

RUNNING HEAD: BIRD FLU, CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETAL MARKETING

¹Sanket Mitruka, ²Hishan Muhammed Ali, ³Shanmathe P

¹Student, Department of Business Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India - 560076.

²Student, Department of Business Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India - 560076.

³Student Department of Business Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India - 560076.

1.1 ABSTRACT

“Your fine and so is our chicken: 100% bird flu free chicken,” many of us would have come across these words while ordering from restaurants, especially this particular phrase from the recent successful online start up, Freshmenu. most of us wouldn't have given a second thought of what these advertisements involving the welfare of the society are trying to establish, is it just to create awareness among consumers or is it just another marketing technique or why could it not be both? Yes, it could possibly be both. This way of creating awareness, gaining attention and thereby marketing a product or service and establishing the idea that the company and its business is concerned about the society is one of the recent popular concepts of marketing, the concept of Societal Marketing. In this conceptual paper, we will be elaborating on this Societal Marketing concept with a current happening example of the consumer behaviour and producer behaviour (only, in terms of marketing) against the recent bird flu outbreak.

Index Terms: Society, Consumer Buying Behavior, Markeing, Societal Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Bangalore was recently affected by a virus known as Influenza A Virus Subtype H5N1 or otherwise commonly known as “Bird Flu” leading the health department to take precautionary measures within 10km radius of its first sighting. India and Bangladesh along with China, Vietnam and Indonesia have been categorized as endemic to A (H5N1) due to the repeated occurrences of the virus. The virus is known to have a negative effect on human and certain other animal species and thus being panzootic, meaning it affects several animal species and especially those spread across a wide area. According to experts H5N1 is only known to spread from birds to humans and birds to birds and not from one human being to another. The Virus can inculcate symptoms very similar to that of the human influenza virus which is very, flu or common cold. The symptoms of H5N1 can include high fever,

sore throat, cough, pain over various body muscles thus it is often mistaken for a common cold. H5N1 in some cases may cause diarrhoea and respiratory conditions. Thus during the period of Bird Flu it is highly suggested to consult the doctor if any given symptoms have been noticed. The major concern in most places is the majority population that consumes poultry on a regular basis.

Although there is a widespread misunderstanding when it comes to the relation of the virus and the consumption of poultry, according to most experts poultry (i.e., Chicken, Turkey, Ducks, etc.) can be consumed if cooked properly at or above 70 degree Celsius. If cooked at the right temperature it reduces the risk of H5N1 virus, in areas that are affected. Thus most cases of the virus from consumption can be avoided if cooked properly, but the virus can still be obtained from the mere contact of a bird cage or excretion of affected birds. When a bird affected by the virus is defeathered or slaughtered the virus can transfer to humans through contact. The virus can also be transferred through contact with contaminated surfaces and inhalation of the virus through dust. The virus can also be found on the surface of eggs laid by birds affected by H5N1. Although infected birds are noted to stop laying eggs, the eggs laid at an early stage of the virus are found to have contaminations within the yolk as well as the egg white.

H5N1 can be avoided by a strong regulatory control over poultry industry which can help avoid outbreaks. This is to be taken more into consideration in those countries which are endemic to H5N1. The health authority should closely monitor those already affected or have higher chances of being affected (poultry farm workers) in the case of an outbreak so as to minimize the outreach of the virus and its symptoms.

Consumption amongst influenza

In the recent in Bengaluru, this influenza has spotted to be spreading since the State Health and Family Welfare department created awareness following the culling of 50 chickens by the BBMP in the late December, 2017. Since then, the health department has been in full swing on inspecting and creating awareness among the locals.

Though the awareness has been strongly inculcated, people are still consuming chicken especially from online platforms like Freshmenu, Zomato, and Swiggy. The question here is not if the awareness has reached everyone, it is that what has made those people consuming chicken continue doing the same even after knowing about the spreading influenza. It is also to be noted that humans can also be a fatal victim of this influenza with a 60% mortality rate if affected, according to the World Health Organisation.

Bird flu outbreak had a very less impact on poultry exports but certainly it can affect the prices of the poultry farming because of fear in people to buy which will limit to sell the product in domestic market compare to international market which will lead to increase the price in domestic market and it's also a possibility that there will be a scarcity of products. It has also affected the customers' behaviour to buy the product and automatically they will try to avoid ordering chicken related dishes which will decrease the demand for the product in the domestic market. Restaurants and fast food chain has also faced a major decline in their orders due to awareness for the bird flu. Both demand and supply will decrease because of the flu which will also effect in less sale of the product.

Media play a greater role in consumer behaviour as the reports for bird flu increases in newspaper and social media consumer tend to purchase lesser amount of poultry product for the particular time which affects the market for a short duration. Bird flu have a strong effect on consumers but it doesn't tend to last longer as the news for the flu decreases the demand for the poultry product increases the impact usually starts to decrease from 5th week.

1.2 Societal Marketing Concept (conclusion)

In India many shops selling poultry products were shut down for 15 days which decreased the sale of the product but many retailers who sold poultry product online claim that their product were flu free because if egg or chicken are cooked above 70 degree can be safe for consumption. This line made many consumers free to buy and consume poultry product which shows how consumer can be bought back by using some facts and advertisement.

Here is where the concept of societal marketing helps businesses win the interest of consumers. Sensing the issue in the society, the online restaurant platforms have created awareness as well as have clearly marketed their safe to consume services. Speaking about this, the bird flu free chicken advertised by Freshmenu, "Your fine and so is our chicken: 100% bird flu free chicken" as stated, is a perfect winner in the situation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, N. C. (2017, April 13). Information on Avian Influenza. India: Office of the Associate Director for Communication, Digital Media Branch, Division of Public Affairs.

Express), E. N. (2018, January 3). Bengaluru: Dead chicken tests positive for bird flu. Bangalore, Karnataka, India: The Indian Express.

India, T. T. (2018, January 4). Suspected bird flu sees BBMP cull 50 chickens. Bangalore, India.

