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## **A study of consumer's attitude towards modern and traditional values portrayed in Indian ads**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Advertisement is the means by which goods and services are promoted to the public. The advertiser's goal is to increase sales of these goods and services by drawing people's attention. Frequently it communicates a message that includes the name of the product or service and how that product or service could potentially benefit the consumer. Advertising often attempts to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume a particular brand of product or service.

In modern marketing and advertising, values are used to differentiate and position brands vis-à-vis competitive brands. Values are said to be the basis for Segmentation and Positioning decisions.

Values of both consumers and marketers are defined by their culture and marketing, and advertising will only be effective if these values match. The old marketing paradigm, "markets are people," pre supposes that marketing programs can only be successful when the marketing mix of the product is matched with the values of the consumer.

Values are taught at an early age and in an absolute manner. They describe what people in general think the world ought to be in an absolute way: freedom, peace (not a little bit of peace or a little bit of freedom). This is the desirable as opposed to the desired : The desired is what you want for yourself. The desirable is not necessarily the same as what one "ought" to do. This distinction between the desirable and the desired is particularly meaningful for advertising.

Thus, values include opposites, and there are different types of values in a value system, which may have a different order of importance. Values are integrated in an organized system in which they are ordered in priority with respect to other values.

### **TRADITIONAL VALUES IN INDIAN CONTEXT**

In reality, a traditional value refers to the standards and values which were embraced by most Indians from its earliest beginnings and throughout the majority of its history. It is believed by many, that these values were a great part of what made India a great and free nation – the absence of which, will likely result in further decline of our country.

Traditional, historical Indian Values have in the past, included a faith in God, prayer and the Gitas, which has for a large part, been the foundation of other traditions, such as :

- Honor and respect for the family,
- Diligent work ethics,
- Absolute values of right and wrong,
- Honesty in business practices,
- Wholesomeness in leadership,
- Respect toward authority,
- Marriage as a prerequisite before having sex or bearing children,
- A family which consists of both a father and mother, taking responsibility to provide for our own – such as one's spouse, family and children, and so forth.

Such values were the ethics of our national heritage, which civilized our population and instilled character and maturity. People learned how to behave, to have manners, good morals, to be honest, unselfish, generous and considerate of others.

They were taught the benefits of discipline, hard work, and responsibility. They were given good role models of how to be loving and kind to their spouse, encouraging and supportive to their children. This

was sort of thing which caused marriages to last, families to succeed, and which made our nation strong and free.

Culture of India set a basis for traditionalism and the culture of India can be best expressed as comprising the following:

- Humanity – The mildness of the Indians has continued till date, the Indians are noted for their humanness and calm nature without any harshness in their principles and ideals.
- Tolerance – Gandhiji's satyagraha principle or Ahinsa – freedom without taking a drop of blood, worked wonders and gave credit to India in the International arena. Swami Vivekananda in his famous Chicago Speech on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1893 spoke of this.
- Unity - India is conglomeration of men and women of various castes and creed. It is a fusion of old traditional values and the modern principles, thus satisfying all the three generations in the present India. The Elite businessman and the common vendor on the road share the same news and worship the same deity.
- Secularism – India is a secular country as stated in its Constitution. There is freedom of worship throughout the length and breadth of India without any breeches or violations of any other's religious beliefs. The Hindus, The Muslims, The Christians, and The Sikhs in times of calamity and during festivities come openly together to share their thoughts despite their religious affinities.

The catholicity of the Indian Culture can be best understood by the fact that hundreds of Hindus visit the Velankanni shrine or the Nagore Dargah in Tamil Nadu.

- Closely knit Social system – The Indian Social System is mostly based on the Joint Family System, but for some of the recently cropped nuclear families. The families are closely knit with Grandfathers, Fathers, sons and grandsons sharing the same spirit, tradition and property.

## **MODERN VALUE IN INDIAN CONTEXT**

We are living in a modern society today. We shun anything non-modern or so called orthodox. We would like to stay in touch with the contemporary rather than the traditional, be it home furniture or our way of thinking or our way of dressing or the way we perceive spirituality. Modernity can be defined as connecting to the new and the contemporary, rejecting the old. Obviously, modernity often is used to reject old-fashioned ideas and traditions. In the cultural and social contexts, modernity is also interlinked with the values of equality, freedom, feminism and democracy. It is generally assumed that the modernity in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century unleashed the power of scientific and industrial progress, which led to social equality, freedom of downtrodden sections of the society, freedom to women. Democracy is also thought to be a modern concept of governance as against rulers and kings of ancient times. Modernity is also thought of as increasing the role of rationality in the public sphere and reducing the role of religion. Let us take these modern values one by one and explore them more.

- Social Equality : One of the popular assumptions is that modernity provided equal status to downtrodden sections of the masses. Before the advent of modernity, people in the weaker sections of the society were controlled and oppressed by the landlords and the religious leaders. With modernity, all the sections of the society have equal rights. One of the novel Swadhyaya concepts is Amrutalayam, meaning house of immortality. This is similar to a village temple but its priests come from different castes of the village and every evening the entire village gathers here as a social/economical/spiritual family. Just a small example to show how social equality can be achieved by cultural values.

- Democracy : Another popular assumption is that modernity gave rise to democracy, ending centuries of autocracy, and therefore governments for the masses, of the masses and by the masses was installed in many parts of the world. Thos gave tremendous power to the masses in choosing their own rulers and removing the ones they didn't like in the elections.
- Feminism : In the modern society, women are seen more liberated with their earning capacities and their role as career women rather than housewives or homemakers. It is believed that majority of Indian women committed sati in ancient times and widow-remarriage was not allowed. It is true that Indian society has always been a patriarchic society with males being the head of the family, but so is the case with all the other cultures – eastern or western. But, it is only South Asian countries that have no problem accepting women as the head of their states in the form of presidents or prime ministers. There are other dozens of social and religious female leaders in India.
- Science/Technology and Rationality: Modernity has negated the role of philosophical thinking and glorified reason-based thinking. Modernity also launched the era of science and technology with thousands of new inventions and discoveries about the outer world and human body. Within India, we know that many scientific notions in the fields of Astronomy, Medicine, Mathematics, Metallurgy, Maritime and Linguistics were known to Indians thousands of years ago. It is true that modern science has added tremendous inventions for human society but to claim that tradition or culture was non-scientific will again be misleading.
- Environment protection: It is a popular notion that modernity also led to the awareness about environment protection and animal rights. However , it is also true that modernity has reduced the natural resources due to exploitation by human beings. Whereas Indian Culture has the reverential concepts to worship natural powers and animals, modernity, while ridiculing such notions, claims to champion the cause of ecology.
- It is said that the cultural values to regard the rivers as mothers, land as mother, and cow as mother and trees as divine are ridiculed or rejected today in the name of modernity.
- Freedom: Modernity also is seen to be liberating dozens of nations from centuries of colonial rule. However, it can be argued that we have certainly achieved political freedom from colonial powers but how free are we intellectually and culturally from those powers?

We have seen that the so-called modern values were already present in ancient Indian Culture. It is just that, in the medieval period of the last few centuries, they were corrupted under colonial pressures. With the advent of modernity, the same ancient cultural values are being presented to the human society in new western forms. We just need to apply our cultural contexts to them.

#### **THE VALUE CONCEPT IN FRAMING ADVERTISING STRATEGY:**

In Marketing, the value concept refers to people and to objects. A brand will be a strong brand if people's values match the value of brand. "Branding" means adding values to products, and Advertising is an important instrument for achieving this.

Values play an important role in consumer behavior because they influence choice. They provide consumers with standards for making comparisons among alternatives. Consumers' value systems can be divided into three groups:

1. Central values: the core value of the individual's value system.
2. Domain-specific values: values acquired in specific conditions or domains of activities.
3. Product-specific values: evaluations of product attributes.

Examples of different domains include economy, religion, politics, work, and consumption. In using values to evaluate products and brands, the values of interest are product-specific values applied to product categories or specific brands.

Western advertising strategy development includes:

- (a) Selecting values or end-states to emphasize in advertising.
- (b) Determining how advertising will connect the product to key end-states.
- (c) Developing advertisements connecting the product to the end value. Values offer an opportunity to differentiate brands by going beyond attributes and benefits or the deliverance of higher-level consequences to consumers. Adding values creates association networks that distinguish the brand vis-à-vis the competitive brands in the category and thus can help build strong positions for brands.

### **VALUE STRUCTURE MAPS:**

A tool for strategy is the value structure map (VSM), which describes how a particular group of subjects tends to perceive or think about a specific product or brands. (Reynolds)

A value structure map links the product's attributes and benefits to values.

Attributes can be concrete or abstract; benefits can be functional or psychosocial. Value structure maps provide a structure of people's associations with a brand at three levels:

- Attributes
- Benefits
- Values

They show how the types of associations that people make between a specific attribute of a product and its subsequent benefits and values are connected. This connection, developed by Gutman, was presented as the means-end chain model.

Gutman formulated the essence as follows: Means are objects (products) or activities in which people engage; ends are valued states of being such as happiness, security, accomplishment.

A means-end chain is a model that seeks to explain how the choice of a product or service facilitates the achievement of desired end-states. Such a model consists of elements that represent the major consumer processes that link values to behavior.

The technique used to develop means-end chains is laddering, an in-depth, one on-one interviewing technique used to develop an understanding of how consumers translate the attributes of products into meaningful associations with respect to the self.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

As per Dorothy Cohen (1988) Advertising is a business activity, employing creative techniques to design persuasive communications in a mass media that promote ideas, goods and services in a manner consistent with the achievement of the advertiser's objectives the delivery of consumer satisfaction and the development of social and economic welfare.

In a diverse country like India, culture is one of the biggest determinants of consumer behavior. Culture refers to a set of values, ideas, attitudes, beliefs, norms, customs, rituals and symbols that are learned and transmitted from generation to generation over time. Values are shared and shaped by homogeneous groups of people-families, religions, institutions and members of society in general. It sets the norms, mores and conventions that designate forms of acceptable and unacceptable behavior and guides individuals in their conduct, including their consumption behavior.

The study of culture becomes important in consumer behavior because consumers worldwide are not the same. These differences are not merely due to environmental factors but owing to cultural variances as well. A child growing in a particular society learns the basic set of cognitive, affective and conative responses through a process of socialization involving the family and other key institutions of the society. Thus Indians are more attached to family values whereas Americans to individualism and freedom. It is also important to remember that culture is not static but subject to change overtime. Thus, Indian values of abstinence are giving way to hedonism and materialism, and there is a convergence of global teen values like consumerism, independence and openness to new culture. (Kumar & heath, 2002)

Due to rapid globalization, though we are fast absorbing concept of "no-border"

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world, yet cultural factors moderate many aspects of consumer's buying behavior.

There is a growing interest in cultural differences of countries and understanding the cultural context of consumer behavior in a globalized marketplace (Maheswaran and Sharon, 2000). The consumption of market-made commodities and desire-inducing market symbols is central to consumer culture and yet the perpetuation and reproduction of this system is largely dependent upon the exercise of free personal choice in the private sphere of everyday life (Holt, 2002). It also conceptualized an interconnected system of commercially produced images, text and objects that groups use to make their collective sense of environments and to orient their members 'experience lives (Kozinets and Handelman, 2004) in the market place, it is almost true that consumer's perception of a product's attributes is based upon its abilities to satisfy needs on which culture and values have a great impact. The relationship between culture and values manifesting themselves through consumption of products is well-documented, with material goods being important to individuals due to their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard, 2002). Over the time values, beliefs and practices of a society are shared by all of its people and these influence individual decision-making.

Hofstede (1980) identified Indian Society as "Collectivist". It was defined collectivism as a social pattern that consists of individuals who see themselves as an integral part of one or more collectives or in-groups, such as family & co-workers (Triandis, 1989). It encourages connectedness and mutual defense or comprise and social interdependence as dominant values creating a collective identity among individuals (Tafarodi & Swan, 1996).

Further, many critics of advertising hold the contention that advertising promotes materialism and consumerism in society. In a study conducted by Richins (1995), it was pointed out that on exposure to advertisements, comparison with advertising images takes place which enhances the materialistic desires of the viewers. A number of other studies have also established a significant and positive relationship between consumerism and advertising (Roy, 2006; Chan and Cia, 2009). Taking this argument a step ahead, some critics are also of the view that in order to buy the advertised products, people are ready to take loans beyond their repayment capacity or are even ready to commit crimes and resort to corruption (Nuta, 2009).

### **3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

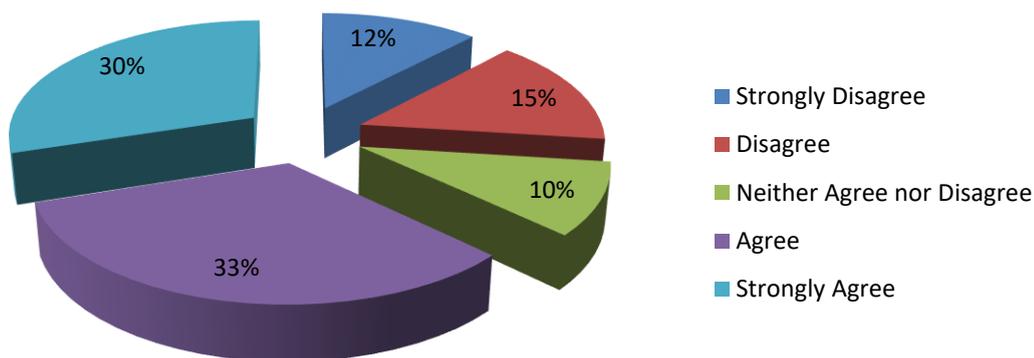
- 1) To understand the influence of values in buying behavior of the customer.
- 2) To study the customers' attitude towards Traditional and Modern values portrayed in Indian ads.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

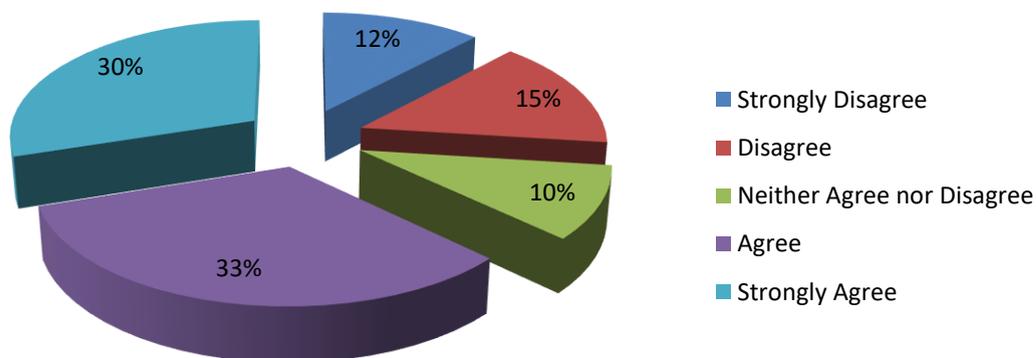
The study is based on primary data obtained through a well-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to customers, experts, advertising agency consisting of 80 respondents. The questionnaire consisted of 30 statements as a main concept the respondents were requested to mark their responses for each statement on the Likert scale where '1' referred to 'strongly disagree' and 5 meant 'strongly agree'. The study involves the primary data which is collected through interviewing the consumers, experts and advertising agencies, Questionnaires and surveys.

**5. ANALYSIS:**

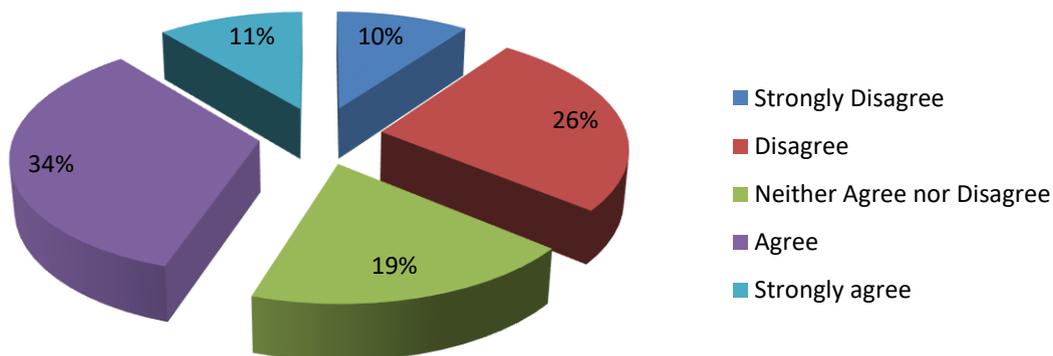
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I do not wear clothes that are considered disrespectful in our society even though I would like to.	10	12	8	24	26
		12 %	15%	10%	33%	30%



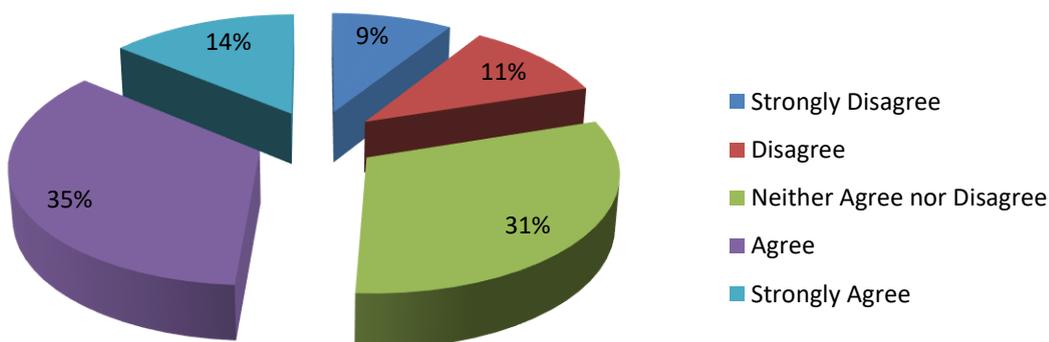
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2.	Our lives are determined by what is written in our stars we can do very little to change it.	22	27	16	10	5
		27%	34%	20%	13%	6%



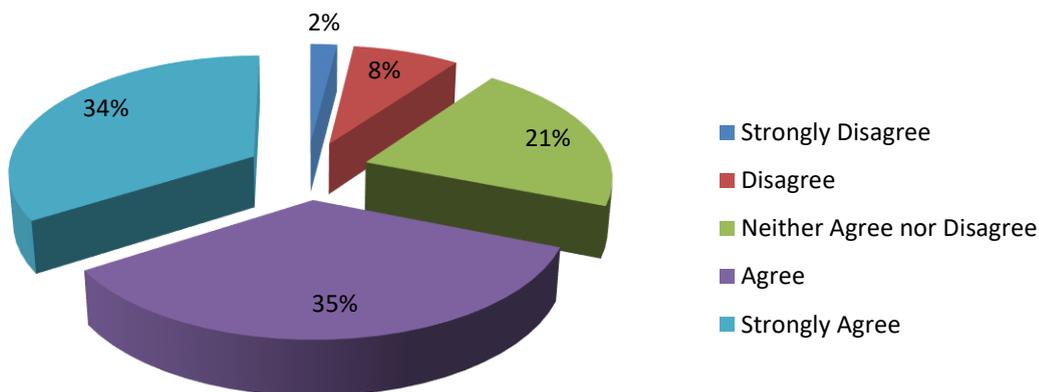
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3.	When we have visitors at home, I serve a variety of foods, even if it means a drain on my budget.	8	21	15	27	9
		10 %	26%	19%	34%	11%



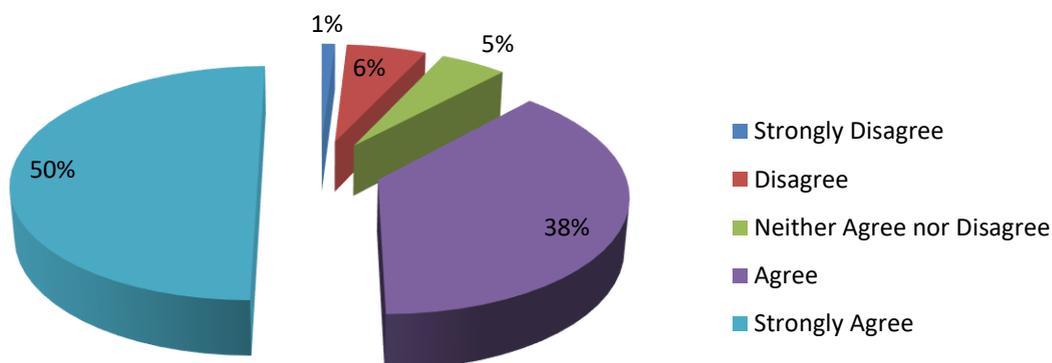
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4.	I like the idea of staying in a joint family.	7	9	25	28	11
		9 %	11%	31%	35%	14%



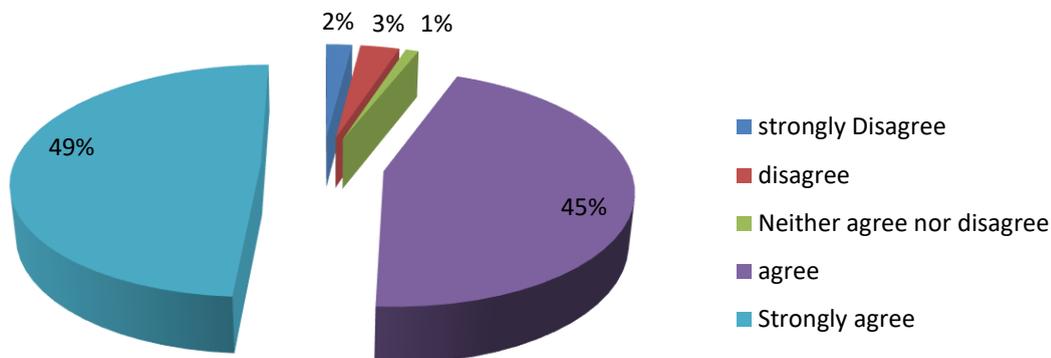
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5.	I generally have my meals along with the rest of the family.	2	6	17	28	27
		2 %	8%	21%	35%	34%



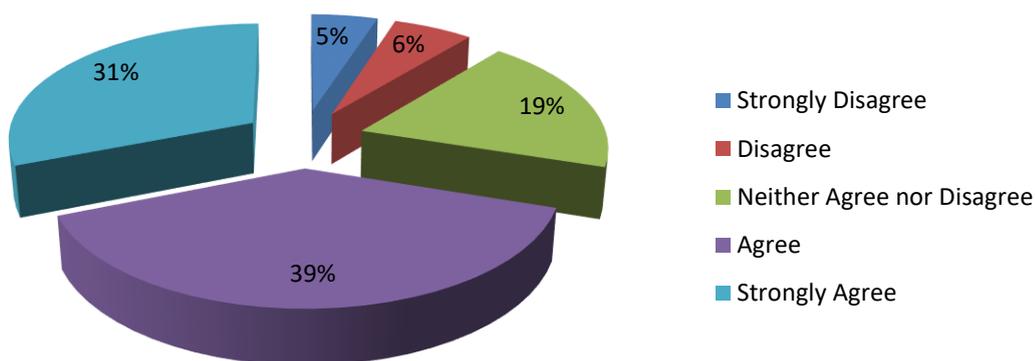
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6.	Family is the only long-lasting association that people have in life.	1	5	4	30	40
		1 %	6%	5%	38%	50%



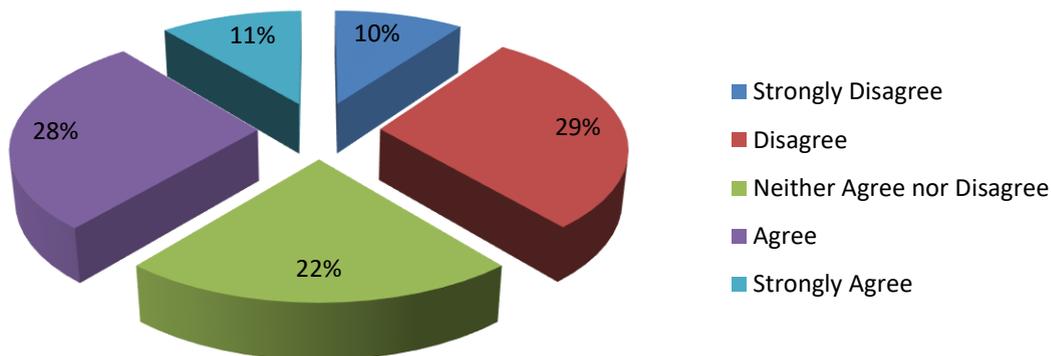
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.	It is important that we obey our elders.	2	2	1	36	39
		2 %	3%	1%	45%	49%



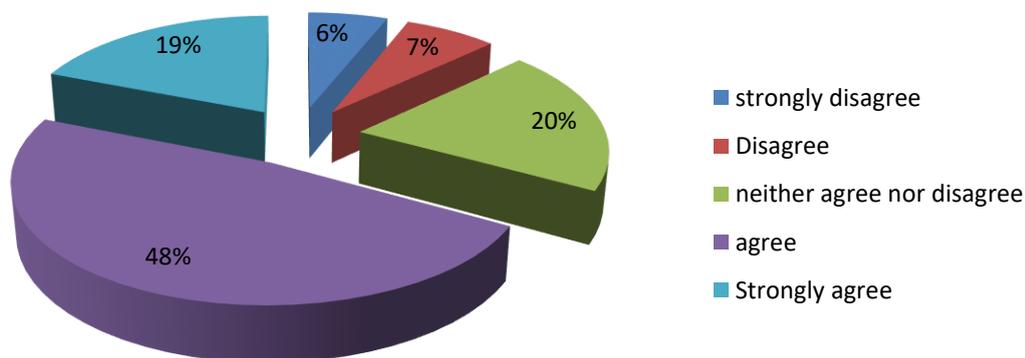
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8.	If I had to choose money and ethics, I would choose ethics.	4	5	15	31	25
		5%	6%	19%	39%	31%



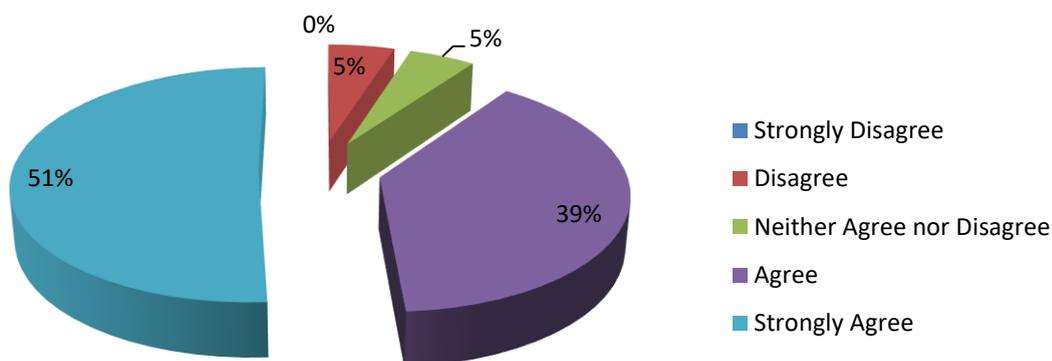
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9.	I don't think we have control over our destiny. If bad things happen, they will happen. I can achieve only what is in store for me.	8	23	18	22	9
		10 %	29%	22%	28%	11%



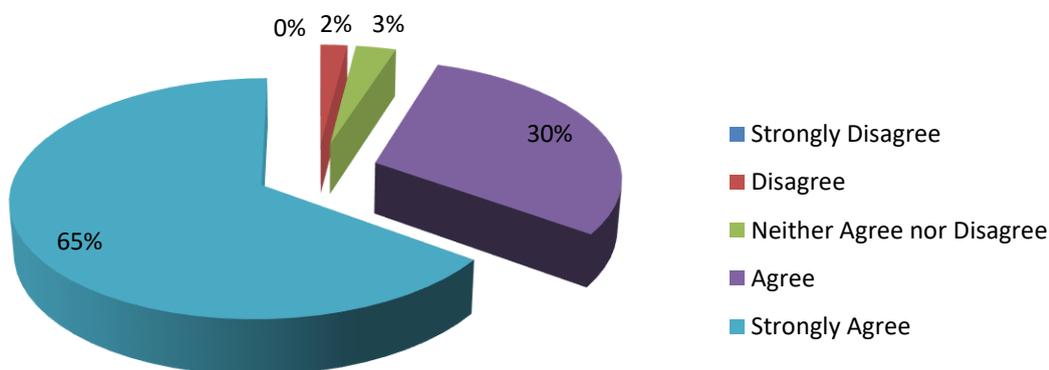
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10.	I don't think a foreign brand is necessarily better than an Indian brand. I feel we must buy more local products for helping Indian brands go global.	5	6	16	38	15
		6 %	7%	20%	48%	19%



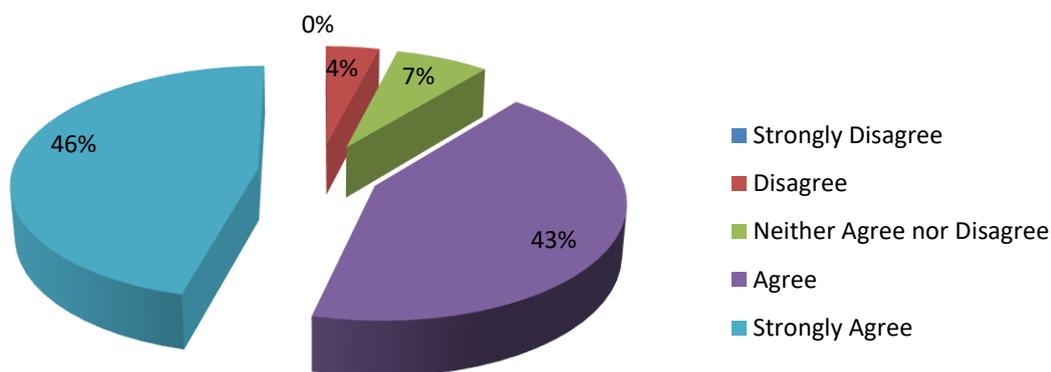
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11.	I think success comes through hard work alone. I believe that every field of work is equally appreciable.	0	4	4	31	41
		0%	5%	5%	39%	51%



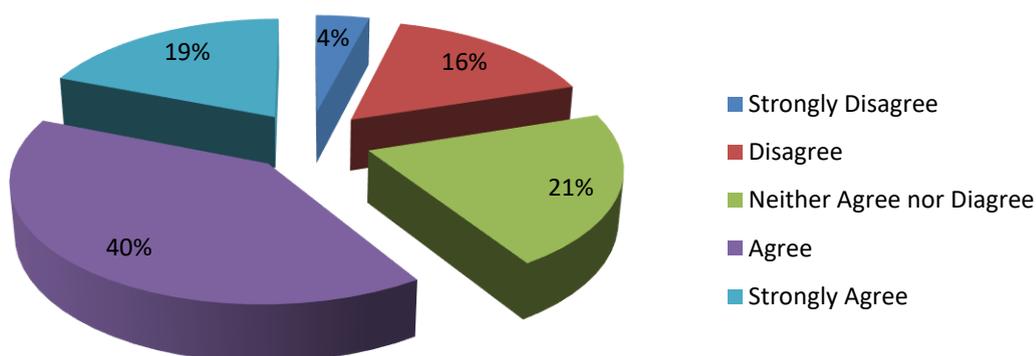
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12.	My family prestige is of utmost importance to me.	0	2	2	24	52
		0%	2%	3%	30%	65%



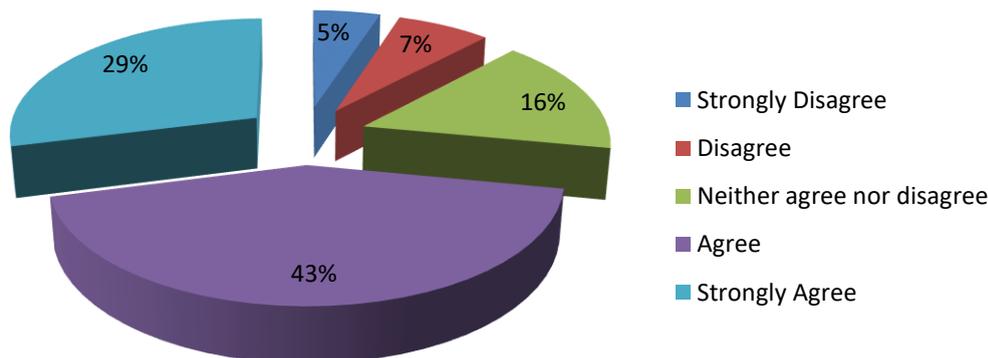
No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13.	In almost every aspect, I am glad to be the person I am.	0	3	6	34	37
		0%	4%	7%	43%	46%



No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14.	I often take my decisions from my heart.	3	13	17	32	15
		4%	16%	21%	40%	19%



No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15.	I believe my parents know better than me I believe that one can only get better with age as one gains experience.	4 5%	6 7%	13 16%	34 43%	23 29%



**6. FINDINGS:**

Respondents were asked to give views in the applicable box of each statement consist of five dimensional scale. So these are the findings:

N=80

● **TRADITIONAL VALUE :**

Q1.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 26 which means 30% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q2.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 27 which means 34% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q3.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 27 which means 34% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q4.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 28 which means 35% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q5.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 28 which means 35% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q6.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 40 which means 50% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q7.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 39 which means 49% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q8.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 31 which means 39% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q9.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 23 which means 29% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q10.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 38 which means 48% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q11.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 41 which means 51% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q12.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 52 which means 65% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q13.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 37 which means 46% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q14.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 32 which means 40% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q15.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 34 which means 43% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

● **MODERN VALUES:**

Q1.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 20 which means 25% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q2.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 45 which means 56% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q3.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 25 which means 31% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q4.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 34 which means 43% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q5.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 37 which means 46% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q6.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 41 which means 51% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q7.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 36 which means 45% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q8.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 40 which means 50% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q9.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 23 which means 29% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q10.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 24 which means 30% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q11.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 34 which means 43% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q12.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 35 which means 44% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q13.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 33 which means 41% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q14.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 45 which means 56% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

Q15.) The highest number of respondents falls in the category of strongly agree box i.e. 40 which means 50% of the respondents where as rest of the respondents fall in the other category.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS:**

### **FOR TRADITIONAL VALUE :**

- People do not wear clothes that are considered disrespectful in their society.
- Their family prestige is of utmost importance to them.
- When they have visitors at home, they serve a variety of foods, even if it means a drain on my budget.
- They like the idea of staying in a joint family.
- They generally have their meals along with the rest of my family.
- If they had to choose money and ethics, they would choose ethics.
- They don't think a foreign brand is necessarily better than an Indian brand. They buy regional or national brands due to a strong sense of loyalty. I feel we must buy more local products for helping Indian brands go global.
- They often take their decisions from my heart.
- They believe their parents know them better and believe that one can only get better with age as one gains experience.

### **FOR MODERN VALUE:**

- They never buy items just because they liked its advertisements.
- They search for a lot of information before I do or buy something.
- They believe in saving money rather than giving/spending.
- They am not sure what many rituals of my religion actually stand for.
- They like to try new and different things; I like to experiment with my ideas.
- They prefer taking most of my decisions myself. I like to be different from the crowd at times.
- They don't think equality is a practical concept.
- They think small family is a happy family. It's important for both parents to earn as living costs rise up.
- They often think about the future when they need to make a decision. They engage in a lot of planning and don't believe in just living for the present.
- Being successful is the most important thing to them.
- They don't simply follow my heart while selecting products.
- They cannot stick to the same old practices all their life. They change habits and behavior with time.

Hence concluded that respondents are more into traditional values as the confidence level of giving their views for traditional values is higher than modern values. The result of this study suggests that people follow traditional values much more while keeping in mind their tradition, cultural belief, but with a touch of modern values.

## **8. LIMITATIONS:**

- Sometimes responses are given in haste so can't be relied upon.
- Most of the consumers do not give the information to the researchers wants and needs.
- Some confidential information is not shared.
- Most of the time customers are saying that they are busy or they do not have time.
- Sometimes people don't understand the questionnaire.