Chapter 3

An Overview of Toys Market and Consumer Behaviour
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The origin of the word “toy” is unknown, but it is believed that it was first used in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century. Toy is an object for a child to play with, typically a model or miniature replica of something\textsuperscript{59}.

\textit{Encyclopedia Britannica\textsuperscript{60} indicates that Toy is a plaything for a child. Playthings to engage one's fantasies and stimulate the imagination, to build with and to learn from, to provide companionship and pleasure in otherwise tedious hours—toys are all of these and more. For infants they are an eye catching diversion, and for older children they often serve as miniature representations of the adult world. For collectors and hobbyists toys are treasured historical objects. In the economies of many nations, the manufacture and sale of toys have become highly profitable.}

Toys are usually associated with children and pets, but it is not unusual for adult humans and some non-domesticated animals to play with toys. Toys and plays have gained greater importance in the world of grown ups also. The young ones play with toys to discover their identity and to help their bodies grow strong, learn cause and effect, explore relationships and practice skills they need as adults. The adults use toys and plays to form and strengthen social bonds, teach the young ones to remember and

\textsuperscript{59} The New Oxford Dictionary of English

reinforce lessons from their own youth, exercise their minds and bodies, practice skills which they may not use everyday, and decorate their living spaces. Toys are more than means of simple amusement; and their use profoundly influences most aspects of life. Toys enhance cognitive behaviour and stimulate creativity. They aid in the development of physical and mental skills which are necessary in later life. Toys develop hand-eye coordination, mathematical ability, science skills and also develop the creative skill.

3.1 Brief History of the Toys

Toys have a history as old as human civilization itself. Toys and games have been unearthed from the sites of ancient civilizations. Toys excavated from the Indus valley civilization (3000-1500BC) include small carts, whistles shaped like birds, and toy monkeys which could slide down a string. The earliest toys were made from materials found in nature such as rocks, sticks and clay. Thousands of years back, Egyptian children played with dolls that had wings and movable limbs which were made from stone, pottery and wood. In ancient Greece and ancient Rome, children played with dolls made of wax or terra cotta, sticks, bows and arrows and yo-yos. When Greek children, especially girls, came of age it was customary for them to sacrifice the toys of their childhood to the Gods. On the eve of their wedding, young girls around fourteen would offer their
dolls in a temple as a rite of passage into adulthood.\textsuperscript{61,62} No dolls have survived from prehistoric times, although a fragment of an alabaster doll with movable arms from the Babylonian period was recovered. Dolls constructed of flat pieces of wood, painted with various designs and with "hair" made of strings of clay or wooden beads, have often been found in Egyptian graves dating back to 2000 BC. Egyptian tombs of wealthy families contained pottery dolls. Dolls placed in these graves lead some to believe that they were cherished possessions. Dolls were also buried in Greek and Roman children's graves. Most ancient dolls that were found in children's tombs were very simple creations, often made from such materials as clay, rags, wood, or bone. Some of the more unique dolls were made with ivory or wax. The main goal was to make the doll as "lifelike" as possible. That ideal led to the creation of dolls with movable limbs and removable garments, dating back to 600 B.C. Following the era of the ancient dolls, Europe became a major hub for doll production. These dolls were primarily made of wood. The Grodnertal area of Germany produced many peg wooden dolls, a type of doll that had very simple peg joints and resembled a cloth spin. An alternative to wood was developed in the 1800s. Composition is a collective term for mixtures of pulped wood or paper that were used to make doll heads and bodies. These mixtures were moulded

under pressure, creating a durable doll that could be mass produced. Manufacturers closely guarded the recipes of their mixtures, sometimes using strange ingredients like ash or eggshells. Papier-mache, a type of composition, was one of the most popular mixtures used.

Archaeological evidence suggests that they are the same kinds of things today's children use in their play. Centuries ago, Roman, Babylonian, Greek and Egyptian children had balls, rattles, dolls, toy animals, hoops, kites, marbles, stilts and tops. Some had dominoes and checkers. New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art has an Egyptian rattle in its collection. Estimated to be over 2000 years old, it is shaped like a cow, with some stones inside. Other toys from this same period have been found: a baker kneading bread, a crocodile snapping its jaws, and a dog with a moving jaw and tail. Many early toy like objects- such as dolls and animals- were closely related to religious observances. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between these and the real toys of children’s play. The oldest clearly identified toys were unearthed from the site of a 3300 year-old temple in Iran. These small, carved, limestone figures of a lion and a porcupine were mounted on wheeled platforms and pulled along by a string. An even more remarkable early discovery was a crude doll with movable arms and legs, which kneaded bread or ground corn when a string was pulled. Before the arrival of the white man in America, native children played with cornhusk dolls, small bows and
arrows, and leather balls stuffed with feathers. In 1585 the members of the Roanoke Expedition brought dolls in Elizabethan dress for the children they expected to find in the new country.

In addition to wooden dolls, wax dolls were popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. Wax modelers would model a doll head in wax or clay, and then use plaster to create a mould from the head. Then they would pour melted wax into the cast. The wax for the head would be very thin, not more than 3 mm. One of the first dolls that portrayed a baby was made in England from wax in the beginning of the 19th century. The first speaking dolls were made in 1820s by the French man Johann Maelzel, the inventor of the metronome for the piano. Early pictures of children with actual "baby" dolls in their arms did not appear until the 1820s. By 1823, Maelzel displayed dolls that said "Maman" when their left hands were raised to shoulder level and "Papa" when their right hands were raised. Maelzel took out a patent in 1834. Dolls with moving eyes first appeared in England in about 1825. The eyes opened and shut by means of a wire coming out of the body at the waist line, easily concealed by the voluminous dresses of the period.

The oldest known mechanical puzzle came from Greece and appeared in the 3rd century BC. The game consists of a square divided into 14 parts, and the aim was to create different shapes from these pieces. In Iran, “puzzle-locks” were made as early as the 17th century AD; and in a
1742 Japanese Book, there was mention of a game called “Sei Shona-gon Chie No-Ita”. Around the year 1800, the Tangram puzzle from China became popular; and 20 years later, it had spread through Europe and America. Cardboard puzzles were first introduced in the late 1800s, and were primarily used for children's puzzles. The idea caught on and, until about 1820, jigsaw puzzles remained educational tools. Decades later the popularity of puzzles soared and in the early 1900s, both wooden and cardboard jigsaw puzzles were available. Pastime puzzles were so successful that Parker Brothers stopped making games and devoted their entire factory to puzzle production in 1909. The popularity of jigsaw puzzles has waxed and waned since the Depression. One strategy was to make cardboard puzzles more intricate and difficult, thus appealing as much to adults as to children. Experimentation with pop-up figure pieces led to three-dimensional puzzles such as a freestanding carousel.

In the case of Mechanical toys, they were known as early as the third century BC; and in the first century AD, the Roman writer Petronius referred to a silver doll which could move like a human being. In India and Arabia, moving dolls and mechanical birds were known in medieval times. These were displayed at European fairs and most of the average population saw such things as mysterious and with suspicion. Medieval and the pre-medieval history of Europe reveal that moving images of one sort or the other were constantly billed as novel attractions at fairs. In 1509 Leonardo
da Vinci made a mechanical lion walk through a long hall and place a
deur-de-lis at the feet of the king Louis XII as a present. In 1632 King
Gustavus Adolphus received an extremely expensive cabinet in which two
lavishly dressed dolls danced together. In the 17th century Louis XIV was
given a richly decorated miniature carriage that had horses and servants.
When the carriage travelled the length of a table and stopped in front of the
king, a little doll got out and courtseyed, presented a petition, returned to
the carriage, and drove off again. In 1880s, small steam engines were used
to power miniature fire engines, locomotives and boats. American
clockwork toys (dancing figures, trains, steamboats) are memorable from
the late 19th century; and some of them were made with actual clock
mechanisms. The centre of the clock making industry was primarily in the
North East, where the production lasted for 30 years only, as the
manufacture was expensive at around 2.50 to 4.50 dollars each. George
Brown and E. R. Ives were both from Connecticut and were the principal
makers of this. These were activated by a key-wound spring that operated
levers and rods connected to the movable parts. Some could work for up to
thirty minutes. Heavy gauge brass gears were added to make parts run at
different speeds.

There are two types of non-clockwork mechanical toys: spring
driven and friction activated. Spring driven became popular after World
War I. In cars and other vehicles, the spring is wound by a key. These toys
have cheap stamped tinplate gears instead of the heavy gauge brass ones; and it runs for only two or three minutes. Friction toys are wheeled toys operated by a central inertia wheel called a friction wheel. American ones have a heavy cast iron friction wheel, which is activated by spinning the rear wheels against a surface. When the toy is then placed on the ground, the friction wheel provides momentum to the ordinary wheel(s).

Wars caused problems for toy producers. Production was hampered, and sometimes ceased altogether, as a result of shortages of both materials and labour. World Wars I and II were particularly disruptive, with many toy manufacturers converting all production to war materials. During the First World War, there was a ban on German imports and British soft toy firms flourished.

Chad Valley set up their soft toy division in 1920s and Merrythoughts began production in the year 1930. The introduction of new materials such as artificial silk, rayon plush and velveteen saw a change in design and production. During the 1940s toys were scarce and mostly made at homes from scraps of materials. Wool was rationed and often garments were unravelled and re-used to knit toys. The post-war period saw the introduction of man-made fabrics, such as nylon and polyester. More attention was given to hygiene and safety as British Safety Standards were introduced then. Glass eyes on toys were replaced by plastic ones which were made safer by the locking system introduced by Wendy Boston.
Playsafe Toys. Following World War II, toy production gradually changed. New toys, particularly space toys with plastic parts such as robots and rocket ships, became extremely popular. Most of these were made in Japan, where electrical and battery-operated toys had gradually replaced those animated by spring-driven motors. The advent of the Industrial Revolution changed both the character of the toys and the ability of the workers to manufacture them in larger quantities. Native materials such as wood, straw and stone were rapidly displaced by iron and tinplate. Children were able to acquire manufactured toys at reasonable prices instead of having to make their own, a trend that accelerated both factory production and distribution systems. Toys also became more and more sophisticated. By the end of the 19th century, construction toys were appearing. The early twentieth century saw great popularity for electric trains and other powered mechanical toys.

In the early years of the 20th century, Germany was the leading producer of tin toys. German tin toys were innovative and well made and they dominated the market up to the outbreak of World War II.

In 1950s and early 1960s, the Japanese had flooded the market with many appealingly designed tin toys and a large percentage of them were aimed at the USA with items familiar to Americans. But despite tin toy popularity in the post-war era, tin toy manufacturing faced increasing difficulties. They included changing consumer demands, new safety
regulations and competition from plastic toy makers. By 1970s, Japan had reduced the tin toy output so dramatically that many factories had ceased production altogether. After the decline of Japanese tin toy manufacturing, China assumed the role of the leading tin toy maker in the world. Early Chinese toys were noted for their cheap prices, which often reflected in their quality. Nowadays they are made to a much higher standard, yet retain the edge of being very affordable. China produces a very wide range of tin toys in the market each year.

In 1902, Morris Michtom of Brooklyn’s Ideal Toy Company introduced the stuffed “teddy bear” which was in production ever since; and it was picked up by a variety of other companies. Another enduring stuffed toy hit the markets in 1915 when Johnny Gruelle introduced Raggedy Ann. The age of movie/toy tie-ins arrived in 1928 when Walt Disney created the animated Mickey Mouse in a Cartoon and stuffed Mickeys were available in the market accompanied by his animated sidekicks Donald Duck, Goofy and the rest.

The great depression of the 1930s saw families seeking durable games they could play together. This phenomenon once again revolutionized toy industry was after world war II(1939-1945). The introduction of plastic toys and Polystyrene plastic was first occurred in 1927; and the period of 1940-1960s is now considered as the "Golden Age Of Battery Operated Toys".
Television and movie tie-ins created new toys market in the 1950s. Disney's *Mickey Mouse Club* spurred a demand for mouse-ear hats, as did Disney's *Davy Crockett* series for coonskin caps. Disney's *Zorro* encouraged little boys to ask for black plastic swords tipped with chalk so that they could slash a "Z" on sidewalks, trees, and buildings.

Toy cars had long been around. Jack Odell introduced finely crafted miniatures called Matchbox Cars in 1952, and Tonka trucks in 1957; and the cars hit the market. Tonkas, the larger-scale, metal vehicles with free-rolling wheels, were virtually indestructible. Mattel revolutionized the market once again in 1966 with the introduction of Hot Wheels. The cars had low-friction wheels and used gravity to speed them down on the strips of yellow track that boys could attach to tabletops and then run, down to the floor.

In 1952, the Hassenfeld Brothers—Hasbro—of Providence, Rhode Island, introduced an unlikely toy: plastic eyes, noses, ears, and lips that kids could stick into potatoes and other vegetables or fruits. Hasbro called the odd toy Mr. Potato Head, and it quickly caught on. In the 1960s, Hasbro marketed Mr. Potato Head with plastic potatoes, and even plastic carrots, green peppers, and french fries. A Mrs. Potato Head appeared, but the spuds lost their appeal by 1970s. In 1995, however, Pixar's movie *Toy Story* repopularized Mr. Potato Head.
In 1959, Mattel introduced Barbie, the most popular plastic doll of all time. Mattel engineered a marketing coup with Barbie, by offering not only the doll but a range of accessories as well. Changes of clothes, purses, gloves, shoes—no Barbie was complete without a decent wardrobe, and a Barbie box to carry it in. Soon Barbie had a boyfriend, Ken, and a sister, Skipper.

In 1965, Hasbro took the social risk of introducing a doll for boys—G.I. Joe. In reality, Joe arrived in a year when the United States was celebrating the twentieth anniversary of its victory in World War II. Joe represented a time before the Cold War when Americans were victorious in the battlefield.

In 1970, Hasbro began marketing Joes as the "Adventure Team." Bewhiskered Joes drove All-Terrain Vehicles instead of Jeeps, and hunted for stolen mummies and white tigers. Joe became anemic as the United States began to doubt itself in the battlefield. By mid-1970s, Joe had faded away. He returned, however, as a smaller action figure in the early 1980s to battle with an elite group of terrorists known as Cobra. In the late 1990s, Hasbro returned the original G.I. Joe to the markets. The target audience was grown-up baby boomers who once played with the original.

The release of George Lucas's Star Wars in 1977 brought new interest in miniature play figures, popularly called "action figures". In 1980s, virtually every kid-oriented movie from E.T. to Beetlejuice had
action figure/toy tie-ins. The 1980s also saw reverse tie-ins, when toy manufacturers contracted animation studios to produce cartoons to support toys. He-Man, She-Ra, G.I. Joe, and Teenage-Mutant Ninja Turtles capitalized on such marketing strategy.

In the twenty-first century, children are playing with dolls and doll houses, stuffed animal cars, and trucks. Toys have always imitated life, and they continue to do so. Ancient toys were made from wood, metal, ivory, ceramics, or cloth. Many modern toys are still using these materials, but the most used material in today's toy is plastic. The changes in material are clothes, fiber and synthetic items. Many toys are operated on batteries, and some others are operated by remote control. Dolls are able to speak, while trucks and cars make most of the noises that real trucks and cars make. The use of transistors and other electronic components has made it possible to manufacture toys that are comparable in everything but size, and function to their adult-size counterparts. Some toys have, in fact, become so complex that it takes an adult to operate them or at least to teach the child what they are all about. A wider choice of materials and electronic components made it possible to make toys that are exact miniature replicas of larger objects. While technology has made possible great improvements in toy making, it has also led to the development of toys that were unthinkable in previous centuries. These new toys are a reflection of the strides, the technology has taken since the 19th century. More recent
technology has led to the development of computers, robots, and spaceships; all of these have their replicas in toy departments. Each new weapon advanced by the military is also soon duplicated by the toy manufacturer. Toys are advertised in television and movie, resulting in creation of new toys market in the World. Super heroes from popular toy-based television series and blockbuster movies such as Pokemon and star wars dominate modern children’s toy lines. Pokemon soft toys are Japanese creation that has successfully captivated children all over the globe. The craze for Pokemon soft toys began in 1996. On the heels of the successful Pokemon computer game, came other Pokemon merchandise: Pokemon trading cards, Pokemon soft toys, Pokemon plastic dolls, animated Pokemon television shows, Pokemon comics and Pokemon movies. Pokemon are special creatures who possess unique powers or special abilities. In the world of Pokemon, human beings act as Pokemon trainers and catch as many of the pokemon creatures as they can. The Pokemon soft toys are dexterously crafted displaying the Pokemon with its unique features and characteristics. The Pokemon soft toys serve as wonderful gifts on the occasion of kids’ birthdays and other festive occasions. The craze for Pokemon soft toys first spread all across Japan and then it became a craze among the kids across the world. By 2006, benefiting from economies of scale and cheap labour, the Chinese toy industry had come to dominate the global market for toys, accounting for
around 75% of the world's output. However, in 2006-07, the Chinese toy industry faced a series of product recalls, adversely affecting its global image.

Children play with toys and learn about the world. A toy may mean different to children of different age groups; and hence, exposure pathways also differ accordingly.

According to the NPD survey, the usage of toys by the children of different age groups between 0-14 has been increasing steadily from 2004. They compare the population of the children of the age group 0-4 to other age groups like 5-9 and 10-14 years; and observe that the usage of toys in the age group of 0-4 years will increase more than the other groups by the year 2011. The kids’ population of the age group of 0-4 years is expected to reach 635.213 million by 2011. This offers wide opportunity for the toy manufactures around the world. The Kids’ population growth is shown in the Fig: 3.1.
Toys market is expanding globally due to the increase of kids population in the world especially toddlers, giving great opportunity to the toy Industry to sell the various toys globally.

3.2 Role of toys in Child development

Toy play is universal. Children of every culture engage in play; anthropologists have found evidence of toys dating as far back as there is record of human life. Though play differs from culture to culture, generation to generation, it is clearly an instinctual, essential part of growing up. While play has existed since ancient times, only recently play
with toys has come to be appreciated for its importance in a child’s development. Playing is one of the best experiences that children enjoy. It serves as one of the fundamental tools needed in their early development. An educational toy plays an important role in the development of children in as much as it gives opportunity for children to play with one another. It also helps them to have public exposure. Experts consider that, through toy play, children develop the physical, mental, social, emotional and creative skills needed for life. The main benefit of the toy play is the encouragement of positive play experiences of the children.

Toys play an integral part in this learning process; and a variety of well chosen toys help towards each child’s individual development. As children grow and develop, their needs will change with their age and with their differing abilities and interests. Toys and Games area include manipulative, puzzles, collectibles, matching games and other games that children can play at a table, on the floor, or on top of a divider shelf. These materials offer children a quiet activity that they can do alone, with a friend, with a teacher or a parent volunteer, or with a small group. Children strengthen all areas of their development as they play with toys and games. The various developments facilitated by play with toys are given below:
3.2:1 Social/emotional development

Playing with toys is the best way to help the child to adjust in living in the society. Social development is one of the developmental areas of the whole child. The area of social development encompasses self-discipline, empathy, cooperation and sharing. In play, the child expresses the ideas without any restrictions and disapprovals among the group. Children learn to cooperate with one another by sharing and taking turns as they play a game or build an intricate design. Toy play develops a child’s personality, helps them to realize their potential and to experience the satisfaction of success. Toy play is also integral to help a child manage emotions, develop values and understand and interpret the world around them.

3.2:2 Physical development

Coloring, cutting with child-sized scissors and playing with toys such as peg boards or dressing dolls are just a few ways by which children develop small muscle coordination and dexterity. Children practice eye-hand coordination while lacing cards or placing pegs in a pegboard. When children string beads or construct with interlocking cubes, they refine small muscle skills. Moreover playing with activity toys enhances the physical development of children.

3.2:3 Cognitive development

Cognitive skills like perception, intuition, and reasoning are developed through play with toys. All of these are important in the process of gaining or
acquiring knowledge with the help of toys. As children build with table blocks or make designs with pattern blocks and parquetry blocks, they experiment with construction and invention and use creative problem-solving skills. They also expand their emerging mathematical skills such as counting, seriation, matching patterning and classification. Studies show that children who are involved in imaginative play are more creative thinkers who become better problem solvers. “Child experts agree that dress-up play not only stimulates imagination, it can also be tracked to improved vocabulary and social skills”63.

3.2:4 Educational development

Children are born with an innate desire to learn, and educational toys help them to their best advantage by encouraging aspects of learning. Educational toys enhance the knowledge of developing concepts, problem solving skills etc. Playing with all types of toys, the child learns the shapes, sizes, colours, textures, numbers and qualities of objects as well as their significance. Exploring, collecting and experimenting with play things furnish the child with information that cannot be obtained by any other means. Playing with educational toys prepares the child for the school education. Construction toys, puzzles and interactive toys with lots of different shapes and sizes are capable of stimulating children’s mental

activity. Role playing with children’s toys helps to develop a child’s imagination and creativity as well as communication skills. Learning to take care of their toys also helps them develop a sense of responsibility, which is very important for success in school and subsequent life.

3.2:5 Moral development

Toy play among children is an important medium for the moral education of the child. Through play, the child is helped to know what is right and wrong. Child can learn to be fair, honest, truthful, self-controlled, a good sport and a good loser. Further more the child learns to play the sex role expected by the society in embodying the socially approved patterns of behavior for his sex group.

3.2:6 Stimulating the imagination and creativity

Toys are the best ones to stimulate the imaginations of children. Everything is a wonderful new experience for children. Toys like crayons, blocks, construction toys etc. are assorted tools for creative growth. Creative toys at an early age help to bring a child’s natural curiosity to the surface, and help him to explore to find things. Kids love to imitate the adults holding tea parties, grocery shopping, cooking and making house. Role playing toys play an important activity and develop creativity.

3.2:7 Interactive plays

Toys that encourage interaction are especially beneficial in that they have the added benefit of encouraging children's social development. An
important area of child development is learning how to interact with other people, and there are interactive toys and games that help to build these relationship skills from an early age. The ability of children is to form and strengthen relationships of people with the toys play. Parents make every effort to play directly with their children and to encourage interaction with other children through playgroups or neighbourhood get-togethers.

### 3.2:8 Scientific and technological development

As kids move into middle childhood, they can benefit from toys that encourage learning through scientific experimentation. Chemistry sets, microscopes, telescopes, and digital building tools all help to promote strong thinking skills. Kids who begin building simple model cars and advance to assembling small motors for their vehicles are expanding their base of knowledge while encouraging their individual interests.

Choosing toys for the children is a difficult decision for parents and relatives; particularly if the child has disability, it becomes a more difficult task.

### 3.2:9 Visual disabilities

Children with visual impairments enjoy with toys that make sounds, vibration, and interesting textures and surfaces that provide sensory stimulation. Toys may be marked tactually with glue, plastic paste, tape (colored tape can provide contrast), velcro dots, or adhesive braille labels. Toys that emit light are a good choice. Also, children with moderate visual
impairments can enjoy toys that include bright lights. Toys made with variety of materials such as stuffed animals, wooden blocks, and plastic cars help to encourage exploration.

3.2:10 Hearing impairments

While many toys are appropriate for children with hearing impairments, these toys include one or more of the following features: lights or visual feedback, volume control, interesting texture or surface, or some other unique feature that make it appropriate for a child with hearing impairment. Examples of action toys for older children include remote control cars and trucks. Toys with intricate parts and designs are better choice for older children. Toys that foster thinking, such as puzzles and shape sorters should also be considered suitable for older children.

3.2:11 Motor disabilities

Children with motor impairments struggle with lack of both gross motor skills such as balancing, jumping, or even running, and fine motor skills like lacing strings through holes or holding a pencil correctly. Children with motor impairments often have trouble in moving their hands, arms, or legs. Toys can be kept within reach by placing them on a tray, cookie sheet, or box lid. Another method is to make a border around toys with pillows. Non-skid materials such as Dycem, Scoot Guard, light weight carpet padding, or rubber pads can be attached to the bottom of the toy or placed underneath the toy. Toys can also be stabilized by adding suction
cups, magnets, or velcro strips. Handles can be added or enlarged with foam curlers, rubber, or plastic coating. Light weight toys that do not require much strength may be easier for children to handle. For children who cannot control arm movements, use unbreakable toys or attach toys to a secure, flat surface with clamps or other means. If the surface slopes, the toy may move out of reach.

3.2:12 Cognitive disabilities

Children with mental impairments often enjoy toys that require only a few steps to work. Toys that may not need to be adapted include magnetized blocks, large crayons, knobbed puzzles with a small number of pieces, and toys that respond to touch or sound. Children can often play with games if the rules are simplified. Cognitive development is the construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem solving and decision-making from the childhood to adulthood. Children playing with the selected toys are reducing the cognitive disabilities to a certain extend.

3.2:13 Learning disabilities

Learning disability is a neurological disorder, and children with learning disabilities will have problem in understanding the meaning of the words other people say to them and they sometimes interchange the meaning of one word with another.
Toys are enhancing critical thinking and ability to make predictions, and understand cause and effect of the problem. Educational toys like Alphabet puzzles, Number puzzles etc can improve the logical reasoning of the child.

3.2:14 Multiple disabilities

For children with multiple disabilities or for children who are unable to move, adapted or specialized toys may be the best choice. A variety of mail order catalogues sell toys for children with disabilities.

All parents want to help their children to reach their full potential, but adults need to remember that kids learn most efficiently when they are relaxed and enjoying themselves. By grilling children and requiring them to memorise lists of facts, they may get a lot of information; but for kids and for grown-ups as well, to really understand how things work, they need to have some hands-on experiences. A right toy for the right child is important for skill development.

3.3 Toys suggested for the various age groups of children

Present day toys market offers almost infinite variety of choices. There are toys for every age of childhood, and there are many varieties for each age. Amid all the varieties, however, there are two features that should not go unnoticed: the differences between the toys for infants, and those for older children. To a large degree, the difference is that many
infants' toys have remained nearly unchanged for centuries, while those for older children are the products of modern technology.

Children of all ages need a well-balanced assortment of toys to contribute to their development and pleasure–like active play, manipulative play, make-believe play and creative play. It is necessary to study the child to know what his or her interests and abilities are, and read the labels to make the right selections. Poorly constructed toys or those made from cheap materials may break easily, leaving sharp edges, wires or pieces that can hurt children. So quality design and construction are important for toys. Toys with proper safety features and that are nonflammable, flame resistant, painted with non-toxic paint, and/or made from washable/ hygienic materials must be selected. Age grading is the determination of the appropriate age of children for whom a toy is intended. Age labeling is the information provided on the packaging for consumers to use as a guide for choosing toys for their children. The Toy Industry Foundation Inc. (TIF)\(^64\) has indicated the age by age guide to help buy toys, which are given below.

3.3:1 Birth to 6 Months

Abilities and Interests

Experts agree that even babies benefit from toys. Infants use their senses to learn about their world. For the first few months of life, babies are unable to grasp objects with their hands, but enjoy exploring with their

ears and eyes. Therefore, toys that make noise or feature high-contrast, black-and-white or brightly coloured images are especially appealing to newborns and young infants. Once infants can reach for objects, they enjoy toys that are textured and safe for mouthing. Remember to avoid dangerous entanglements-toys never should be hung or attached to a crib, playpen, stroller, infant seat or around a child’s neck with elastic, string or ribbon.

**Toy Suggestions**

- Crib gyms*
- Floor gyms
- Activity quilts
- Mobiles*
- Safety mirrors
- Teething toys
- Large, interlocking rings or keys
- Cloth toys
- Soft dolls
- Stuffed animals (with short pile fabric)
- Musical and chime toys
- Rattles

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* Remove when baby is five months old or is able to push up on hands and knees.
3.3:2  6 Months to 1 Year

Abilities and Interests

In the second half of the first year, infants master the motor skills that enable them to play with toys in new and exciting ways. When babies can sit up, they enjoy playthings they can manipulate - to bang, drop, stack, put in and take out and open and shut. Once they can crawl, “cruise” (walk while holding onto furniture) and walk, they enjoy things that move along with them. Toys that show cause and effect are also thrilling at this age.

Toy Suggestions

Balls (1 3/4 inches and larger)
Push-pull toys
Busy boxes
Nesting and stacking toys
Simple shape sorters
Pop-up toys
Soft blocks
Bath toys
Teething toys
Large, interlocking rings or keys
Soft dolls
Stuffed animals (with short pile fabric)
Simple musical instruments
Rattles
Squeeze/squeak toys

Cloth and cardboard picture books

3.3:3  1 to 2 Years

Abilities and Interests

In the second year of life, children are explorers. Fuelled by curiosity and wonder, toddlers also possess the physical skills that make it easy for them to play and learn. A busy toddler needs toys for physical play - walking, climbing, pushing, riding and the ones that encourage experimentation and manipulation. At this age, children imitate adults and enjoy props that help them master life skills.

Toy Suggestions

Balls (1 3/4 inches and larger)

Push-pull toys

Ride-on toys (feet-propelled)

Wagons

Backyard gym equipment (infant swing, small slide, small climbing apparatus)

Nesting and stacking toys

Simple shape sorters

Pop-up toys

Puzzles with knobs (whole-object pieces)

Blocks

Sandbox/sand toys
Wading pool/water toys
Bath toys
Stuffed animals (with short pile fabric)
Dolls
Play vehicles
Kitchen equipment and gadgets
Play household items (telephone, lawn mower, workbench, shopping cart)
Playhouse
Child-sized table and chairs
Non-toxic art supplies (large crayons and coloring books, clay, finger-paints)
Musical instruments
Cardboard picture books, pop-up books

3.3:4  2 to 3 Years

Abilities and Interests

Older toddlers love testing their physical skills -- jumping, climbing, and throwing -- and enjoy toys for active play. This age group also possesses good hand and finger coordination and enjoys putting these skills to work with basic arts and crafts, puppets, blocks and simple puzzles. Imaginative play also begins in the third year.
Toy Suggestions

Balls (1 3/4 inches and larger)

Backyard gym equipment (swing, small slide, small climbing apparatus)

Building blocks and building systems

Blocks with letters and numbers Wading pool/water toys

Puzzles with knobs (whole-object pieces that fit into simple scenes)

Dolls that can be bathed, fed and diapered

Dress-up clothes and accessories

Hand/finger puppets

Play household items (telephone, lawn mower, workbench, shopping cart, kitchen equipment and gadgets)

Non-toxic art supplies (crayons and coloring books, clay, finger-paints, sidewalk chalk)

Child-sized table and chairs

Play scenes (e.g., farm, airport) with figures and accessories

Sandbox/sand toys

Tricycle and helmet

Play vehicles

Wagon

Shape sorters
Playhouse
Storybooks
Stuffed animals

3.3:5  3 to 6 Years

Abilities and Interests

After the age of three, children begin to play actively with each other. Pre-schoolers and kindergartners are masters of make-believe actions. They like to act out grown-up roles and enjoy costumes and props to help them bring their imaginations to life. It is quite common for children of this age to develop strong attachments to favourite toys, expressing feelings to a special doll or teddy bear. Materials of arts and crafts are also popular with children of this age group, who enjoy creating things with their hands.

Toy Suggestions

Tricycle and helmet
Bicycle and helmet
Backyard gym equipment
Construction toys
Lacing and threading sets
Puzzles (10-20 pieces)
Stuffed animals
Dolls and doll clothes
Dress-up clothes and accessories
Props for make-believe play
Play vehicles
Hand/finger puppets
Play scenes with figures and accessories
Cassette/CD player
Non-toxic art supplies (safety scissors, construction paper, crayons)
Simple board games; word and matching games
Storybooks

3.3:6 6 to 9 Years

Abilities and Interests

School-age children enjoy play that requires strategy and skill. Board games, tabletop sports and classic toys like marbles and kites are favourites. Grade-schoolers also enjoy exploring different kinds of grown-up worlds; and like fashion and career dolls and action figures. Children of this age group seek out new information and experience through play and enjoy science, craft and magic kits. In addition, this age group possesses the physical skills and coordination to enjoy junior versions of adult sporting equipment.
**Toy Suggestions**

Complex gym equipment

Bicycle and helmet

Sporting equipment (baseball glove, hockey stick, tennis racket) and protective gear

Simple swimming equipment

Stilts

Ice or roller skates/in-line skates and protective gear

Construction toys

Pogo sticks

Jump ropes

Action figures

Paper dolls

Model kits

Craft kits

Magic sets

Science sets

Art supplies

Tabletop sports

Electronic games

Jigsaw puzzles, including three-dimensional puzzles
Fashion/career dolls
Puppets, marionettes and theaters
Doll houses and furnishings
Video games
Board games
Cassette/CD player
Books (children’s classics, fairytales)

3.3:7  9 to 12 Years

Abilities and Interests

Pre-teenagers begin to develop hobbies and life-long interests and enjoy crafts, model kits, magic sets, advanced construction sets, science kits and sophisticated jigsaw puzzles. Active play finds its expression in team sports. Painting, sculpting, ceramics and other art projects continue to be of interest.

Toy Suggestions

Sports equipment and protective gear
Bicycle and helmet
Ice or roller skates/in-line skates and protective gear
Advanced construction sets
Jigsaw puzzles, including three-dimensional puzzles
Puppets, marionettes and theatres
Remote control vehicles
Model kits
Science kits
Magic sets
Craft and handiwork kits
Art supplies
Playing cards
Board games
Chess, checkers, dominoes and other strategy games
Tabletop sports
Video games
Electronic games
Electric trains
Musical instruments
Books (biography, mystery, Adventure, science fiction)

3.4 Toys Market in India

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world. Its rich traditions embedded in the very core of common Indian man, and its large cultural diversity is well known worldwide. The Indian toy industry is as old as this nation itself, has been nurtured and enriched under this intellectually rich background. Indian toys, manufactured all over the country reflect the Indian
cultural diversity in the range of items manufactured. India manufactures toys from diverse raw materials like, plastic, wood, rubber, metal, textiles etc. This industry is predominantly confined to the sector of Small Scale Industries and is spread all over the country, meeting the local needs of different cultural parts of India. Manufacturing of toys in India, in general, is labour intensive and utilizes the Indian skills of master craftsmanship and creative designing. The Indian toy industry, fuelled by the vast domestic market, has now turned its attention to global markets and is fast gearing up to meet international demands. The strong points of Indian toy industry are skilled workforce, diverse range, focus on innovation and creativity, and emphasis on learning and education. Indian manufacturers are catering to both large and small volume requirements and are exporting to a few of the most developed nations in the world. The main markets for Indian toys are USA, U.K. and Germany.

The Indian market is largely unorganized and the market is very small compared to the population and per capita income. Small Scale nature of business has resulted into low product innovation and low investments in new equipments and technology, which has over all resulted into small market size. The survival of toy business depends on constant innovation. Another reason for the small size market may be the large number of small players and low advertising and marketing efforts due to limited resources.
The volume of toys market in India is estimated at Rs. 2,500 crore\textsuperscript{65}. The market is said to grow at 15% to 20% per annum, which is said to be a sound situation and it is further expected to grow for the next five or six years. The Toy industry is reserved in the Small Sector Industries (SSI) sector, which the government is considering to de-reserve. This will allow the larger companies to make capital investments of over Rs.100 million in the toys industry with or without collaboration with foreign companies. In addition, the formation of a task force by the Department of SSI has proved to be a positive development. Many Toy Associations of India in association with others have started funding the programmes for providing good infrastructure, which at present is very poor compared to China, who has developed strong manufacturing facilities and infrastructure. Funding is also required for improving technology and quality standards. In addition, sufficient amount is required for brand building, which is a challenging task for Indian manufactures in view of the size of the industry. Brand building is an expensive option and needs heavy investment. Returns on investment have to be spread at least over 5 years. Financial strength is required in order to face international competition. So these funding programmes with the help of Associations will definitely prove to be a growing point for the industry. International toy makers like the $3 billion Hasbro's Indian venture Funskool, and the $5.5 billion Mattel have been in India for more than a

\textsuperscript{65} The Hindu, Mar 03, 2009
decade. Mattel has been in India since 1985. The company sells toys under the brand name of Barbie, Hot Wheels, Star Beans etc. The Mattel Company is a $5.5 billion company and their market share in India is around 20% of organized market. According to the Toys Association of India, 90 per cent of the Rs 2,500 crore (Rs 25 billion) toy market is unorganised. That means organised players get a share of only Rs 250 crore (Rs 2.5 billion). In the Indian market, Mattel Inc. (MAT) and Hasbro Inc. (HAS) have less than 40% of the organized market, which the analysts expect to grow at a compound rate of roughly 2% annually. “Any growth rate above inflation will also depend on factors like birth rates”, they said in a report on the traditional toy industry (excluding video games), which had $22.2 billion in retail sales in 2007.

3.5 Toys Market in Kerala

In the modern economy, numerous toys are available in the toys market of Kerala. Unorganised and organised sectors are pumping a large variety of toys as branded and unbranded toys in the market. Brand is an exhaustive term and it includes brand name, brand mark, trademark, logo or other symbol. ‘Brand name’ is that part of the brand which can be vocalized or uttered and is in the form of words, letters, numbers or any combination of the three. A brand is essentially a seller’s promise to consistently deliver a specific set of features, benefits and services to the buyers. The best brands convey a warranty of quality. According to
Kotler\textsuperscript{66}, a brand is much more than just a name and in fact it can convey up to six levels of meaning—attributes, benefits, values, culture, personality, and user. If a company treats a brand only as a name, it misses the point of branding. The challenge in branding is to develop a ‘deep’ set of meanings for the brand. Brand name of retail merchandise is a commonly used extrinsic clue to infer and/or maintain quality perception and can represent an aggregate of information about a product\textsuperscript{67}. Brand images represent the overall perception of the brand and are formed from information about the brand and past experience. The image of a brand is related to attitudes and beliefs about, and preferences for the brand\textsuperscript{68}.

The biggest name in doll manufacturing is Mattel Inc., maker of Barbie, the number one brand, targeted towards girls aged three to seven. Barbie has engaged in various professional roles and has been joined by friends and family. In 1965 she gained her first ethnic friend and, in 1997, a disabled friend. Recognizing some serious competition from a growing collection of ethnic dolls, Mattel introduced an African-American Barbie in 1980; but only the coloring—not the doll’s features—was modified. The company later introduced other ethnic dolls; but these only imitated products already being marketed by minority entrepreneurs. Barbie is not

\textsuperscript{66} Philip Kotler, Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning Implementation and Control, 9\textsuperscript{th} ed. (New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Pvt. Ltd. 1996) p. 443

\textsuperscript{67} Paul Richardson, et al., Extrinsic and Intrinsic Cue Effects on Perceptions of Store Brand Quality, \textit{Journal of Marketing}, Vol. 58, pp. 200

\textsuperscript{68} C. Glenn Walters and Blaise J. Bergiel, Consumer Behaviour (Cincinnati, Ohio: South-Western Publishing Co., 1989) p. 153
the only cause of Mattel's strength in this industry. Through licensing agreements and acquisitions, Mattel has brought under its umbrella such hit dolls and stuffed toys as Cabbage Patch Kids, Tickle Me Elmo and Winnie-the-Pooh. Mattel's closest competitor in the dolls and stuffed toys industry is Hasbro Inc., many of whose products are geared towards boys. Like Mattel, Hasbro has numerous licensing agreements that allow it to offer a variety of brands, including action figures under the Starting Lineup, Star Wars, Batman, Superman, and Pokemon names. In the late 1990s, the company's divisions sold three of the industry's hottest product lines: Teletubbies, Furby, and Pokemon. The Teletubbies plush were offered in many sizes and forms, including an interactive version. The interactive Furby plush toy speaks "Furbish" and other languages and reacts to different conditions. Although Pokemon's most popular product is trading cards, the plush "pocket monsters" are highly demanded as well. Another strong industry player is Ty Inc., maker of Beanie Babies. Several smaller manufacturers produced interactive dolls in 1990s. DSI Toys produced a doll that recited a bedtime prayer. Irwin Toy Ltd. implanted moisture-sensitive switches in its Kissy Kissy Baby doll that activated when kissed, causing the doll to kiss and giggle.

Funskool created in 1987 is a joint venture between the World's largest toy manufacturer Hasbro and the Indian tyre major MRF. While Funskool leads in board game segment, the players like Mattel and Lego
leads in the building blocks and dolls segment. Mattel with its Barbie rules the premium end of the Dolls segment. Soft toys is another segment that is growing fast and gaining popularity. Hanung Toys is a major player in this segment. Funskool has a marketshare of around 25% in the branded segment.

Kerala State Council for Child Welfare headquarters has collected more than 2500 dolls and exhibited in a museum at Thycud in Thiruvanthapuram. Toy manufactures usually have their own brands and designs. Currently, major toy manufacturers in Kerala are Mattel Inc. (Barbie dolls, Hot Wheels die-cast toy vehicles, Cabbage Patch Kids, Matchbox, Fischer Price, and Hot Wheel etc.), Hasbro Inc. (GI Joe, Monopoly, Transformer, Mr. Potato Head, Play Doh, Milton Bradley, and Parker Brothers brands, as well as brands with licensing agreements such as Star Wars and marvel. etc.), JAKKS Pacific (JAKK) (traditional toys under licences for brands such as Cabbage Patch Kids, Care Bears, and Hannah Montana), Russ Berrie and Company (RUS) (infant bedding, bath toys, feeding items, baby comforting products, and stuffed animals, under brands such as Sassy, KidsLine, and CoCaL, Inc.), RC2 (RCRC) which has grown significantly during the new millennium, (products under licences with the Thomas & Friends, Bob The Builder, and John Deere brands), Action Products International (APII) (products under brand names such as

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69 The Hindu, Online edition, Janu 14th, 2010
Space Voyagers, Play and Store, and Kidz) and LEGO Company (building bricks, etc.). Some of the other toys available in the toys market are Sidney dolls, Travel games, Superman, Action toys, Tom and Jerry, Pokemon, Rapunzel, Fairytopia, Chelsea, Rev-ups, Scrabble, Fisher-price toys, Nuby toys, Chinese toys and the toys produced in the unorganized sector.

Toys are made from different raw materials (plastic, woods, textile and metal), components (moulded components and electronic components), and packaging materials (box, can, and printed material). Toy supply chain is most important in the competitive market.

3.6 Toy distribution in Kerala

Toy supply chain consists of component/raw material suppliers, toy manufacturers, toy distributors or wholesalers, toy sellers and toy consumers. Children are the main purchase decision-makers, though the parents and grant parents are paying for the purchase. Channels play a vital role in the distribution function. Marketing channels are generating increased customer demand for the particular products and play a pivotal role in getting competitive advantage for the firm. Consumers used to purchase most of their toys from the traditional channels such as departmental stores, supermarkets and independent toy specialists. Currently, emerging sales channels such as hypermarkets, discounters and

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toy specialists (superstores) are dominating in the toy sales. Toy sellers purchase toys from manufacturers or wholesalers and distribute through retail outlets.

3.7 Home made Toys in Kerala

Traditional home made toys used by the children, which were in vogue from the early times itself, laid the foundation for the modern models of the toys, in which the same principles were adopted: Learning by ‘experimentation’ and ‘Creative Activity’. One of the unique features of these toys is that they introduce children to a scientific method of working. In the process of making and playing with these toys, their faults and shortcomings can be realized easily.

Children learn to make the toys from their peers, from older children and adults. In the process they share and learn. At times, a child may need help from someone to demonstrate how to make and play with the toy. Learning becomes a part and parcel of the play and a joyful experience.71

Traditional toys were made in Kerala as well as other parts of India by the children with waste materials, leaves, paper etc. Today’s children probably think differently because their lives have become a lot more complex than the lives of children of the same age a few decades ago. The researcher has observed that today the usage of home made toys are very less due to the

71 Sudarshan khanna, “Joy of making Indian toys”, National book trust, India
children living in a bigger, more realistic world than in former times. They also get into contact with modern technology at an earlier age. The Researcher classified the traditional toys as under:

3.8 Classification of Toys for the Study

Toys market in Kerala is flooded with infinite varieties of choices items. There are toys for every age of the childhood, and many varieties for each age. Infants are great observers of the world around them. Whatever they see attracts their attention momentarily. If an unfamiliar object is nearby, they will reach out to take hold of it. They have no tastes that have been acquired over a period of time, because everything is new. The toys that are given to amuse infants, therefore, have remained fairly standard over the centuries: rattles, soft cloth or rubber balls, dolls, and mobiles that can be hung on or near a crib. Even the toys of older infants have remained fairly commonplace: stuffed animals, blocks, and noisemaking animals or bells. As children get older, they acquire tastes and make demands. They know the toys that brothers and sisters have. They learn what their friends play with. Most of all, they are bombarded with television commercials advertising every latest item from toy manufacturers. The kinds of toys older children play with may remain essentially the same from one generation to the next, while the appearance of the toys may change dramatically. Toys are classified for the study as dolls, puzzles, educational
toys, construction toys, battery toys, mechanical toys, activity toys and soft toys which are described below:

3.8:1 Dolls

Dolls are often regarded with sentiment as they are a reminder of childhood days. Dolls have been a part of human kind since prehistoric times. Dolls were used to depict religious figures or used as playthings. Early dolls were made from primitive materials such as clay, fur, or wood. Today, dolls come in every shape and form; and mechanically perform tasks that rival the activities of their human counterparts. Like many toys, some dolls are not designed for children at all, but are made to appeal directly to the play instinct latent in most adults. It helps children to know the various dolls and cultures of the various countries. Doll segment is an important segment, and hence the researcher selected it for the present study.

3.8:2 Puzzles

A puzzle is a problem or enigma that challenges ingenuity. Solutions to puzzles are required, recognizing patterns and creating a particular order. Children with high inductive reasoning aptitude can solve these puzzles. Puzzles based on the process of inquiry and discovery to complete, may be solved by those with good deduction skills. There are many different types of puzzles: construction puzzles, mechanical puzzles, stick puzzles, tiling puzzles, transport puzzles, sliding puzzles, logic puzzles, picture puzzles, lock puzzles and mechanical puzzles. Children's
puzzles have moved from lessons to entertainment, showing diverse subjects like animals, nursery rhymes, and modern tales of superheroes and Disney. The last decade has brought many design innovations as new craftspeople have turned to jigsaw puzzles. Puzzle aficionados of today can choose from a number of different styles of wood puzzles or jigsaw puzzles to suit their passions for perplexity. Wooden puzzles and jigsaw puzzles are as popular and will last a lifetime and can become family heirlooms.

3.8:3 Educational Toys

Toys are educational because they help to develop concentration, problem-solving, and imagination. Children who play with educational toys have an advantage of increasing their mental and physical growth. There are many benefits to playing with quality educational toys. Families who have educational toys in their homes enhance their children’s environment, boost learning skills, and promote quality to the time spent together. When choosing educational toys, the quality of the toys must be a factor to be considered. Children tend to care for their toys better when there is an emphasis of value. They care for their belongings with respect and a positive sense of ownership. Educational Wooden Toys fit into the category of high valued toys. Educational Wooden Toys come in many varieties, which are wooden building blocks, wooden puzzles, wooden trains, wooden games, etc. Educational Games develop strategic thought, memory, concentration, coordination, knowledge, and patience. Playing
educational games helps them to enlarge these skills. Skills taught in
school are improved at home by playing with educational games. These
skills are reiterated at home, when children have quality family time,
progressive learning time and fun at the same time.

3.8:4 Construction toys

Construction set is a collection of separate pieces that can be joined
together to create models. Popular models include cars, spaceships and
houses. The oldest and most common construction toy is a set of simple
wooden blocks, which are often painted in bright colors and given to
babies and toddlers. Construction sets appeal to children who like to work
with their hands, puzzle solvers and imaginative sorts. Construction toys
are building strength in a child’s fingers and hands, and improve their eye-
hand coordination. It encourages social relationships among children and is
a valuable cooperative play opportunity for groups of children.

Constructive play helps children to expand their language abilities and
there by, they are able to articulate about size, shape, colours, comparisons
and other aspects of building. Children learn and practice mathematical
ability through block and construction play by grouping, adding,
subtracting, and sequencing. Science and physics are experienced when the
child experiments with gravity and balance. The Greek Philosopher Plato
wrote that the future architect should play at building houses as a child.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{72} Karl Hills,( 1959) the toy-its value, construction and use,Edmund Ward Ltd. London
Building block experiences are creating their own ideas for buildings, structures, and designing imaginary things. “They help to develop hand-eye coordination, math and science skills and also let kids be creative”73.

Alphabet bricks made to teach young children in the nursery were also predecessor of the building brick. Building blocks were considered educational because they required dexterity and imagination to produce results. Boxes of rectangular, triangular and cylindrical building bricks made of beech or oak were produced by a number of makers in the 19th century. Construction toys gradually became commercialized, and enjoyed widespread popularity during the twentieth century, assisted by a market-oriented toy industry. Various types of materials have been used for creating construction toys and models. Construction toys help children to sharpen their minds, strengthen hands and improve coordination while having a lot of fun. Constructive play has many benefits to enhance dexterity, special thinking and creativity.

3.8.5 Battery toys

Battery toy cars for kids are one of the most popular toys today. Currently 6-volt batteries that are rechargeable are used for toys, which last for 2 to 4 hours on a single charge, depending on the type of terrain that the child will be playing on. Putting too much weight on the toy car could

cause damage to the toy, and may not be comfortable for the child. All the
toys have forward and reverse gears, and a workable steering wheel to help
the child learn to guide it. The varieties available are Aston Martin, BMW,
Mini Cooper, electric power motor bikes, and trikes, and lots of other
styles. The great thing about these toys is that many of these toys have a
parental remote control, which will help the parents to control the car when
the child is not doing such a good job themselves.

Children are able to play inside and outside the house because the
toys also have horns, and turning sounds, as well as working lights and
electric brakes. The toys can reach a speed of 5km/h, depending on the type
of the battery car. So the child definitely needs some adult supervision.
Many of the battery cars for kids have different functions compared to
some of the other battery-powered toys. Some have working windscreen
wipers, or flashing LED lights on the bonnet, and they may even have seat
belts installed on the toy. Some of the battery cars are made specifically for
certain age group of children.

3.8:6 Mechanical Toys

Mechanical toys are developing curiosity, creativity and imagination
of the child. The wind-up toys are the most charming toys, which are
powered by a spring inside and it move for several minutes. It is powered
by complex gears and performs a big variety of movements. Usually it is
made of tin but nowadays it is made of plastic. They are cheaper and
lighter but cannot live as long as the good old tin toys. A mechanical toy is to transmit the kinetic energy from the hand to the toy. The mechanical toys are powered by various gravity forces. The numerous varieties of mechanical toys are available in Kerala market.

3.8:7 Activity toys

Activity toys provide happiness to children and keep them occupied. Fun activity toys are providing physical development of children. New born are inherently curious and are constantly intrigued by the surrounding lights and sounds. The first few years are extremely important, when the baby’s development is at its peak. The activity toys stimulate and encourage the development of the children’s mind and body.

3.8:8 Soft toys

Soft toys like animals, Bunnies Bears, Dolls, Puppets etc are the essential items of childhood development. They play a vital role in developing the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning, as well as in getting tactile maturity and stimulation. The origin of the Teddy Bear is claimed by many and the versions are different. Soft toys are often gifted on special occasions like birthdays, weddings, Valentines day etc.

The behaviour of consumer is dependant on a number of factors which may be economic or non-economic. The consumer behavioural scientists believe that these factors are influencing the actual sales of the
products. The marketers study the behaviour of the consumer, which will help to formulate the strategies. Researcher describes the various dimensions of the consumer behaviour in the present study. Selecting quality toys for children is not an easy task. There are many factors responsible for the quality of a toy. The concept of quality and perceived quality of a toy by the parent is given below:

3.9 Perceived quality of toys by the parents

Researcher from the pilot study identified the perceived factors in the quality of toys. Sona Sen Gupta\textsuperscript{74} has explained in her book about the concept of quality and dimension of quality. The word ‘quality’ is derived from the Latin word ‘qualitas’ which means ‘of what kind’. Cicero and other ancient writers used this word in the sense of nature. Others say that the term quality originates from the Latin word ‘qualis’, Which means ‘such as the thing really is’\textsuperscript{75}. "The quality of a product (article or service) is its ability to satisfy the needs and expectations of the customers"\textsuperscript{76}. According to International Standard ISO 8402 Quality Vocabulary and also as per the ISO 9000 Series, quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy

\textsuperscript{74} Sona Sen Gupta (2005). Consumer Behaviour Dynamics of Building Brand Equity. New Century Publications and printed at Singhal Print Media, New Delhi-110 007


stated or implied needs\textsuperscript{77}. David A. Garvin proposes eight critical dimensions or categories of quality that can serve as framework for strategic analysis: performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, and perceived quality\textsuperscript{78}.

Researcher analyses the quality of the toys with the various variables mentioned in the definitions, and identified the important variables which are selected for the present study. They are toy design, educational value, entertainment value, safety, non toxic nature and comfort. The comprised quality factors of toys are given below:

3.9:1 Toy design

Toy design becomes a good avenue for differentiation. A well designed toy makes real difference to the customer. Toys are designed to create desirable outlets for the child’s natural energies. Toys designed for pushing, pulling and stacking hasten the development of the child’s growing muscles. Simple basic shapes in bright colours teach the very young to perceive differences in size, shape and colour of objects. Stacking toy is teaching eye and hand coordination as well as helping in the achievement of learning to screw the nuts to the bolt. Modern toy companies are producing toys with various designs for the child’s development.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{ibid}
3.9.2 Educational values of toys

Children are born with an innate desire to learn; and educational toys can be put to use to get the advantage by encouraging all aspects of learning. Educational toys help in recognition, developing concepts, problem solving and facing consequences. Educational toys are the tools that foster the development of the childhood thoughts, fantasies and creativity. Playing creates a strong foundation for learning, and satiates the child’s urge for exploration and discovery. Puzzles, memory games, matching and sequencing games, and number games help promote cognitive and numeration skills in children. The educational toys help to exercise their reasoning abilities and hone the skills that are extremely important at a later age. Dramatic play things like cars, dolls and kitchen wares, encourage the growth of imaginative powers in a child, and help to experiment with different materials. Play dough, paints and block provide unlimited opportunities, giving the child the freedom to create imaginary world. Board games like chess, scrabble and domine become interesting; and help the child to exercise the analytical and strategic skills. Appealing toys usually offer only the basics. Toys playing kiddies music, teach the alphabet and letter, and show numbers and shapes, help the child in his growth and development. Space educational toys educate the children about the space and satisfy their curiosity about the galaxies, planets, moon, stars and the sun. There are different versions of this kind of toys,
even the ones that allow a room to be decorated with glowing figures and create a universe-like atmosphere. Space toys also enhance the child’s interest in science.

### 3.9.3 Entertainment values of toys

Toys are among a child’s first possessions. They entertain kids, but they also help them learn about the world around them. Fun toys are also providing the best educational opportunities, imagination and creativity, and teach a child to think for himself. Word toys are created for fun, enjoyment and educational purposes. The toys that are constructed of favourite cartoon characters are both loved and adapted by the child, with great entertainment. A building block set is full of entertainment, but they also help to develop the child’s imagination of motor skills and speech, and eventually to identify colour, shapes number and letters. Most of the entertainment toys which are available in the market are able to build prospective, innovative ideas and creative thinking. Electronic toys keep a child entertained with lights, sounds and pictures. When they push a button, they get a specified response from the toy. When they push a different button, they get different response. Electronic toys often reward a child with funny sound or other response when they do something correctly.

Non-electronic toys are often more flexible than electronic ones. It can be used in a variety of ways. Play-Doh or alphabet blocks are
examples. These toys have added benefits of refining fine motor skills and providing opportunities to learn colours, letters and numbers.

3.9:4 Safety of the child

Safety is the most important consideration given when toys are selected, to avoid incidents of cuts, eye injuries and bruises. Some toys have caused motor vehicle-related injuries to the children during play, and even death due to blockage of airway passage and by drowning. Parents must be sure that the toys or pieces of toys are too large to swallow, or to become lodged in the mouth or throat. Parents and others are responsible for a child’s care, and safe toy play habits. The instructions must be read carefully to make sure that both parent and child understand them. Special attention to the directions will result in safer play and longer toy life. Always remove and immediately discard all packaging (Graphic omitted) from a toy before giving it to a baby or small child.

3.9:5 Non toxicity in toys

Chinese and Indian toys, both branded and unbranded, available in the Indian market have been found to have high lead content. According to a special investigation conducted by CNN-IBH and Toxic Links79, an independent research group, found that 65% of the toys available in India are contaminated with lead and 14% are heavily contaminated. In children, lead can cause low IQ, retarded mental growth, kidney and liver failure and

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79 The Hindu daily, 05/1/2008, How safe are children’s toys
agrigan. While several countries have safety standards for toys, in India the Bureau of Indian Standards has evolved certain standards, but they are not mandatory. Selecting the non-toxic toys from the toys market remains to be an important task of the parents.

3.9:6 Comfort for using toys

Comfort is another important factor to be considered at the time of toy purchase. It should help children to use the toy smoothly. Kids are emotionally attached to the comfort toys.

3.10 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is a new field of study, evolved just after the Second World War. The sellers market has disappeared and buyers market has come up. This led to a paradigmatic shift of the manufacturer’s attention from product to consumer and specially focused on the consumer behaviour.

The evolution of marketing concept from mere selling concept to consumer oriented marketing has resulted in buyer behaviour becoming an independent discipline. The growth of consumerism and consumer legislation emphasizes the importance given to the consumer. The study of consumer behaviour focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money and effort), and also on consumption related aspects (what they buy, when they buy, and how they buy). The heterogeneity of people makes understanding consumer behaviour a
challenging task to marketers. Hence marketers felt the need to obtain an in-depth knowledge of consumers’ buying behaviour. Finally this knowledge acted as an imperative tool in the hands of marketers to forecast the future buying behavior of customers and devise four marketing strategies in order to create long term customer relationship.

**Definitions of consumer behaviour:**

*Consumer behaviour is defined as the study of individuals, groups or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society*.\(^8^0\).

“The behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs.”\(^8^1\)

“The mental, emotional and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy needs and desires”\(^8^2\).

Consumer behavior is viewed as a process that includes the issues that influence the consumer before, during and after a purchase. Consumer behaviourists view an attitude as a lasting general evaluation of people

\(^{80}\) Del I hawkins, Roger J.Best, Kenneth A Coney, Amit Mookerjee (2007), Tata Mc Graw, Hill(9th ed.) New Delhi 110063


Consumer behaviour deals with the psychological process of decision making by consumers in a social context which also exerts group pressures on them. The buying behaviour involves several psychological factors. These factors govern the individual thinking process (like motivation, perception and attitude), decision-making steps involved in buying (decision making process), interaction of the consumer with several groups like friends, family and colleagues (group-oriented concepts), and selection of the brand and outlet depending on price and features and emotional appeal (marketing mix of elements in a given environment). According to Patti M. Valkenberg & Joanne Cantor, Children of all ages strive to understand their physical and social environment. Moreover, their level of understanding determines to a large extent their tastes and preferences for products, information and entertainment, and as a result, their consumer behaviour. The significant role of consumer behaviour in the marketing strategy is given below:

### 3.10:1 formulating marketing strategies in toy industry

According to Leon G. Schiffman & Leslie Lazar Kanuk, consumer behaviour is rooted in the marketing strategy. Consumers’ reaction to this

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84 Patti M. Valkenberg & Joanne Cantor. (2001). The development of a child into a consumer, Applied Developmental Psychology (22) 61-72
strategy determines the organizational success or failure. In this competitive environment of toy industry, one can survive only by offering more customer value - difference between all the benefits derived from a total product and all the costs of acquiring those benefits – than competitors. Providing superior customer value requires the organization to do a better job of anticipating and reacting to the customer needs than the competitor.

3.10:2 Segmentation of the market

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a market into subsects of consumers with common needs or characteristics. A market segment has unique needs. A firm that develops a product focusing solely on the needs of that segment will be able to meet the target group’s desire, and provide more customer value than the competitor. In the case of toys market, the organization can try to segment on the basis of children’s age.

3.10:3 Toy positioning

Positioning is developing a distinct image for the product or service in the mind of the consumer- an image that will differentiate the offer from competing ones. Through positioning, marketers seek the right fit between a product and desired customer benefits. The right positioning means understanding the consumer perception process in general and perception of company’s product in particular.

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86 Ibid, P.12
87 Ibid
The consumer is influenced by family members, and family decision-making is important in the toys purchase.

3.11 Family Decision Making

The roles played by the different family members will vary from product to product. Family members are playing different roles like influencers’ role, deciders’ role, buyers’ role and users’ role. Satish K. Batra & S.H.H. Kazmi\footnote{Satish K. Batra & S.H.H. Kazmi (2004). Consumer Behaviour Text and Cases. Excel books New Delhi 110 028} indicated the nature of family decision making. Some family purchases are inherently emotional and affect the relationships between family members. The decision to buy a new toy might be an expression of love and commitment to the child. When two or more family members are directly or indirectly involved in the decision making process, it is called family decision making. Marketers are aware of the different roles played by family members that influence the family buying decision process. Fisher-Price put ads in Readers Digest to influence parents for toys that they buy for the children.

The role of children as decision-makers has also changed. They are not only direct purchasers but also quite influential indirect purchasers, with the span of their influence ranging from items directly consumed by them to a large number of household purchase decisions.
There are some products where children wield direct influence or pester power by overtly specifying their preferences and voicing them aloud. For other products, parents’ buying patterns are affected by prior knowledge of the tastes and preferences of their children. This ‘passive dictation’ of choice is prevalent for a wide variety of daily consumed items as well as products for household consumption. Also, decision making in households is seen to change with the mere presence of children. The nature of joint decisions in couple decision making units and family decision making units is seen to be different. It is also observed that children are socialized by their parents to act as rational consumers. After years of direct or indirect observation of parental behaviour in the marketplace, they gradually acquire relevant consumer skills from their parents. The amount of influence exerted by children varies by product category and stage of the decision making process. The purchasing act is governed by how they have been socialized to act as consumers. Family, peers and media are key socializing agents for children, while family-specific characteristics such as parental style, family’s Sex Role Orientation (SRO), and patterns of communication play key roles.

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Hoda Karbaschi\(^90\) propounded that, the consumer decision making models enable managers to explain and predict consumer behaviour and thereby provide a basis for taking marketing decisions. The EKB model is the most popular one which emphasizes the consumer’s perception of a want that must be satisfied. The aim of marketing is to understand customer’s buying behaviour. The most important thing is to meet and satisfy the target customer’s needs and wants. The field of consumer behaviour studies how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires.

### 3.12 The Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (EKB) Model

The EKB model\(^91\) is one of the most important models on buying behaviour. This model is discussed here. In this model consumer decision making enables managers to explain and predict consumer behaviour, and thereby provides a basis for making decisions. This model was originally developed by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell, but has undergone several revisions. In 1990, the most recent version has come out, given by Engel, Blackwell and Miniard. This model is shown in Figure 3.4. The basis of consumer behaviour as a decision making process is comprised of five major activities over the period of time. Following are the five major activities:

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\(^90\) Hoda Karbaschi. (2007). Exploring Age-related Differences in Information Acquisition for Buying a Book. Master Thesis, Lulea University of Technology

(i) Need recognition

(ii) Search for information

(iii) Alternative evaluation

(iv) Purchase and

(v) Outcome

The consumer progresses firstly from a state of felt deprivation (Problem Recognition) to the Search for Information on possible solutions. The information gathered, be it from internal sources (e.g. memory) or external sources (e.g. discussions, brochures, sales promotions) provides the basis of the next stage – the Evaluation of Alternatives. This stage requires the development and comparison of purchasing evolution criteria. The Choice/purchase stage concerns the action or activity of the purchase, and includes such issues as the place and means of purchase as well as the actual decision to buy. Finally, Post-Purchase Behaviour, the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product and services as an explicit stage in the process, is critical in the marketing perspective. This framework is useful in enabling the complexities of the external environment and internal information processing to be captured. The chart is given below:
3.12:1 Need recognition

The buying process starts when the buyer recognizes a consumption need or problem. Formally defined, problem recognition is the perceived difference between an ideal (desired) state and an actual state. The consumer is compelled to fill the gap between the actual state (deprivation) and the desired state (fulfillment) when his or her threshold of problem awareness is reached. This disparity creates
tension and arouses a motivation to act\textsuperscript{92}. A number of external or internal factors may elicit problem recognition.

Children’s wants and tastes are formed during childhood. It has been shown that even toddlers firmly express their preferences regarding what to eat, wear, watch or play with\textsuperscript{93}. Children have the need recognition power to identify the various types of toys.

3.12:2 Search for Information

Once a need is recognized, consumers are more likely to search for and process information relevant to that need\textsuperscript{94}. The process of pre-purchase information seeking is explained by Bettman\textsuperscript{95} as buying behaviour. Information search is an important aspect of consumer decision making process. Once need recognition occurs, the next stage is searching for information and solutions to satisfy their unmet needs. Search may be internal, retrieving knowledge from memory or perhaps genetic tendencies or it may be external, collecting information from peers, family and the market place. Some times, consumers search passively by simply becoming more receptive to information around them, where as at other times they engage in active search behaviour.


\textsuperscript{94} Henry Assael (2001). \textit{Ibid}.P.83

such as researching consumer publications, paying attention to ads, searching the internet or venturing to shopping malls and other retail outlets.

The problem recognition stage motivates the consumer to act, and the information search stage is when the consumer takes action to gain knowledge. The sourcing of information is at the heart of this stage, in the consumer buying decision process. Essentially, the consumer seeks information for decision-making, and the marketer must provide the necessary information.

Peers play an important role in the age group of children, and develop a sincere interest in real-world phenomena. Children in this age group tend to become attached to real-life heroes, such as sports heroes, movie stars, and realistic action heroes. Some children in this age group develop a preference for collecting objects, such as dolls or cards of their heroes. By the age of 2 years; children also start to make connections between television advertising and products in the store when they accompany their parents and influencing parents for purchasing the toys. The amount of influence exerted by children varies

98 Valkenburg P.M (1999).Do ontwikkeling van kind tot consument(The development of a child into a consumer).Tijdschrift voor communicatie wetenschap 27,30-46
by product category and stage of the decision making process. For certain products they are instrumental in initiating a purchase, while for others, they make the final selections themselves. Children have been reported to wield a lot of influence in purchase decisions for children products such as toys.

3.12.3 Alternative Evaluation

The next stage of the consumer decision process is evaluating alternative options identified during the search process. In this stage, consumers seek answers to questions such as “What are my options?” and “Which is the best?” They compare, contrast and select from various products or services. Consumers compare what they know about different products and brands with what they consider most important, and begin to narrow the field of alternatives before they finally resolve to buy one of them.

3.12.4 Purchase

The next stage of the consumer decision process is purchase. After deciding whether or not to purchase, consumers move through two phases. In the first phase, consumers choose one retailer over another retailer. The second phase involves in-store choices, influenced by salesperson and product displays etc.

3.12:5 Post purchase actions

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product will influence a consumer’s subsequent behavior. Satisfaction occurs when consumer expectations are met or exceeded and the purchase decision is reinforced. Dissatisfaction results when consumer expectations are not met\textsuperscript{100}. The satisfied customer will also tend to say good things about the brand to others. Marketers say, “Our best advertisement is a satisfied customer.” \textsuperscript{101}

Toys have reflected the cultures that produced them. Toys are reflecting the popular styles of clothing, activities, occupations, social standards and social conditions. Dolls and other toys often reflect the clothing styles of the period. Labels on toy packages make choosing safe and appropriate toys much easier. However, no package label can tell you exactly which toys are right for your child. All toys are not appropriate for all children. On the other hand, child development experts agree that children develop in a sequence of stages and toymakers use this information to indicate which types of toys are safe and appropriate for children of various ages. Product labels help consumers distinguish among the vast number of toys in the market to make the most appropriate purchases. Various toys are mentioned in this

\textsuperscript{100} Henry Assael (2001). \textit{Ibid.} P.90

chapter which is suitable for children of different ages. They are offered as a guide to help in the selection process, because all children are not alike. Study the child and get to know his or her interests, abilities and limitations before selecting the right type of toy. Analysis and interpretation of the primary data are described in the next chapter.