

**A STUDY ON PATTERNS OF CONSUMER'S DECISION MAKING
PROCESS IN PURCHASING LIFE INSURANCE POLICY**

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RECOMMENDATION

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CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Modern age seems more challenging. Risk and opportunities arises in everywhere because of factors like new technology, new need of the people, and new method of doing work, new trend, and new need of society. Rapid globalizations, divergent economic structure, exposure to information and opening up of media, and changing markets (product & service innovation) have greatly modified the behaviors of consumers of Nepal. Rapid urbanization, growing population of Katmandu, women empowerment (increase in women worker), and gender equality has had a sustained impact on the social and economic structure of people residing here. Life insurance has been existing since 2029 B.S. in Nepal, but in the early period its importance had not speeded at all. From the peoples' movement of 2046 B.S., new type of problem had emerged that how to market life insurance products. The problem is prevailing till now because the marketing trend and consumer behavior in consumption and decision has changed. In the early period sensitive consumer used to purchase the product, which is new and useful. There were not wide varieties of products and different companies to offer the product. For instance, Rastriya Bima Sansthan (RBS) was single company who offer life insurance policy for more than two decades as monopoly. Now

there are product varieties and many companies are operated in market to compete. Consumer purchase decision process changed vastly. In high involvement product like life insurance policy, they tend to go through need recognition, information search, evaluation, decision, and post purchase outcomes.

Life insurance is the concept of compensation or indemnity for any damage in life or the part of life. Since the real compensation of life is impossible, the most needed thing money is assumed as the most effective source of compensation. Risk is the basis of insurance. Generally, risk has to do with uncertainty of losing, or not gaining something of value. Insurance emphasizes the variable result of financial losses.

Insurance may be an economic system for reducing risk through transfer and pooling of losses; a legal method of transferring risk in a contract of indemnity. Life insurance in its simplest form protects against the loss of earning power caused by death of the insured. The permanent loss of current earning capacity amounts to an "economic death". From an economic standpoint, death may be (1) actual, (2) living, or (3) retirement. The first classification represents the so-called casket death. Permanent disability is "living death", while living beyond the period of earning capacity represents "retirement death" (David, 1983:21).

Life insurance comes to existence because of the human need of the economic security and the business need of people for the new way of collection of fund. The businessman takes the fund as the premium from civil in result of taking their risk of economic life. Life insurance is a type of legal contract between the insurer and insured whereby companies offer civil for acceptance in the certain terms and condition, which should be legally verified.

"Life insurance is a contract by which the insurer, will pay for certain sum of money as premium proportioned to the age, health and other circumstances of the person shall die within the period limited in the policy to the person in whose

favor such policy is granted”(Ritter, 1898:54).

Life insurance companies make offer generally in written form, with certain terms and conditions, is called policy. Hence Life Insurance Policy (LIP) is the product executed by the insurance companies for the business purpose and that may be the matter of social concern, as they take the premium from individual and group in result of taking risk of their death or handicap. LIP includes both the building up of a fund and a transfer of risk. Life insurance assists in making better society. The contribution of life insurance to the society is prevention of economic want. Because of hazard events individual’s current income is socially disturbing. It refers particularly to such disturbances as are brought on by the emergencies of unemployment, old age, disability and death. Life insurance serves in all these crises either by through maturity benefits or cash values. Hence, LIP may be defined as the socially accepted goods, which delivers the economic security to individual in case of risk caused by perils under a mutual agreement certified by law. For insured individual, LIP is simple a device, which makes it possible for him to substitute a small but certain loss (premium) for the large but uncertain loss (amount of insurance) under a mutual agreement. But LIP modifies concept of loss into the building up of fund whereby after the maturity period they are compensated with large amount including bonus.

Life insurance is, in a system approach, collection of small fund by many people to bear possible risk of few people. Joseph B. MacLean stated, “Every plan of insurance is, in its simplest terms, merely a method of spreading over a large number of person a possible loss to serious to be conveniently borne by an individual”(Joseph, 1962:17). Thus life insurance can be successful after only the investment of many people.

In spite of beautiful concept, there seems to be little concern of life insurance policy (LIP) among general people in Nepal. Five insurance companies, (1) Rastriya Bima Sansthan (RBS), (2) National Life Insurance Company (NLIC), (3) Nepal Life Insurance Company (NLIC), (4) Life Insurance Corporation

Nepal (LIC), (5) American Life Insurance Company (ALICO) have proposed life insurance products in Nepal. RBS is pioneer among them, started its business under the government control.

1.2 A Brief Profile of the Life Insurance Company

Rastriya Bima Sansthan (RBS) is a government owned enterprise. It is an exception that it gives continuous profit to government. It is imperative to say that RBS has been successful to win the recognition of believable name in the area of insurance. It was first established in Pouse 1, 2024 B.S. in the form of private company. Later in Pause 1, 2025 B.S., it was converted as government enterprise according to enterprise act 2025. After a decade of its establishment, it had launched 'life insurance' from Falgun 7, 2029. It has 1,96,305 clients (policy holders) till Aswin 30, 2064 B.S. At current, it has offered five types of life insurance products: (a) Endowment Life Assurance, covering 5% of total clients, (b) Endowment Life Assurance with Double Accidental Benefit, covering 70% of total clients, (c) Money Back Policy, containing 10% of total clients, (d) Children's Education and Marriage Endowment Life Assurance, containing 15% of total clients, and (e) Group Endowment Life Assurance Policy, covering 70 groups at present. The company has now offered 65 per-thousand bonus rates for its policyholders. The first one can be issued by two methods: by involving in profit and do not involving in profit. It has said to be endowment because one should pay the premium for fixed term. After maturation, the insured will get lump sum amount with bonus if the type is profit involvement. But in the case of death of insured person during the period, his wills get the insure amount and bonus till that period. The second one adds one special attribute on endowment policy that is accidental double benefit. In the case of accidental death, one can get extra amount up to 1 lakh depending on the contract. For the third type, one can extract for 15, 20, and 25 years as contract period and gets insure amount For the third type, one can extract for 15, 20, and 25 years as contract period and gets insure amount in three installment (but four installment for 25 years) but gets

bonus after only the maturity. In the fourth type of policy, the willing child gets insure amount after only death of insured person or maturity period. But s/he is waived for next premiums. The fifth one is for group that any organization can do for its group of employees but it should include more than ten employees (RBS, Brochure).

National Life Insurance Company was first established in 2044 B.S. as public limited integrating life and general both. But in 2062 B.S., the two are separated after new rules formed by Bima Committee. The company has the reinsurance contract to the Alexander Howden Re-insurance Brokers Limited, London. The company has total 60,400 policy holder till Aswin 30, 2064 B.S. the company has offered eight products to its customers: (a) Endowment Life Assurance Policy, (b) Child's Education & Marriage Endowment Life Assurance Policy, (c) Endowment with Accidental Double Benefit Life Assurance Policy, (d) Anticipated Endowment Life Assurance Policy, (e) Level-Term Life Assurance Policy, (f) Decreasing-Term Life Assurance Policy in which risk of debtor for the debtor's family to pay the debt is considered, (g) Whole Life Assurance Policy, and (h) Child's Luck: Anticipated Life Assurance Policy. The last product has offered to parents to secure their child's future education. The parents must be between the ages of 17 to 50. The product maturity term is 15 years. The insures will get 25% amount after 5 years, 25% after ten years and 50% after maturity. In case of death of parents before the maturity period, the payment of premium is not necessary. The bonus rate for the product is 65 per thousand (NLIC Brochure).

Life Insurance Corporation (Nepal) Ltd, a joint venture of Life Insurance Corporation of India, has been run since 1 September 2001 in Nepal under the company act 2053. The company claims the success in India and striving towards success in Nepal. The company has offered the following products: (a) Endowment Policy, (b) Money Back Policy, (c) Child Love Planning, (d) Ghrihalaxmi, and (e) Jeevan Anand. The features of Ghrihalaxmi are 1) security even in the case of not payment of premium after two years, 2) free accidental

benefit and permanent insolvency (physical), 3) 4% of insure amount will be back every year after 3 years of starting and 52% amount with bonus will be returned after maturity. In Jeevan Anand, client will get insure amount and bonus after maturity and lifetime risk cover without premium. So the product is the combination of endowment and lifetime. The company has also offered the term rider facility to its clients. Under this planning, the insured can get extra life insurance facility from the payment of small extra premium. The company has declared bonus rate of 65 per thousand till the date (LIC Brochure).

Nepal Life Insurance Company (NLIC) was established under the company act 2053 and the insurance act 2049 by nit Nepali investment as a public limited company in Baisakh 21, 2058. It is the first Nepali company, who did only life insurance business. It has 83,586 policyholders till Chaitra 30, 2064. The company claims that it has secured and productive investment from the premium received. It has the reinsurance contract with Hanover Reinsurance Company, Germany. The company has presented the following life insurance planning as its products: (a) Endowment Plan, (b) Anticipated Endowment for term 15 & 20 years, (c) Endowment and Anticipated Endowment with Accidental Double Benefits, (d) Mortgage and redemption plan is specially for debt that insured took for buying home or vehicle or others. If the insured died without completing the installment the company will have taken the liability. The company also has 'salary saving scheme' for employees of any organization in which at least 15 employees must include. The company has claimed that the 'Jivan Laxmi Plan' is triple benefit scheme with bonus. In the case of insured death during the period, the company will pay thrice of insure amount. The insure amount ranges from 50,000 to 1,00,000. The company also provides optional facilities. For the child's endowment premium waived benefit (PWB) and for child's anticipated endowment plan additional risk cover benefit (ARCB) is available (NLIC Brochure).

American Life Insurance Company (ALICO), a member company of American

International Group, is another company doing life insurance business in Nepal. The company has almost 1,30,000 policyholders. It has offered three special products to the customers: (a) Three Payment Plan, (b) Education Protection Plan, and (c) Endowments. Three payment plans is like anticipated and accidental double benefit is optional. In the second one, face amount of the policy plus bonuses are paid on survival of child at maturity. In case of parents death all future premiums under the policy will be waived and 1% of the face amount is paid every month to the child till the maturity of the policy. The disability waiver of premium benefit may be attached to any regular life insurance policy or supplementary rider (ALICO Brochure).

Prospective consumers are the qualified people, in its sense, for the life insurance. They can be children, parents, adults etc. with current earning capacity or secured by elders. The product varieties, design, and utility scheme depend on company's policies and product scheme, which need legal permission. Consumers' acceptance of the product generally depends on his awareness, information, product attribution, intention, and motivation. Most consumers show high involvement to take purchase decision of life insurance policy. And insurance companies make big effort to sell LIP to the individual by powerful marketing tools (they are personnel selling generally). Marketer wants to make consumer to feel problem or necessity of the product (LIP). Agents of the companies activate the need of consumers. They suggest that why the individual needs to solve their planning problem in changing environment. Marketers use advertisement, exposure of the product and other type of cues to influence external stimulation. After the recognition of problem, consumer wants to search related information about the product. Nepalese companies are doing their best to help and influence consumer search process. The search process may be mostly external because it seems less awareness of LIP in Nepal. Companies' agents assist in making evaluation criteria and range of alternatives by presenting more information of their best. The objective of research process is to make rational choice among different alternatives but search process varies in terms of the consumer

characteristic, market conditions, buying strategies, situational factors and perceived risk. Lead by the received information consumer want to evaluate the product from different perspectives and different attributes. They want to reduce their range of alternatives to make decision by brand processing or attribute processing method. On the other hand marketers want to make consumer in favor of them by influencing consumers' evaluation process. Finally, consumers may come to the purchase decision of they find all the cases are favorable to him. In the case of LIP, as the big motivation by the agent of particular company, individual become ready to buy if h/she motivated. After the Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) approach, many marketers want to keep harmonious relationship with the customers in order to get continuous marketing responses like repeat purchase, better word of mouth, unpaid brand ambassador, reference, social value etc. post purchase behavior of consumer directly effects on these facets. Consumers, style product using, imagery, opinion, degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, degree of loyalty, and certain action in relation to product are post purchase feeling, attitude of costumers, which are major determinant factor for CRM. In context of LIP, CRM approach is probably the best marketing approach. After the purchase of LIP, it is crucial for insurance companies that how their clients think about the policy (product): either positive or negative, if they want to long-term survival.

1.3 Focus of the Study

No prior research has been done in the field of buyers' decision process of life insurance policy. Concerning about awakening problem of misunderstanding, the relevant concept of research in this field has been emerged. Analysis of present behavior to arrive on relevant conclusion and estimation of future behaviors and their fluctuation with respect to certain marketing input are the basic purpose of the research. The research finds consumers behaviors: factors affecting the behaviors, and different situations like psychological, economical, social, and cultural in the whole decision process as the study area. The insured clients,

residing in the Katmandu valley, are the study sources. The study is organized in five chapters: introduction, review of relevant findings/books, research methodology, relevant data presentation and their analysis, and finally summary, conclusion, and recommendation of the research.

As the LIP is the consumers' high involvement product, their purchase process starts from problem recognition and passes through information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and ends at the post purchase behavior. The purchase of LIP mostly depends on the consumers' awareness level and the companies' efforts in influencing and enhancing consumers' behavior in the different process. Thus the whole study centered on the consumers' purchase process in special reference to LIP. The study focus on the question that what the customers do before and after the purchase decision; how they develop their decision such as recognition of problem, searching sources and conformation of information, evaluating criteria and choice set, and purchase; and what type of factors like economic, psychological, social, situational, and interpersonal impact on the decision process. In most of the cases individual generates information through the experimental behavior of other person. Thus, the study also focuses the post feeling of consumers and how they give their response in relation to certain characteristics of products. The study sample of 100 insured people are taken by the researcher judgmentally from five different companies equally. The study is prominently focused on the interpretation and analysis of their saying. Ultimately, the study tends to go to the conclusion and solution of marketing problem from the analysis.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Marketing complexity has become the adjective of Nepalese life insurance companies. With respect to outer world, here are too low percentages of people, who have the direct involvement in insurance. Although it is good concept for the individual, group or society here seems very less awareness. People, who are insurance clients, are urban and mostly of them are taking policy because of

tough motivation and persuasion by agents. Here seems vague relationship between the functions and marketing approach. What do marketers want to communicate? Are consumers really recognizing the companies' intentions? Life insurance companies are producing large number of agents. Definitely it is an effort to make more and more clients. And agents are trying to motivate and even persuade many times by different kind of psychological pressure. It is also definitely an effort to make more and more clients. Are their efforts really enhancing consumer decision? How consumers develop their engagement to the decision process? Many factors are responsible for research. Specially, consumer unwillingness to purchase the product; companies' vague marketing activities; the distance between companies and clients; less frequency of repeat purchase in spite of increase in consumers' income; low sensitivity of LIP among people; and risk management behaviors of Nepalese people have contributed to the research problem.

The following research questions will be analyzed in the study:

- a. How consumers make aware themselves to the product (LIP)?
- b. How and what type of problems are recognized by consumers?
- c. What is the attitude of consumers to the LIP and how much buying intention they have?
- d. What type of information consumers use to search in relation to the product and how extent?
- e. What is the consumers' information source about the product?
- f. To what extent information varied in terms of the consumer characteristics, market conditions, buying strategies, situational factors and perceived risk in the case of product?
- g. How consumers use the information of the product to clarify the various alternatives and their relative attractiveness? How do they evaluate?
- h. How consumers come to choice decision of the product?
- i. What are the post purchase behaviors of consumers in context of LIP?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study has a purpose of analyzing the behavior and the impact of behavior and marketing component from a viewpoint of marketer as well as consumer in a circumstance of purchase decision process of life insurance policy. The study will examine and compare the current marketing strategies to influence the purchase decision process and the real impact on consumers. To explore the major objectives, the study has following specific objectives.

- a. To study and evaluate the problem recognition process of consumers in relation to the product (LIP).
- b. To identify and analyze the information variety and sources of information.
- c. To examine the use of information of the product in order to evaluate the various product and their relative attractiveness by consumers.
- d. To assess the reasons behind the choice decision of particular product
- e. To identify post purchase behaviors of consumers of LIP
- f. To provide suggestions based on study findings.

1.6 Importance of the Study

The purpose of research is to explore the realities. It seems low readiness to consume the life insurance in Nepal. It is major challenge for the companies. But besides awareness, there are many marketing challenges confronting companies. To change these challenges into opportunities through intensive research is the goal of the study. It helps to solve marketing problem by understanding consumers' behavior in the purchase decision process. The purpose of study is to make smooth and convenient bridge between the marketer and consumer. The study enhances the Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) approach among marketers. It will be guideline for marketer to design their marketing mix and formulate marketing strategy. The study also inspires consumers to understand more about LIP. They find their reaction and recommendation of desired attribute, services and expectation in the study. Thus, the study helps to clarify the

misunderstanding and difficulties between clients and the company. Though the study is deep probing into the customers and their reaction to the marketing component, it helps the different group of people, who take stakes in life insurance. The study also generates new knowledge in the field of life insurance.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Because of the nature and method of study many inherent and misleading error may overcome. The study has the following limitations:

- a. The study is concentrated to the consumers of Katmandu valley. It may not consolidate the behavior of consumer outside the valley.
- b. The study has the sample size of hundred people, which is small and may not generalize its findings to the whole population.
- c. The sampling method is judgmental. The appropriateness of sample is depends on the researcher ability, so sampling error may overcome.
- d. A strong initial positive or negative impression of a person tends to influence the ratings on all subsequent observations.
- e. Respondent chosen for a research tends to feel and respond differently compared to other individual.
- f. Unwillingness and inability of respondents to provide enough information.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The research study has been organized into five chapters namely:

The chapter first is the introduction, which includes general information, focus of the study, statement of the study, objectives of the study, importance of the study and limitation of the study.

The second chapter, review of literature deals with some related matters of the study. This chapter deals about the conceptual review of life insurance policy. It addresses about meaning, definition and need of insurance policy and reviews of

some related studies in Nepal.

Third Chapter covers Research methodology employed in the present study. It describes about how the study being designed and prepared, what kind of data are collected, what types of sources are used for the data collection, how these data are processed to fulfill the needs and objectives of the study.

The fourth chapter is presentation and analysis of data deals with the issues identified in the introduction. This is the heart of the research study. What has been analyzed, how it has been analyzed and what has been found are the concerns of this chapter. This chapter presents major findings derived from the analysis of data. The fifth or last chapter concerned with summary, conclusions and recommendations. In the summary, present study is discussed briefly. Conclusions of the study are presented here. On the basis of the study suggestions are made in this chapter

CHAPTER -II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Review

To deal with the marketing environment and make purchases, consumer engages in decision process. Consumer decision process involves myriad of decision made with respect to product or service, brand, vender, buying quality, timing, and payment method. In general consumer decision process can be viewed as problem solving approach. However the range of problem solving approaches can be placed on a spectrum from routine problem solving, to limited problem solving, to extensive problem solving (Loudon and Bitta, 2003:15).

Marketing scholars have developed a stages model of buying decision process. Francisco Nicosia (1966) has postulated a model, which is viewed as representing a situation where a firm is designing communication to deliver to consumers, and consumers' response will influence subsequent action of the firm. The model contains four major components or fields: (1) the firm's attributes and consumer's psychological attributes, (2) the consumer's research for and evaluation, (3) the consumer's motivated act of purchase, and (4) the consumer's use of the product. John A. Howard and Jagadish N. Sheth (1969) have postulated another normative consumer behavior model, which is popularly called as Howard Seth model, describes the rational brand choice behavior by buyers under the condition of incomplete information and limited abilities. Four major components are involved: (1) input variables as stimuli in the environment; (2) output variables as the behavior shown by consumer like attention, comprehension, attitude, intention, or purchase; (3) hypothetical constructs as perceptual constructs dealing with information processing and learning constructs dealing with buyers' formation of concepts; and (4) exogenous variables as external factors that can significantly influence buyer decisions. By the way consumers purchase process

starts an input stimulus and goes to search, predisposition, purchase, and finally exhibits more routine behavior (Loudon and Bitta, 2004:23).

Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1968) have developed a model, which was adjusted with the contribution of Miniard and called Engel-Blackwell-Miniard model. The model depicts the five stages of consumer decision process: (1) motivation and need recognition (2) search for information, (3) alternative evaluation, (4) purchase and (5) outcomes. Two level of involvement of consumers are recognized by authors: extended problem solving behavior (EPS), characterized by high level of involvement; and limited problem solving behavior (LPS), characterized by low level of involvement. The first step in the process involves exposure to marketer dominated or other stimuli that goes through attention, comprehension, acceptance, and retention of stimuli and finally consumer recognizes the need. Then consumers' memory, environmental factors, individual differences influence search process. The alternative evaluation stage involves comparing information about alternative brands that forms beliefs, attitude and intention. Unless situation intervene the process, intention will lead to actual purchase behavior. Thereafter, two outcomes are possible: satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These results have impact on future search and belief.

Although these five stages models are useful for examining purchase decision, the process is not always as straight forward. The consumer can withdraw any stage prior to actual purchase if the need diminishes or no satisfactory alternatives are available. The stages usually are of different lengths, may overlap, and some may even be skipped. The consumer is often involved in several different buying decisions simultaneously, and the outcome of one affects the others (Ettel, Walker and Stanton, 2001:45).

Philip Kotler (2004), in his book marketing management, states that the five stages process captures the full range of considerations that arises when a consumer faces a highly involving new purchase. The buying process starts when the buyer recognizes the problem or need. The need can be triggered by

internal (hunger, thirst, sex rises to threshold level) or external stimuli. An aroused consumer will be inclined to search for information. Consumer information sources fall into four groups: personal sources, commercial sources, public sources, and experiential sources. The relative amount and influence of these information sources vary with product category and the buyers' characteristic. Through gathering information, the consumer learns about competing brands and their features. First the consumer has total set of products, services, or brands, and then he goes through reducing this set to awareness set, consideration set, choice set and finally comes to decision by analyzing the information. In the evaluation stage, the consumer forms preferences among the choice set. The consumer develops a set of brand belief about where each brand stands on each attribute. The set of belief about a brand make up the brand image. The consumers' brand image will vary with his or her experiences as filtered by the effects of selective perception, selective distortion, and selective retention. At the purchase decision stage, the consumer forms an intention to buy the most preferred brand. Two factors: attitude of others and situational factors can intervene the purchase. At the post purchase stage, marketer must monitor post purchase satisfaction, post purchase action, and post product use of consumer. The buyer satisfaction is the function of closeness between the buyers' expectation and the product's perceived performance. If performance falls short of expectation, the consumer is disappointed; if it meets expectation, the customer is satisfied; if it exceeds expectation, the customer is delighted. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with product/service will influence customer subsequent behavior. After the use, consumer may store, trade or sell the product.

David L. Loudon and Albert J. Della Betta (2003) also indicate five stages of decisions process. According to them, problem recognition results when the consumer perceives the differences between the actual state (lower level) and desired state (higher level). The process of problem recognition means that the consumer becomes aroused and activated to engage in some purposeful purchase-decision activity. This intention may depend on two factors: the magnitude of

discrepancy between the desired state and actual state and the importance of the problem. There may be varying types of problem recognition: routine, emergency, planning, and involving. Routine and emergency are needed at present. Planning types are bought in the anticipation of future. And evolving types involves no plan but the situation of diffusion and innovation.

Loudon and Bitta (2003) state that once the consumers have recognized the existence of problem, they move to the next stage that is search. The term 'search' refers to mental as well as physical information seeking processing activities, which one engages in to facilitate decision-making regarding some goal-object in the market place. Search may be categorized as pre-purchase or ongoing (based on purpose of search) and as internal or external (based on its source). If a consumer has recognized a problem, then pre-purchase search would be engage in. but ongoing search characterized as independent of specific needs. Internal search is a mental process of recalling and reviewing information stored in the memory that may relate to the purchase situation. Once recalled, the information may be used in the evaluation process. External search refers to the process of obtaining information from other sources.

Loudon and Bitta (2003) state that purchase-decision is selecting a course of action based in preceding evaluation process. Purchasing processes involve not only the purchase decision but also activities directly associated with the purchase. At this stage, consumer choice store/company and brand (product or services). Different pattern of purchase behavior like loyalty and impulsive in the process may taken. Situational factors may greatly influence the purchase, which may beyond the knowledge of consumer. Consumer may purchase in home or Internet instead of store or company (for service). Brand loyalty refers to strong inclination of favorable attitudes to the brand that consumer choose in purchase. Impulse buying is the purchase that was not specifically planned.

John C. Mowen (1990), in his book 'consumer behavior', also states five stages of consumer decision-making. He further points out that three perspectives on

consumer behavior were developed: the decision-making perspective, the experiential perspective, and the behavior influence perspective. The decision-making perspective justifies that in high-involvement decision that the consumer goes through problem recognition, extensive search, extended alternative evaluation, complex choice and acquisition evaluation. According to experiential perspective, the consumer goes through problem recognition that is affect driven, search for affect-based solution, affect based choice, and acquisition evaluation. The behavioral influence perspective suggests that one should focus on behavior and contingencies of the environment that influence the behavior. Discriminate stimulus influence problem recognition, learned behavior search process, internal state evaluation, and learned responses results choice, which experience influence post acquisition evaluation. Mowen (1990) argues that problem recognition occurs when a discrepancy develops between an actual state and a desired state of being. Wear out product, the product that fails to meet expectation, negative stimulation can cause the actual state to decrease below the acceptable level. Cultural, subculture, reference groups and lifestyle trends can cause a person to change his/her desired state. Consumers also create new desires because they have a capacity to, think, plan, and dream. The consumer begins a search process to acquire information about products or services that may eliminate the problem. After a problem is recognized consumer will engage in internal search prior to external search. But when the purchase processes is an experiential or behavioral influence purchase, it is likely that little or no internal search occurs. During the alternative evaluation consumer forms beliefs and attitudes regarding the decision alternatives. From a high-involvement decision making perspective, alternative evaluation will follow the standard learning model in which hierarchy of effects flows from belief formation to affect formation to behavioral intentions. From the experiential perspective, the evaluation process is viewed as affect driven. Finally, from the behavioral influence perspective, consumers are conceptualized as never consciously comparing alternatives. A concept “judgmental heuristic”, focus in the factors that influence how people make judgments of probabilities (possession of an attribute) and goodness or badness of an object. Three judgmental

heuristic: anchoring and adjustment, availability, and representativeness are used to estimate probabilities. First justifies that people frequently make their estimates by starting from initial value and then adjusting upward and downward to obtain final answer. The availability heuristic states that people may assess the probability of an event by ease with which the event can be brought into mind. The representativeness states that consumer perceives the similarities of brands stereotypically. Prospect theory and framing explain how people evaluate the goodness or badness of an object. Prospect theory argues that people interpret the extent of goodness and badness of something based in part upon whether the outcome is framed as a loss or gain. Psychological values of loss or gain do not necessarily match actual value. During the choice process, consumer may choose among the alternative brands of services or non-comparable alternatives. The decision-making approach takes a cognitive, information processing approach to choice. From the experiential perspective, however, choice is viewed resulting from consumers referring to their feelings about alternatives. In some cases consumer elicit from memory the overall recollection of their evaluation of an alternative. Thus rather than examining attributes or beliefs about attribute, a holistic approach is used in which consumer choose the alternative toward which they have most positive feelings. This may result a habitual purchase, brand loyalty, and impulse purchase. During the post acquisition process a consumer may show a certain type of behavior in form of consumption/usage, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, complaint behavior and disposition of product. After consumers obtain and use a product or service they will tend to develop the feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. A number of factors including expectancy disconfirmation, equity attribution, performance evaluation, and affect formation may influence consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Equity theory justifies that people will analyse the exchange between themselves and marketer to determine the extent to which it is equitable and fair. Attribution theory is concerned with how people identify the cause for action. According to experiential perspective, positive and negative affective association with the

product/services will influence consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Gerrit Antonides and W. Fred Van Raaij (2003) in their book “Consumer Behavior: A European Perspective” state that consumer decision process as a cognitive learning that is a conscious mental activity of comparing and trading of factors, which plays a role in information search and the solution of (consumption) problems. They further states that an important aspect of consumer behavior is information search to select the best alternative from a set of options in a product class. First, consumer looks to solve problem internally. Consumers with little memory or experience may use external search. Consumers’ search process has three characteristics: sources (where to search), intensity (degree of search) and necessity of search. Consumer forms choice set and finally make choice from their awareness set. But after the information search, the consumer’s awareness set tends to increase, so do the consideration and rejection set. Consumers are motivated to search and process the information to make better decision; to reduce perceived risk and uncertainty; to decide timing; to collect justification; and to accumulate knowledge. Many times consumer faces a conflict with the making of a decision between alternatives, which is frequently associated with cognitive dissonance. In consumer information processing, cognition (knowledge of choice alternatives) precedes ‘affect’ and ‘attitude’ (judgment of alternative). So consumers tend to integrate prior knowledge (memory) with search. Sometimes a positive first impression can strongly affect subsequent information processing. This extensive search is especially true for important decision or high-involvement condition. Consumer use decision rules in order to compare alternatives. According to author, decision rules can be used in a descriptive way (how consumer make decision), in a predictive way (likely outcomes of consumer decision), and normative way. Human limitation (motivation and ability) and circumstances (opportunities) affect consumer decision-making and choice. The characteristics of consumer, the set of available and known alternatives, the presentation of information (its structure and format)

and the choice situation also influenced the decision process.

Joel R. Evans and Barry Berman (1990), in their book 'marketing', state that the consumer decision process is comprised of two parts: the process itself and factors affecting the process. The decision processes consist of six basic stages: stimulus, problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post purchase behavior. Factors affecting the process are logical characteristics. A stimulus is a cue or a drive intended to motivate a consumer. It may be commercial, non-commercial, social or physical. If stimulation occurs, consumer will go to the next step of decision process. If it does not occur, s/he will ignore the cue. Recognition of problem occurs when a consumer becomes aware of good, service, organization, person, place and idea. In many cases, the consumer is aroused by a desire to try something new. In information search consumer tends to engage in listing alternative that will solve the problem at hand and determine the characteristics of each. In evaluation process, there is enough information to select one alternative from the list of choice through the process of determining criteria, ranking their importance, and finally rank the alternatives. In the purchase process, a consumer determines their decision on place of purchase, terms, and availability. Place of purchase indicates store, location, home, work, school etc. purchase terms indicates the price and method of payment. Availability refers to the timeliness with which a consumer receives a good or service that s/he purchases. In the post purchase consumer re-evaluates their purchase, this results consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

If the satisfaction with actual state decreases, or if the level of desired state increases a problem may be recognized that propels a consumer to action. Wear out product, the product that fails to meet expectation, out of style product, negative stimulation may cause the actual state to decrease below acceptable level. The desired state tends to be influenced by factors that affect the aspiration and circumstances of consumer. Thus such things as culture, subculture, reference

groups and lifestyle trends can cause a person to change his/her desired state (Mowen, 1990:28). One of the researches on problem recognition has viewed the process as being a function of the congruity between the positive or negative valance values of some perceptual stimulus and the respective positivism/negativity values for some evoked referent. Another research direction taken has been to view problem recognition longitudinally. Instead of focusing on one instance of problem recognition, the effect of repeated occurrence of similar problem is considered. For some consumers problem recognition is triggered mainly by a change in desired state (DS type). For others, a problem would rarely be recognized unless their actual state changed (AS type). Problem recognition is more easily triggered for DS type consumers, they have greater interest in the product and enjoy shopping for it, they are easier to reach using conventional communication channels, and they perceive themselves as influential in others' shopping decision.

After problem is recognized, consumer will engage in internal search prior to external search. If the purchase process involves extensive problem solving, the consumer may actively search long-term memory for information on brand alternative (Mowen, 1990:32). Generally speaking, the consumer receives the most information about a product from commercial sources that is marketer-dominated sources. However, the most effective information comes from personal sources. Commercial information normally performs an informing function, and personal sources perform a legitimate function (Kotler, 2004:55). Most shoppers rely on experiential information sources. Different research on various products (house appliance, car, grocery shoppers) sought that the majority of consumers actually engage in quite limited amount of external search. A number of findings suggest that those who typically in considerable external-search activity are identified by a higher demographic profile (higher education level, income, occupational standing, and so on). External search is greater when prices are higher, price differences between brands are greater, style and appearance are perceived to be quite important, and it is suspected that substantial differences may exist between product alternatives. Brand loyalties reduce the search activities. When the available information is difficult to process, a consumer tends

to adopt simple choice rules and significantly curtail their external search. Greater market experience with a product is associated with a lower degree of external search. Open-mindedness and self-confidence of consumers have found to be positively related to greater search activity. Marketing belief reduces the search activities. Time pressure crowded store condition, and special opportunities also reduce search amount. Consumer wants to reduce the perceived risk by searching for confidence or by making brand belief market belief (Loudon and Bitta, 2003:73).

A study has done on consumers' evaluation for choosing an airline for business and non-business travel. Although departure and arrival times, fares, and past experience are very important for both types of travel, the airline exhibits very little differences on these factors. Consequently these factors are not determinant attribute for passengers. Rather than spending heavily to promote attributes that passengers view as important but similar, airline marketers, instead, might promote a factor such as safety, on which consumers perceive significant differences. The number and type of evaluative criteria may vary by product. Consumers would tend to use more evaluative criteria for high-involvement products than low-involvement one. Evaluative criteria may also change over time. As consumers gain new experiences and information, their evaluative criteria may shift. Consumers process the information by attribute processing in early stages of the decision process, switching to brand processing approach in later stages. A research on decision rules used by consumers indicates that compensatory strategies tend to be utilized under high-involvement and few alternatives (Loudon and Bitta, 2003:74). Husbands and wives must frequently estimate the preference of their spouse when making purchase. Studies found that anchors caused consumers and managers to bias their estimates of probabilities in the direction of the anchor (Mowen, 1990:41).

Two factors can intervene between the purchase intention and purchase decision. The more intense the other person negativism, and closeness and inclination of consumer to the other person, the more the consumer will adjust his or her purchase intention. The converse is also true. The second factor is the unanticipated situational factors. A consumer decision to modify, postpone,

or avoid a purchase decision is also heavily influenced by perceived risk. In executing a purchase intention the consumer may make up to five-purchase subdivisions: a brand decision; vendor decision; quantity decision; timing decision; and payment method decision (Kotler, 2004:46). People do two things when choosing among non-comparable alternatives. First, they tended to focus on using more abstract attributes for their comparison of alternatives. Second they use a holistic approach in which overall attributes towards the alternatives were compared (Mowen, 1990:47). For the consumers' purchasing activities both personal and social motives are responsible. A situation has a demonstrable and systematic effect on current behavior, which does not follow from knowledge of personal (intra-individual) and stimulus (choice alternative) attributes. But a strong loyalty results in weaker situational influence. There are four brand loyalty patterns as: (1) undivided loyalty, (2) divided loyalty, (3) unstable loyalty, and (4) no loyalty based on purchase frequency, although the degree of loyalty varied by product, the percentage of customer exhibiting some loyalty was rather high. Informal group leader and perceived risk takers have a positive relationship with brand loyalty. To increase brand loyalty of present customers may necessitate better after sale service, for new customers price discount, for committed customers a catchy advertisement may be effective. Impulse buying is another consumer purchasing pattern. It may be activated by suggestion, remembrance and intention of purchasing (Loudon and Bitta, 2003:76).

If the consumer is satisfied s/he will exhibit a higher probability of purchasing the product again. One survey showed that 75% of Toyota buyers are highly satisfied and about 75% intended to buy again; 35% of Chevrolet buyers were highly satisfied and 35% intended to buy Chevrolet again. Dissatisfied customers may abandon or return the product (Kotler, 2004). One reason for the satisfaction/dissatisfaction is the amount of discrepancy between actual product performance and expected product/service performance. Factors influencing the formation of expectation are product/service itself, heavy promotion, other products/services and consumer characteristics. Once the consumer perceives that s/he is dissatisfied with the product or service, his complaint behavior may exist. The purpose of complaining is to recover an economic loss or rebuild the person's

self-image. Cognitive dissonance occurs when a logical inconsistency exists among cognitive elements (Mowen, 1990:89). Research has uncovered several determinants, which appear to influence satisfaction, including demographic variables, personality variables, and expectations and to be more satisfied. Older consumers tend to have lower expectations and to be more satisfied. Higher education tends to be associated with lower satisfaction. Men tend to be more satisfied than women. The more confidence one has in purchase decision-making and the more competence in a given product area, the greater one's satisfaction tends to be. There is also greater satisfaction when relevant others are perceived to be more satisfied. Higher levels of product satisfaction is also indicated by persons who are more satisfied with their lives as a whole, and persons with more favorable attitudes toward the consumer domain, that is, market place, business firms, and consumerism. If consumers are dissatisfied, they are likely to exhibit less-favorable post purchase attitudes, lower or non-existent purchase intention, brand switching, complaining behavior, and negative word-of-mouth. Studies show that consumers tell twice as many people about bad experience as good ones. Complainers tend to be more upscale socioeconomic groups rather than non-complainers. The severity of the disconfirmation or problem is positively related to complaint behavior. Complaining is more positive perception of retailer responsiveness to customer complaints. Consumer dissonance occurs when a minimum threshold level of dissonance tolerance is passed. And the action is irrevocable. There are several major ways in which consumer strives to reduce dissonance, he may (1) change his evaluation of alternatives, (2) seek new information to support his choice, or (3) change his attitudes. And finally disposal of products often occurs in connection with the changing roles of consumer in consumption. As roles transition occurs, consumer may dispose of their possession in order to facilitate or validate both role and status changes, thus enhancing and solidifying their new self-concepts and social role identities (Loudon and Bitta, 2003:92).

2.3 Review of Thesis

Mukund P. Dahal (1994) prepared a dissertation, on the topic "patterns of consumer decision making process while purchasing high involvement goods

in Nepal”. The main objectives of the study were to examine the pattern of consumer decision-making process for high involvement goods (risky and expensive) in Nepal. Motorcycle and scooter is chosen as the sample product. Sample size of 300 recent buyer of Katmandu was taken from 3619 populations for the study. The major findings of the study were follows:

- a. The Nepalese motorcycle buyers undertake information with greater emphasis upon dealer and interpersonal sources of information.
- b. Nepalese motorcycle buyers have rather small-evoked set size for both the makes and models.
- c. Nepalese motorcycle buyers used fine types of sources namely browsers, test drives, advertisements, interpersonal sources and dealer visits.
- d. Evoked number of makes and models, shopping orientation, education and total time spent on research is negatively related with low search segment. But the factors like time pressure, months of driving experience and prior preference for dealer, manufacture and model relate positively with this segment.
- e. Motorcycle buyers of Nepal were classified in two groups. One is an Indian motorcycle buyer and another is Japanese motorcycle buyer.

Subash Palungwa (1998) did a research entitled “A study on personal computers buyer behavior”. The basic objective of this study was to examine the personal computer buyer’s behavior among the individual, household, corporate house and business organization. 50 units of samples are considered from Katmandu valley for the study. The major findings of the study were follows:

- a. Higher the income more the buyers.
- b. Educated people are prominent buyers of personal computers.
- c. The main purpose of buying computer is for personal or family use.
- d. The major factor affecting buying decision is quality.

Minakshi Khetan (1992) did a research entitled “Motivation behind acquisition of time saving electric appliance in Nepalese household”. The main objective of

the study is to examine the motives behind the acquisition of electric appliance among the Nepalese households of Katmandu Valley. The major findings of the study were:

- a. Most determining motive of acquiring or using appliance is convenience.
- b. The interpersonal sources or social network is the most effective media of consumer awareness and probably important for motivation too.
- c. Time saving is not the main motive for the acquisition of time saving electrical.
- d. The main reasons for not using the appliance are high price, higher operating cost (electrical charge), operating difficulties due to lack of facilities.

Yogesh Panta (1992) did a research entitled “a study on brand loyalty”. The major objective of the study was to examine the brand awareness of the Nepalese consumer and to identify the correlates of brand loyalty especially in low involvement product for this purpose. Hundred respondents were taken as the sample for the study. The major findings of the study were as follows:

- a. Most of the Nepalese consumers are brand loyal, however, percent showing entrenched brand loyalty is very low.
- b. Brand loyalty is more in the products that are frequently needed than those, which are needed or less frequently used.
- c. The consumer belonging to the nuclear family system is comparatively more brand loyal than those belonging the joint family system.
- d. Brand loyalty is strongly associated with consumers’ income and shop loyalty.
- e. Brand loyal consumer is less influenced by special deals like free samples; discount coupons, price activities and advertisement.

Yogesh Panta (1993) entitled “brand loyalty of Nepalese consumer” has the major objective to study whether or not the brand loyalty exists among the Nepalese

consumer. The study was conducted among the 160 samples of respondent. The major findings of this study were as follows:

- a. Brand awareness of Nepalese consumers is high.
- b. Female are found to be more brand loyal than male.
- c. Families with medium size are found to be more brand loyal than large and small size.

It is found that education and brand loyalty has no relation at all.

CHAPTER -III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the procedure employed in the study leading to data collection and analysis. Consequently it deals variables used in the study. The required variables are identified and judged by the researcher for the

necessary analysis. This chapter implies a systematic approach to get the research findings. It also explains the methods, used in the study including presentation of the research design.

3.1 Research Design

The research study attempts to analyze the consumer purchase decision process in life insurance policy. The study has objective to describe the process. It also tends to analyze the changing behavior caused by different marketing situation. So the research design is descriptive as well as analytical rather than experimental. It can be called a survey or a field study as it studies the relation among the attitudes, values, beliefs, perception and behaviors of individuals and groups in a purchase situation. Being descriptive study it identifies problems or justifies current marketing conditions and practices. Being a conclusive study, it clarifies the characteristics of phenomena in relation to certain conclusion. The study process is very concerned on the validity and accuracy in every part.

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The population for this study comprised all the insured clients belongs to different demographical, psychological values and affiliated to different companies. It includes all the policy holder of life insurance category. The nature of population is physical i.e. people. Katmandu valley is taken as the place, where sample is issued. But the selected insured clients might come from different geography. One hundred insured peoples are selected as a sample judgmentally. Judgmental sampling method may quit appropriate for the study because it needs to be a kind of sample, which represents the whole population. It is just avoiding a risk of selecting a sample of same demography. To make findings more useful for the whole life insurance market, the sample is comprised of the clients from five life insurance companies equally representing twenty.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

The sources of data are life insurance clients, who are selected as sample. Because of the nature of research as it is based on consumer, and lack of secondary sources of data, the research was only based on primary data as no research was done previously in this topic. Same kind of questionnaire sheet is given to all hundred people each. The nature of questionnaire sheet is self-administered. The questionnaire is designed for collection of basic and useful data. After filling the questionnaire sheet, they are interviewed for proofing. LIP clients may have a specific view or behavior (overt and covert) that make easy for describe the situation and finding their value towards their product. Almost all the respondents, who are approached for the questionnaire and interview, readily agreed to respond. So, the questionnaire and interview techniques are assumed as sufficient for collection of related data. The study is totally based on consumer research. Consumers' attitudes, beliefs, perception imagery all are considered during the data collection procedure. Here, the responses given by the incumbents are assumed confidential. Every respondent has been visited home or office or everywhere. No telephone and mail are used to communication because of difficulties and problems of clear understanding.

CHAPTER -IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Respondents' Profile

Structured questionnaire sheets were prepared and distributed to one hundred respondents. All of them were educated and were residing at Katmandu Valley in the study period. Out of the total respondents, every twenty were from each of the five companies. The demographic profiles of the respondents are presented next, in the table and graphs.

Table 4.1 presents demographic profile of respondent. Out of one hundred respondents 83% were male and 17% were female; 71% married and 29% unmarried; 48% were possessed monthly income below ten thousands, 37% were possessed between ten to twenty thousands, and 15% were possessed monthly income above twenty thousands. The table clarifies that most of the respondents were married. Male were more than female. Most of the respondents possessed lower medium income. It is also presented in the following diagram with individual company figure.

The figure 4.1 clarifies that more respondents possessed monthly income above twenty thousands fall on ALICO and more respondents possessed below ten thousands fall on NLIC.

Figure 4.1

Monthly Income of Respondents

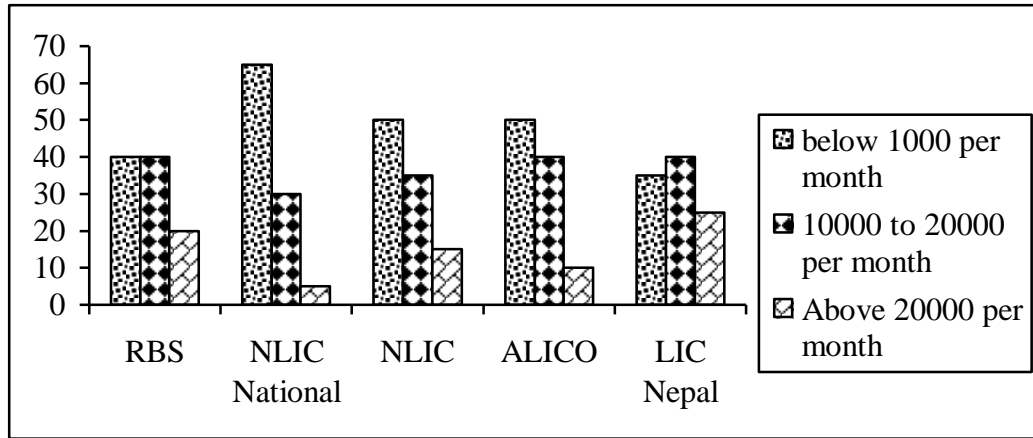


Table 4.1

Demographic profile Companies	Sex				Marital Status				Monthly Income ('000')					
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Married	Percentage	Unmarried	Percentage	Below 10	Percentage	Between 10-20	Percentage	Above 20	Percentage
RBS	19	95%	1	5%	13	65%	7	35%	8	40%	8	40%	4	20%
NLIC (National)	18	90%	2	10%	16	80%	4	20%	13	65%	6	30%	1	5%
NLIC	15	75%	5	25%	16	80%	4	20%	10	50%	7	35%	3	15%
ALICO	14	70%	6	30%	13	65%	7	35%	7	35%	8	40%	5	25%
LIC (Nepal)	17	85%	3	15%	13	65%	7	35%	10	50%	8	40%	2	10%
Total	83	83%	17	17%	71	71%	29	29%	48	48%	37	37%	15	15%

Respondents' Profile

Source: Field Survey, 2009

4.2 Problems Recognition

All the respondents sampled in the study were life insurance clients, who exhibit generally high involvement behavior in purchase process. So they usually go through the process of problem recognition. In this process different steps are involved, which are presented below.

4.2.1 Need Awareness

In the case of LIP, a general conception is that consumers rarely realize the need unless something hits their mind. They are believed to become aware of their need of LIP through social trend, agent offer, self-thinking, advertisement, relative/friends' suggestions, and family recommendations, which are taken as variable for analysis.

Table 4.2
Need Awareness

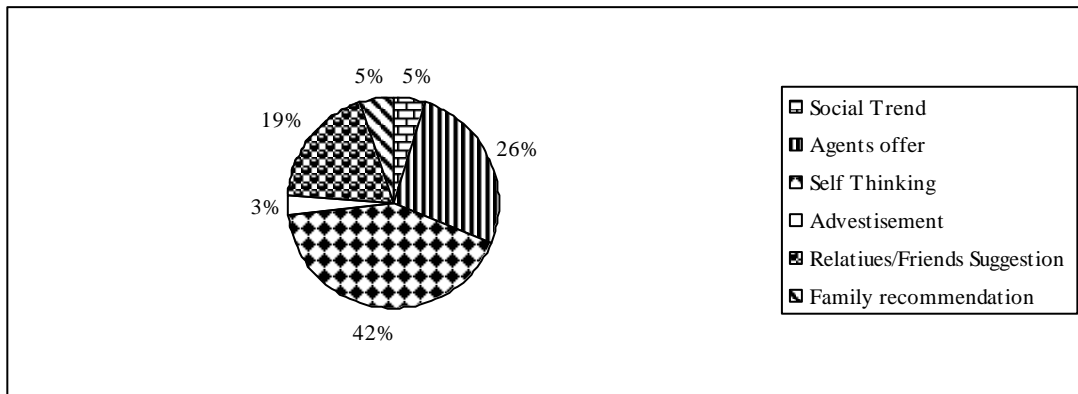
Need Awareness Sours	Numbers	Percentages
Social Trend	5	5
Agents offer	26	26
Self Thinking	42	42
Advertisement	3	3
Relatives/friends' suggestions	19	19
Family recommendation	5	5
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The table 4.2 presents needs awareness sources of the respondents. As in the table, 5% of the respondents were aware of their need of LIP through social trend, and similarly, 26% through agent's offer; 42% through self- thinking; 3% through the advertisements; 19% through relative/friends' suggestions; and again 5% of the respondents through family recommendations. It is also presented in the pie chart below.

Figure 4.2

Need Awareness



The data clearly indicates that large group of customers were aware of their need through self-thinking. This is the sign of consciousness of Nepalese consumers toward the LIP. Agent’s offer and relative/friends’ suggestions also had significant contribution to make aware to the customers. Very few were access to advertisement.

4.2.2 Importance of the Need

Importance of the need is assumed as the indicator of level of motivation to solve particular problem or need. Consumers were asked of their importance of LIP. And the responses are tabulated here.

Table 4.3
Importance of the Need

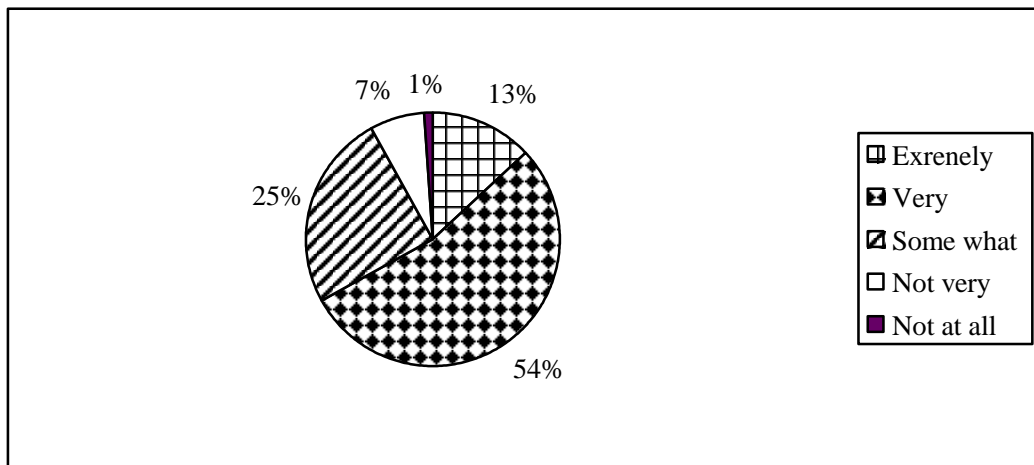
Importance	Numbers (a)	Descent age Percentage	Rating (b)	Score (a × b)
Extremely	13	13	1	13
Very	55	55	2	110
Some what	25	25	3	75
Not very	7	7	4	28
Not at all	0	0	5	0
Total	100	100		226

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The table 4.3 presents the importance of the need of LIP of hundred respondents. As in the table, 13% of the respondents perceived the need as extremely important, and similarly, 55% perceived as very important; 25% perceived as somewhat important; 7% perceived as not very important; and none of the respondents perceived as not at all important. This is presented in the figure below.

Figure 4.3

Importance of the Need



However the score summated by the weight given by the researcher, the variable very important gained the most score i.e. 110, which can be considered as the responses of the most customers. Similarly, somewhat important got 75; not very important got 28; extremely importantly got 13, and not at all important got 1 percent of the score.

This frequency clarifies that most of the life insurance customer perceived their need as very important before purchase. It is a sign that they had higher intensity to solve the problem. A significant number of customers expressed their intensity in the medium level.

Customers perceived the need as extremely important because of higher expectation over the product (scheme). Greater understanding was another factor to contribute the above statement to some extent. None of the customers purchased the product without

importance. But some purchased the product from other pressure like family, friends, relatives, and agent.

4.2.3 Need Arousal

Consumers may have problem recognition triggered in three ways: by the actual state changing, by the desired state changing, or by combination of both changing.

Thus for some consumers problem recognition is triggered mainly by a change in the desired state (DS type) and for others a problem would rarely be recognized unless their actual state changed (AS type). The respondents were asked about the cause of need of LIP, which are presented in the table below:

Table 4.4

Reasons of Need Arousal

Reasons of Need	Numbers	Percentages
For saving scheme and Security	30	30%
For certain financial future	45	45%
Both	25	25%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Table 4.4 presents the reasons for necessity of LIP. As in the table 30% of the respondents said that they needed LIP because they didn't have any such type of saving scheme or they needed to save tax. Secondly, 45% of the respondents said that they needed LIP because they wanted a certain financial future. Thirdly, 25% of the respondents said both. The pie chart below presented the data too.

CHAPTER - V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Life insurance is an economic system for reducing risk through a legal method as a contract of indemnity. Thus it is a contract by which the insurer, for the certain sum of money, will pay the sum specified to the person in whose favor such policy is granted. Life insurance has been in existing in Nepal since 2029 B.S. Marketing trend and consumer behavior in consumption and purchase decision of LIP has changed over time. In the study period, there were five companies to compete in the market such as: RBS, NLIC National, NLIC, ALICO, and LIC Nepal. In order to market their LIP effectively, they have to develop new sense of marketing like Customer Relationship Marketing and quality strategy, which is possible through understanding consumer behavior in the purchase process of the product. Thus, the whole study centered on the consumers' purchase process in special reference to LIP. In a high involvement product like life insurance policy, they tend to go through need recognition, search, evaluation, purchase decision, and post purchase outcomes.

In the chapter II, different model of consumer behavior are studied along with the components of high involvement purchase decision process. Few researches in the area of consumer behavior in Nepal were also included.

The collected data from the questionnaire and interview were presented, analyzed and interpreted by using statistical tools in chapter IV.

According to the findings of the study, most of the LIP clients were aware of their need of LIP through self-thinking. They had high intensity to solve the problem. Most of them were influenced by desired state of mind. Their problem type was planning. Changing environmental circumstances and financial sources influenced to the need recognition. Ongoing search was their best strategy. The motivating factors for the

search for information were perceived risk and social/financial pressure. In the search period they give high importance to the reliability/belief. Personal sources were the best information sources. For the evaluation of alternative the most important criteria was reliability, while the bonus was the determinant factor. Customers had fewer awareness set and consequently evoked set. Mostly use CPA methods for evaluation. Mostly purchased the product through agent. Few customers had loyalty pattern in the more purchase. Mostly customers did not know about Internet for their service. Mostly had lower expectation, however, considerable group also had higher expectation. They faced very low cognitive dissonance. And mostly were satisfied with the product.

5.2 Conclusion

LIP is the consumers' high involvement product. Their purchase process starts from need recognition and passes through information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and the post purchase behavior. But life insurance customers have different kind of behavior when they are in the process. It is because of the nature of the product.

At the problem recognition stage, customers realized the need through self-thinking, agent's offer, and relative/friends' suggestion. Some few customers realized the need through social trend, family recommendation, and advertisement too. Advertisement is the major sources to communicate the existence of product, but in the case of LIP it was not made for that purpose perfectly. The need of LIP was important to customers before purchase. They had higher intensity to solve the problem. Customers took the need as extremely important because of higher expectation over the product. Customers needed LIP for the certain financial future. They were heavily influenced by the desired state of mind in need arousal process, while some were by actual state, and others were by changing both. Many customers made plan long-term & short-term plan about the purchase. Changing family structure and changing income influenced them to do insurance.

After the need recognition, life insurance customers move to information search. But their searches were based on two purposes: to make better purchase (pre-purchase search) and to build a bank of information for future use (ongoing search). Slightly

majority of customers were ongoing type customers learned about LIP mostly through study (book/company brochure), reference group, and agent. This indicates three estimations: customers have become conscious, LIP has become essential according to society, and agent is the detail information provider. Most of the clients were risk averter as perceived risk was their motivation factor. For information search, they were skeptic about monetary risk, functional risk, social risk, and psychological risk associated with the product. Individual differences had no impact on search process. Individual differences had no impact on search process. Reliability/belief was the characteristic that stimulates the most customers the feeling of curiosity. They wanted to examine the validity. Premium was not considered characteristic, which had not impact on choice. Most customers used personal sources as reliable information sources. They had less amount of information in their memory. For the amount of information agent was preferred.

On the basis of total knowledge from the information search, life insurance clients select the important criteria for evaluation of available alternatives. Reliability, risk cover, bonus and financial benefits were important criteria but the determinant criteria for evaluation was bonus as many customers perceived differences among competitive brands. However, reliability, premium, and scheme might be determinant to some extent. The customers had few evoked set for the evaluation. They did not have acquaintances to all companies. They mostly used CPA method for evaluation. Even at the evaluation stage customers had less knowledge about LIP. Only few clients were well informed about the product.

Most of customer purchases the LIP through agent. The majority of sale is in the hand of agent. Customers association with the agent was strong, bounded with belief and responsibility. At the purchase period most customers would expect good personnel with hospitality, up to date information increased convenience, and complaint offices. Some would also expect deep relationship with the company so that company should behave them as special member. These factors have a psychological impact on purchase decision. But customers did not felt any persuasive situation to purchase the product beside few exceptional cases like as agent's pressure, relatives' pressure, tax saving, and fear of risk. Few life insurance clients had company loyalty, average and unstable loyalty and more had no loyalty behavior in the purchasing pattern. Clients

thought a considerable loyalty in a company, while many others thought the different scheme and financial benefits in the other companies. Majority of customers had conservative behavior and change may be difficult so that they did not think about internet for purchase and payment. Only one third were evolving in nature.

Life insurance customer rethinks his purchase decision in the post-purchase stage. Their prior expectation, personality, and cognitive dissonance are strongly associated with this stage. Most of the customers were family lover and had lower expectation, which ought to confirm. Another majority of customers were self-lover and had higher expectation, which result the situation of disconfirmation. Some were extravagant in nature and wanted the product for forced-saving characteristic, which may be the state of lower expectation and leads to positive disconfirmation. Very few had affiliated personality. Customers having almost absence of cognitive dissonance were more than customers having absolute consonance to the purchase decision. Although very few had cognitive dissonance, customers need something extra favorable to support the buying decision. Customers who felt confirmed their prior expectations were fully satisfied, who moderately confirmed were only satisfied, and who confirmed less was average. Male, married and respondents with high income were more satisfied than women, unmarried, and with low income respectively.

Finally, it can be concluded that the international model of consumer behavior, discussed in literature review, did not perfectly satisfied with Nepalese life insurance consumer behavior. Especially, customers realized the post purchase outcomes before the real consumption of the product. Consumers tend to feel expectation confirmation/disconfirmation and satisfaction/dissatisfaction after the greater understanding about the product and the company. The nature of product that takes the gap of long time period for the consumption makes it realistic.

5.3 Recommendations

For the life insurance policy, customers are the key factors of the all marketing programs and efforts. Marketing program and structure should be directed as the behavior of the consumers. Based on the research findings of the life insurance customers, following suggestion and recommendations can be made:

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