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Beyond The Price Tag: Understanding Pink Tax Awareness Among Women Consumers

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ABSTRACT : The Pink tax refers to the practice of charging high prices for products and services marketed specifically to women compared to similar products of men.The study identify the level of awareness among women consumers in Nilambur Taluk regarding the Pink Tax and analysis their perception and attitudes towards gender -based pricing and marketing strategies. The study also analysed the influence of marketing techniques such as packaging ,branding ,product design and advertisements on women's purchasing decisions .The data for the study were collected from 94 women respondents from Nilambur Taluk using structured questionnaire and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools .

The findings of the study reveal that awareness of the term Pink tax is relatively low but majority of the respondents are aware of gender -based pricing differences and perceive the practice as unfair .Most of the respondents support unisex pricing policies and awareness campaigns against unfair gender based pricing .The study conclude that increasing consumer awareness and promoting transparent pricing strategies are essential for reducing gender -based price discrimination and ensuring greater fairness in the marketplace.
Keywords: Pink tax ,gender-based pricing ,consumer awareness,women consumers ,marketing strategies .

1.INTRODUCTION

In today's consumer driven society ,pricing is frequently expected to reflect the quality ,utility or value of a product .However many products sold exclusively for women are usually more expensive than equivalent products made for men ,even when the differences are minor .This phenomena ,often known as the” pink tax ,has emerged as a key topic in contemporary marketing and consumer rights debate .From personal care products to apparel and services ,women frequently pay an extra cost just because the products are labeled or made for them . Gender based pricing has become more visible ,raising concerts about market fairness ,equality and ethical business practices .

With the rapid growth of social media ,digital awareness campaigns and informed consumer movements ,arguments about the pink tax have attracted a lot of attention .Women today are becoming more aware of concealed pricing techniques and are questioning the motives for such discriminatory practices .awareness of the pink tax influences not just purchase decision ,but also customer sentiments towards brand and business.Despite greater discussion ,many customers are still ignorant of how gender -based pricing affects their daily lives.Understanding the level of awareness among female customers is critical for determining how educated purchase behaviour might challenge unfair market practices.

This study focuses on examining the women customers awareness of the pink tax and attitude of gender -based pricing .The study aims to explore whether women are aware of these disparities ,how this awareness affects their purchasing decisions ,and what efforts are taken to create a more equitable

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consumer environment .The study adds to broader discussions about gender equality .ethical marketing and consumer protection in today's markets by analysing consumer awareness and opinion .

2.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Gender based pricing has become a significant issue in today's consumer markets ,products designed and marketed for women are frequently offered at greater price than similar products designed for men, while having little or no difference in quality ,function or production cost .This pink tax exists in a variety of sectors ,including personal care products ,clothes ,accessories and salon services .while these pricing discrepancies may appear insignificant on their own, they cumulatively add to the financial burden on female customers .Even though the issue has gotten increased attention through media coverage and consumer action ,many women continue to buy such products without fully understanding the hidden impact of gender -based pricing on their daily spending .

The lack of proper knowledge about the pink tax raises serious concern in the fields of consumer behaviour and ethical marketing .Consumers with limited knowledge about gender -based pricing may be unable to make wise purchase decisions or challenge unfair market practices .At the same time,business may continue to employ gender -specific branding and marketing methods ,which influence consumer attitudes and perceptions .As a result ,it is vital to investigate the level of awareness of the pink tax among female consumers ,as well as their views towards such pricing methods .This study aims to address this issue by investigating consumer awareness ,views and the impact of gender based pricing behaviour in today's market.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are women consumers aware of the concept of Pink Tax ?
- How do women consumers perceive gender -based pricing practices ?
- Do branding, packaging and product design influence women's purchasing behaviour ?
- What measures can improve awareness regarding ethical pricing practices ?

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the level of awareness about Pink Tax among women consumers in Nilambur Taluk .
- To analyse the perceptions and attitudes of women consumers towards gender-based pricing and marketing practices .
- To analyse the influence of marketing techniques -such as packaging ,branding and product design -on women's purchasing decisions .
- To suggest measures to promote ethical marketing and raise consumer awareness in the community .

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study contributes a better understanding of women's awareness of the pink Tax .as well as the impact of gender -based pricing policies in consumer markets .It adds to discussions about ethical marketing ,consumer rights and gender equality .The findings of the study can help consumers make more informed purchasing decisions and encourage business to adopt fair and transparent pricing policies .

6.SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on understanding the awareness ,perception and attitudes of women consumers regarding pink tax and gender based pricing . The study is limited to women consumers in Nilambur Taluk .The study also i the influence of packaging ,branding and product design in influencing purchasing decisions ,and tries to make recommendations for improving ethical marketing practices and consumer awareness.

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7..RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Research Design : The study is descriptive and analytical in nature .
- Sampling Technique : Convenience sampling method
- Sample size: 94 respondents
- Area of the study :Nilambur Taluk
- Tools Used for the study : Data analysed using descriptive statistics using Jamovi software ,Correlation technique also used for data analysis
- SOURCES OF DATA

Primary Data : Primary data collected directly from women consumers through a structured questionnaire.

Secondary data: Secondary data collected from Research journals ,Articles,Websites,Books,Newspapers and magazines

8..HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between age and awareness about Pink Tax among women consumers .

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between age and awareness about Pink Tax among women consumers .

9..REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Diavika Febriyanti (2023) in her study "Pink Tax: As a Form of Gender Identity in International Products," found that while consumers view the pink tax negatively, producers benefit as women tend to purchase higher-priced pink products, increasing profits and supporting targeted marketing strategies.

2. Sunyang Park (June 2023) investigated the Pink Tax phenomenon in the South Korean fashion industry using secondary data from 2018 to 2023. The study identified product complexity, gender norms, stereotypes, and media influence as key reasons for price differences. It also highlighted gender stereotyping in clothing, especially in women's and children's apparel, though price comparisons were limited due to functional differences in products.

3.Richa Bhargava (2022) in her study "Pink Tax: The Gender Bias in Product Recommendations and Corporate Social Responsibility" explains that the pink tax results from profit-maximizing strategies based on psychological and behavioral trends. The study emphasizes the need for consumer awareness of gender bias and suggests that demand for gender-neutral products could encourage companies to act more responsibly.

4.Nandini Sanadhya (2022) in her dissertation "Pink Tax & Pink Marketing: Understanding, Awareness, Solution," highlights that the pink tax exists despite limited documentation and stresses that consumer awareness and education are key to addressing the issue.

5. Rajat Saxena (2022) in his research "A Legal Study of the Applicability of Pink Tax in India" explains that pink tax is not an actual tax but an additional price charged on products designed for women. The study illustrates gender based price discrimination through examples like pink and blue razors and highlights how marketing strategies reinforce stereotypes, while stressing the need for further research to understand the roots of such disparities.

6.Kumar and Singh (2022) explored awareness of the Pink Tax in an Indian urban sample. They reported a moderate level of awareness among female respondents but noted that many participants lacked clarity about how and why gendered pricing exists. The authors recommended educational campaigns to improve consumer understanding.

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7.Smith and Lee (2021) investigated price differences in personal care products and found that women's items were consistently pricier than men's equivalents in various retail outlets. Their research highlighted that consumers are often unaware of these disparities until they actively compare similar products.

8.Svasti Pant (2021) in her study "UnPinking Discrimination: Exploring the Pink Tax and its Implications" finds that pink tax is widespread across products such as personal care, clothing, and services including beauty and transportation. The study concludes that gendered marketing, particularly through packaging, plays a major role in perpetuating pink tax practices.

9.Charles Scheland (2020) in his study "Assessing Pink-Tax Variations and Price Discrimination" concludes that the pink tax intentionally exploits and reinforces sexism. He finds that price discrimination varies across socioeconomic neighbourhoods, with poorer areas facing slightly higher pink tax burdens, making it regressive and disproportionately affecting low-income
women.

10.Hajar L. Habbal (2020) in his study "An Economic Analysis of the Pink Tax" explains that the pink tax arises mainly from gender socialisation reinforced by stereotypical marketing strategies. He emphasizes that awareness is the first 14 step to reducing gender price gaps, followed by government intervention through legislation.

11.Somasree Poddar Roychowdhury and Ishita Mukhopadhyay (2018) in their paper "Gender Wage Gap: Some Recent Evidences from India" analyze the data and find that gender wage gaps persist mainly due to job-related factors controlled by male-dominated employers. They identify lower skills and experience among women as key reasons and emphasize the need for labour reforms, skill development, and policies promoting women entrepreneurship.

10..LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was restricted to the women consumers in Nilambur Taluk so the findings cannot be generalised to other regions
- The sample size is limited to 94 , which may not fully represent the views of the entire population of women consumers.
- The findings are based on responses collected through a questionnaire and may be affected by personal opinions ,recall errors ,social desirability bias.
- The study was primarily based on consumer awareness ,perceptions and attitude towards gender - based pricing and marketing strategies and did not undertake a detailed analysis of actual pricing strategies adopted by firms .
- Time and resource constraints limited the scope of the investigation and restricted the possibility of conducting a longitudinal study to access changes in awareness and consumer behaviour over time

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11 .ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

11.1. Distribution on the basis of Socio Economic Profile of Respondents

SL.No	Variables	Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Below 18	0	0%
		18-25	29	31%
		26-35	44	47%
		36-45	19	20%
		Above 45	2	2%
2	Educational Qualification	Below SSLC	0	0%
		SSLC	1	2%
		Higher secondary	28	30%
		Graduate	24	26%
		Post Graduate and above	41	44%
3	Occupation	Student	28	29%
		Home Maker	9	10%
		Government Employee	30	32%
		Private Employee	17	18%
		Self Employed	10	11%

The demographic profile of the respondents shows that the majority of them belongs to the age of 35 years (47%) followed by 18-25 years (20%) and 36-45 years (20%) ,while only 2% are above 45 years .The study largely represented by young and middle aged individuals who are economically active and likely to have greater exposure to contemporary market trends and consumer practices.

The educational qualification of the respondents shows a significant portion of them are highly educated ,with 44% possessing post graduation and above ,26% being graduates,and 30% having completed higher secondary education .The occupational distribution reveals that Govt.Employees constitute the largest group (32%) ,followed by students (29%) .Private employees 18% while self -employed 11% and home makers 10% .The presence of respondents from different occupational back ground enhances the comprehensiveness of the study .Overall ,the demographic profile suggests that the study predominantly reflects the views of educated young adults from rural and semi -urban areas.

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11.2. Analysis on the level of awareness about Pink Tax among women consumers in Nilambur Taluk .

Descriptives	Mean	Median	SD	Variance
AWARENESS ABOUT PINK TAX	1.45	1	0.5	0.2498
PRODUCT MARKETED FOR WOMEN ARE MORE EXPENSIVE THAN SIMILAR PRODUCTS FOR MEN	1.78	2	0.419	0.1754
PRODUCT SHOW PRICE DIFFERENCES BASED ON GENDER	3.59	3	1.339	1.7938
WOMEN ARE CHARGED HIGHER PRICE THAN MEN	1.66	2	0.476	0.227
CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT PINK TAX HELP TO MAKE BETTER PURCHASING DECISIONS	2.48	3	0.668	0.4458
LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PINK TAX AND CONSUMER RIGHTS	1.96	2	0.203	0.0412

The descriptive statistics result showed , a relatively high level of awareness regarding the pink tax (M=1.45 ,SD =.50) .They were also aware that the products marketed for women are often more expensive than comparable products marketed for men (M=1.78,SD 0.42).Respondents generally agreed that increasing awareness about the pink tax can promote better purchasing decisions (M= 2.48 ,SD =0.67) and expressed a willingness to learn more about the issues and consumer rights (M=1.96 ,SD= .20) .These findings indicate a favorable level of awareness and interest in consumer education regarding gender based pricing

11.3.Analyse the perceptions and attitudes of women consumers towards gender-based pricing and marketing practices .

Descriptives	Mean	Median	SD	Variance
PINK COLOUR OR PASTEL SHADE ATTRACT	1.63	2	0.486	0.236
BRAND IMAGE AFFECT WILLINGNESS TO PAY HIGHER PRICE	2.12	2	0.796	0.634
ADVERTISEMENTS INFLUENCE PERCEPTION OF PRODUCT QUALITY	3.56	4	1.063	1.13
ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING INFLUENCE YOUR PURCHASE DECISION	2.95	3	1.213	1.47
PREFER PRODUCT SPECIFICALLY LABELED FOR WOMEN	2.03	2	0.796	0.633
WOMEN ORIENTED MARKETING MAKES PRODUCTS APPEAR MORE PREMIUM	2.19	2	0.793	0.63

The Women consumers perceived that advertisement as the most influential marketing factor affecting their purchasing decisions (M =3.56,SD=1.06) followed by attractive packaging (M= 2.95 ,SD =1.21) .In contrast ,the influence of the colour pink (M =1.63,SD =0.49) Product specifically labelled for women

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(M=2.03,SD = 0.80) and women oriented marketing (M=2.19,Sd =.79) was comparatively lower. These findings suggest that traditional marketing elements have a greater impact on purchasing decisions than gender - specific marketing cues among the respondents .

11.4.Analyse the influence of marketing techniques -such as packaging ,branding and product design -on women's purchasing decisions .

Descriptives	Mean	Median	SD	Variance
WOMEN PAY MORE ON PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS	3.6	4	0.896	0.803
GENDER BASED PRICING IS UNFAIR TO WOMEN CONSUMERS	3.72	4	0.809	0.654
COMPARE PRICE BEFORE PURCHASING GENDERED PRODUCT	2.56	3	1.232	1.517
AVOID BUYING PRODUCT PRICED HIGHER FOR WOMEN	1.7	2	0.46	0.211
FELT EXPLOITED AS A CONSUMER DUE TO DENDER BASED PRICING	1.48	1	0.502	0.252
DISCUSS THE PRICING ISSUE WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS	1.54	2	0.501	0.251
COMPANIES ADOPT UNISEX PRICING FOR SIMILAR PRODUCTS	2.53	3	0.617	0.381
PINK TAX INCREASES THE FINANCIAL BURDEN ON WOMEN	3.65	4	0.799	0.639

The descriptive statistics result showed, that respondents agreed that gender -based pricing is unfair to women consumers (M=3.72,SD=.81) and that the Pink tax increases women's financial burden (M=3.65,SD=0.80) .However ,respondents reported low level of behavioural responses ,including avoiding higher- priced products marked to women 9M=1.54,SD =50) and discussing pricing issues with family or friends (M=1.54,SD =0.50) .The gap between awareness and behavioral responses highlights the news for greater consumer education ,advocacy and policy interventions to encourage informed purchasing decisions and promote equitable pricing practices .

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

1.Correlation between Age and Awareness About Pink Tax

The Pearson Correlation was used to identify the relationship between Age and Awareness About Pink Tax

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between age and awareness about Pink Tax among women consumers .

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between age and awareness about Pink Tax among women consumers .

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Reject H_0 and accept H_1 (p =.049 < 0.5)

VARIABLES		AGE	AWARENESS ABOUT PINK TAX
AGE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.204*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.049
	N	94	94
AWARENESS ABOUT PINK TAX	Pearson Correlation	-.204*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.049	
	N	94	c

INTERPRETATION : The Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between Age and Awareness About Pink Tax. (r=-0.204 ,p=0.049).The result indicates that awareness decreases slightly with increasing age.The findings suggest that younger respondents exhibit relatively higher levels of awareness regarding Pink Tax .This underscores the importance of age specific awareness initiatives to enhance consumer knowledge about gender based pricing.Since the p value is (.049) less than the significant level of .05 ,the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between age and awareness about Pink Tax is rejected .Therefore alternative hypothesis is accepted .

12.FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. A large majority of Respondents were aware of gender based price differences ,while only 22% were not and this shows a very high level of awareness of gender - based pricing among the participants.
2. 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that women pay more on personal care products ,30% were neutral and 10% disagreed .This suggested a widely held belief among the respondents that women's personal care products are priced higher than men's .
3. The majority of the respondents were attracted to products with pink or pastel colour indicating a strong influence of gender-specific marketing. Marketers use these colours to create a feminine identity and increase the appeal of products to women. This strategy is closely related with Pink Tax,where products targeted for women are sold at higher prices than similar products for men . The preference for pink or pastel colored products may indirectly support the continuation of gender based practices.
4. Most of the Respondents agree that advertisement influences their perceptions and this indicates that advertising exerts a considerable impact on consumers perceptions about the product that are labeled as pink. Advertisement often promotes Pink labeled or feminine products as more desirable ,encouraging consumers to perceive them as higher in value.This enhanced perception can make consumers more willing to pay higher prices ,thereby reinforcing gender-based practices.
5. 52% of respondents stated that attractive packaging sometimes influenced their purchase decisions .The result indicated that packaging has a moderate influence on consumer buying behaviour of women consumers. Companies often use premium and feminine packaging to differentiate products targeted at women ,which is a common feature associated with Pink Tax .
6. Most of the respondents agreed that gender based pricing is unfair ,36% were neutral and only 4% disagreed .This indicates that there is a strong consensus among participants regarding the unfairness of gender - based pricing,this reflects an awareness of pink tax among women consumers .

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7. A majority of the respondents (72%) reported that they avoided purchasing products when they believe the prices are higher for women ,while 28% do not. This suggests that gender based price disparities strongly influence consumer buying behavior ,prompting many consumers to avoid products perceived as unfairly priced .
8. Most of the respondents (60%) strongly agreed that Pink Taxes increased women's financial burden ,while 6% disagreed and 34% were neutral .This indicates broad recognition of the Pink Tax's financial impact among the participants.This awareness highlights the need for fair pricing practices and greater consumer education to reduce gender-based price discrimination .
9. A vast majority of the respondents (96%) expressed interest in learning about the Pink Tax and consumer rights ,with only 4% no interest .This indicates an extremely high level of consumer interest and awareness of gender-based pricing and its impact on women consumers.

13.SUGGESTIONS

1. Conduct Awareness campaigns : The Government Should organise awareness programs to educate consumers about the Pink Tax and Gender based pricing .
2. Introduce strict Regulations : Policy makers should enact legislations to guarantee fair pricing in the market and stop discriminatory Gender based pricing .
3. Use Community programs for Education: Women can be made more aware of consumer rights and financial literacy through initiatives like Kudumbasree
4. Establish Complaints Systems in Stores : Retail stores establish simple complaint mechanisms for consumers to protest against unfair pricing practices .
5. Promote social media awareness : Consumers should be informed about the Pink Tax and Ethical shopping practices through digital and social media channels
6. Encourage Gender -Neutral Pricing : Businesses should be encouraged to adopt transparent and gender neutral pricing policies for products and services .
7. Monitor Online shopping Platforms : Authorities should monitor e- commerce websites to reduce gender based price discrimination .
8. Encourage the practice of Price comparison : Consumers should compare prices before purchasing products to avoid paying extra for gender -targeted products .

13.CONCLUSION

The study Beyond The Price Tag : Understanding Pink Tax Awareness Among Women Consumers , concludes that women consumers demonstrate a satisfactory level of awareness regarding the pink Tax and recognises the existence of gender -based pricing practices in the market places . The findings reveal that respondents perceive gender -based pricing as unfair ,acknowledge that women often pay higher prices for similar products and services ,and they believe that the Pink Tax contributes an additional financial burden .Overall the study emphasis the need for ethical marketing practices ,transparent pricing policies and increased consumer awareness to reduce gender-based pricing disparities and protect the interest of women consumers .

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