Barks etc)	18	15.00
2	Alphabet toys	12	10.00
3	Cars (remote controlled)	08	6.66
4	Helicopters, Trains, Trucks etc.	16	13.33
5	Learning Games, Letters, Numbers etc.	50	41.66
6	Talking dolls	03	2.50
7	Musical Instruments	02	1.66
8	Any others	03	2.50
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Maximum no. of people are willing to buy learning games, letters and numbers. i.e. 41%. 15% respondents are purchasing Dolls (animals and barks) and remaining people spend on toys, cars, musical instruments and other toys.

Table No. 3

Amount spend to purchase E Toys

S.No	Amount spend to purchase E Toys	No of Respondents	% of respondents
1	Less than 1000	80	66.66
2	1000 - 3000	21	17.50
3	3000 - 5000	09	7.50
4	Above 5000	04	3.33
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Most number of (73%) respondents are spending less than 1000% on purchasing toys. 18% respondents are spending up to 3000. 7.5% respondents spend 3000 to 5000. Only 3% respondents are willing to spend above 5000.

Table No. 4

Influence Factors in purchasing E Toys

S.No	Influence Factors in purchasing E Toys	No of Respondents	% of respondents
1	Children	39	32.5
2	Advertisement	48	40
3	Referred by friends	21	17.50
4	School Teachers	12	10
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Most of respondents (40%) influenced by Advertisements in different Media. Nearly 32% influenced by other children. 17% referred by friends and only 10% influenced by school teachers.



Table No. 5
Factors for purchasing E Toys.

S. No	Factors for purchasing E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Fun/ Entertainment	43	35.83
2	Developmental Value	16	13.33
3	Educational Value	9	7.50
4	Quality of Toys	8	6.68
5	Variety	12	10.00
6	Prise (Cost)	32	26.66
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation

Maximum of respondents (35%) purchasing e toys for fun and entertainment. 26% purchasing as per price preferences. 13% purchasing for developmental value and only a few percent purchasing under quality and variety preferences

Table No. 6
Preferable Brand of E Toys

S. No	Preferable Brand of E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Mattel	18	15.00
2	Lego	12	10.00
3	Hasbro	08	06.66
4	Bandai	16	13.33
5	Leap frog	45	37.5
6	Shinseki	05	04.16
7	Zephy	02	01.66
8	Peacock	03	02.53
9	Buddy z	7	05.80
10	Fun factory	3	02.53
11	Others	1	0.83
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Most of respondents preferring leap frogs (i.e. 37%). 15% respondents prefer Mattel brads. 13% respondents prefers Bandai. 10 % prefers the brand Lego. The remaining respondents preferring other brands like Buddy Z, Hasbro, Shinseki, Peacock, fun factory and others.

Table No. 7
Time interval of purchasing E Toys

S. No	Time interval of purchasing E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Every week	9	7.5
2	Once a month	48	40
3	Only on special occasions	63	52.5
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Nearly 53% respondents purchasing on special occasions. 40% respondents purchasing once in a month. Only 8% respondents purchasing every week.



Table No. 8
Quality Preference of E Toys

S. No	Quality Preference of E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Safety	16	13.33
2	Durability	63	52.5
3	Appearance	25	20.83
4	Eco Friendly	10	8.34
5	Others	6	5
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Most of the respondents (52%) give their preference to the durability of e toys. 21% respondents prefer appearance and 13% respondents prefer the safety norms. The remaining respondents preferred eco friendly and other qualities of e toys.

Table No. 9
Playing Hours with E Toys

S. No	Playing Hours with E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Less than 1 Hour	86	71.66
2	1 - 5 Hours	21	17.50
3	6 - 10 Hours	09	7.50
4	Above 10 Hours	04	3.34
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

72% respondents playing less than one hour with the e toys. 17% respondents playing one to 5 hours. 7.5% respondents playing 6 - 10 hours. The remaining respondents playing greater than 10 hours daily.

Table No. 10
Senses of Using E Toys

S. No	Senses of Using E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Sight	21	17.50
2	Sound	19	15.80
3	Touch	76	63.33
4	Any others	04	3.34
	TOTAL	120	100

Interpretations

Most of the respondents (63%) using e toys with the sense of touch. Nearly 18% respondents using with the sight and 15% enjoying Sound. Only 3% of respondents using the E toys with the other senses.



Table No. 11
Category of E Toys

S. No	Category of E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Branded	45	37.50
2	Non Branded	50	41.66
3	Both	25	20.84
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Most of the respondents using non-branded e toys (41%). Nearly 37% respondents preferring non branded e toys due to various reasons like cost, availability etc.

Table No. 12
Brand of E Toys

S. NO	Brand of E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Indian Brands	75	62.5
2	Foreign Brands	45	37.5
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

62% of respondents who are using branded e toys prefer Indian brands. The remaining (37%) branded users prefer Foreign brands. .

Table No. 13
Awareness about effects of E Toys

S. No	Awareness about effects of E Toys	No of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Yes	62	51.66
2	No	58	48.34
	Total	120	100.00

Interpretation:

Nearly 52% respondents are aware about the effects of e toys. 48% respondents are not aware about the effects of E toys.

FINDINGS:

1. Majority of the respondents prefer to purchase the e-toys from Toys Stores. (i.e 42%)
2. Maximum no of peoples are willing to buy learning games, letters and numbers. (i.e 47.)
3. Most number of (72%) respondents are spending less than 1000/- on purchasing toys.
4. Most of respondents (32%) influenced by Advertisements in different Media.
5. Maximum of respondents (35%) purchasing e toys for fun and entertainment.
6. Most of respondents preferring leap frogs (i.e. 37%).
7. Nearly 53% respondents purchasing on special occasions.
8. Most of the respondents (52%) give their preference to the durability of e-toys.
9. 72% respondent's children are playing less than one hour with the e toys.
10. Most of the respondents (63%) using e toys with the sense of touch.
11. Most of the respondents using non-branded e toys (41%).
12. 62% of respondents who are using branded e toys prefer Indian brands.
13. Nearly 52% respondents are aware about the effects of e toys.

LIMITATION SO THE STUDY

1. The survey was limited to four areas of Nanded.
2. Answers of the questionnaire depend upon the opinions of respondents, which may differ from the reality.
3. This research, as usual is also subject to the sampling and research design errors besides the other limitations such as time constraints and resource constraints etc.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Parents should purchase e-toys of those companies who manufacture as per the regulations and safety standards prescribed by the Indian Government.
2. Incidents of accidents do occur sometimes because of e-toys misuse or being given to a child for whom it is not intended. So parents should aware and careful about the e-toys which are manufactured for the intended child.
3. Parents should use traditional toys, instead of e-toys for language improvement.
4. Set limits on electronic toys and video games.
5. Don't fall for e-toys that call themselves educational.
6. Keep only a few e-toys out at one time.
7. Teach children that some e-toys contains magnets, flugs, fur materials, etc which are harmful and should not be placed in their mouth.
8. While children playing with e-toys parents should observe them.

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