7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Influence of advertisements on Consumer behavioural is a complex phenomenon. Meaningful evaluation requires multiple measures and useful interpretation depends in part on knowledgeable judgment. In this study an attempt was made to examine the decision making process of the consumers of durables. It investigated the hypothetical link between communication effectiveness of advertisements and the behavioural responses of consumers at pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of their decision process.

The primary question motivating this research was whether the mass media advertisements had any influence on the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of consumer decision making process of the respondents. The study intended to make an examination of the important sequential stages of consumer decision making process of the respondents who were involved in buying and using house hold consumer durables. The relationship between important variables were explored.

Objectives of the study

The major objective of the study was to explore the association between the communication effectiveness of advertisement on the consumers and their behavioural responses at pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of
the consumer decision process. On the basis of the above broad objective, the following sub objectives were framed.

- To understand the components of the consumer decision process of the respondents involved in buying and using branded consumer durables.
- To ascertain the intensity of communication effectiveness of the advertisements
- To understand the overall attitude of the respondents towards advertising.
- To assess the consumers’ overall perception of ad influence on their buying behaviour.
- To examine the behavioural responses of respondents to advertisements at pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of decision making.
- To examine the relationship between communication effectiveness of advertisements on the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of the consumer decision making process.
- To examine how the different media exposure categories vary in their behavioural responses.
- To assess the influence of mass media advertisements on consumer behaviour of the respondents.
- To explain managerial implications of the study and offer suggestions.
Methodology and survey design

The core area of the study is confined to the examination of the consumer decision making process of the respondents and assessment of the influence of ads on different stages of the decision process. The information collected for the purpose of this study is analysed quantitatively after classification, tabulation and processing. An exploratory cum descriptive research design in the form of multi-stage stratified random sampling survey method was used to describe the influence of advertisements on consumers’ decision process. Primary data was collected by interview method using structured interview schedule. The sample for the study is taken from the metropolitan area of Cochin.

The universe of the study was constituted by the households in the metropolitan area of Cochin. The sample consisted of 200 respondents who were the heads of the households who had purchased at least one of the selected brands under study during the last twelve months prior to the survey. The sample included This was to ensure the regulation of time element for recalling the decision process. Multi stage stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting the respondents and the stratification was based on geographical divisions of Cochin corporation. The survey was conducted during the six months ending December 2007. To identify the households, a sampling frame was prepared. The ‘List of buyers’ of the selected brands, prepared from the sales vouchers of the dealers of household appliances constituted the sampling frame for the study.
All the products chosen for the study belonged to the consumer durables category. Consumer non durables are excluded from the purview of the study as the consumers’ decision making process may not be evident here. The demand for non durables does not vary much with change in price or income. Product categories chosen are such that respondents of the different socio-economic classes and of both sexes can be expected to have had experience with them. Use of different product classes in the analysis is expected to increase the scope of generalization of findings. The product categories selected to investigate the media influence were major household appliances and automobiles. The list consisted of colour television, washing machine, computer, microwave oven, vacuum cleaner, refrigerator, music system, passenger car and two wheelers.

The study focused on the urban consumer behaviour as the growth of the urban markets in India has contributed heavily to the economic development of the country in the recent times.

The key variables chosen for this study are the communication effectiveness of advertisements and the behavioural responses of the respondents at the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages of their decision making process. The independent variable, ‘communication effectiveness’ was studied by using ‘recall’ of different elements of the advertisement and ‘liking for the ad.’ The dependent variables (outcome variables) studied were seven behavioural responses to ads i.e., need recognition, pre-purchase information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, consumption pattern, post-purchase satisfaction, evaluation and disposal of the product. Other variables studied included the intensity of media exposure to ads, the overall attitude of the
consumers towards the advertisements, and consumers’ perception of media ad influence on their buying decision making process. Demographic variables like, age, income, family size, household income, number of children and socio-economic status of the respondents, were also used for analysis.

Findings of the study

The major findings of the study are listed below:

**Characteristics of Consumer Decision Making Process**

1. The tracking of the decision process of the respondents for consumer durables revealed the presence of identifiable stages of the decision making process as explained in the theoretical review. The respondents passed through seven stages of need recognition, information search and evaluation of brand alternatives, purchase decision, consumption, post consumption evaluation and disposal decisions.

2. At the pre-purchase phase of decision making process, the respondents were found to have covered the stages need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternate brands. At the post purchase phase, the important variables identified were, the consumption, post consumption evaluation and disposal of the product.

3. Among different buying motives, the most important motive which triggered the need recognition among 23.5 per cent of the respondents was ‘status motive.’ 22 per cent of the sample respondents were motivated to buy product out of economical reasons. Another 15.5 per cent were motivated to buy
because friends and relatives had already bought the same. Replacement of damaged one, comfort and convenience were other important buying motives.

4. At the information search stage of the ‘pre-purchase phase,’ mass media advertisements were found to be the most important source of information for the status seekers and for others who were motivated to make purchase by the friend and relatives. Those who were motivated by economical reasons made use of direct experience and opinion of friends and relatives. Television was found to be the most preferred source of information for those who were keen on brand image. To know more about the product features, supporting services, respondents relied heavily on sale people.

5. Apparently no significant variations were found in the shopping orientations of the respondents of different buying motives. But the number of store visits increased as the number of brands considered increased.

6. At the pre-purchase phase 26.5 per cent of the respondents were aware of only one brand and nearly 16 percent were aware of more than four brands of the product group concerned. 34 per cent of the respondents subsequently purchased the same brand which was at their ‘Top of the Mind Awareness’ level. While only one brand entered the choice set of 22 per cent of the respondents for 16 per cent of them more than four alternate brands were under consideration.

7. As revealed by the analysis for 25 per cent of the respondents, ‘price’ was the most important purchase criteria and for 20.5 per cent, ‘brand image.’ The mean ratings of the ten purchase evaluation criteria of the respondents
arranged in the order of importance were, price, product features, brand image, supporting services, warranty, credit facilities, durability, exchange offer, store image and additional benefits.

8. Of the sample of 200 respondents, 61.5 per cent of the respondents made the purchases after seeing the advertisement for the brand and 18.5 per cent had made their purchases even before seeing the advertisement. Rest were not sure whether they had seen it before or after the purchase.

9. As high as 45.5 per cent of the respondents made their purchases from retail stores of the dealers or agents. While 15.5 per cent made second hand goods through the dealers, 13 per cent exchanged their old product for the new one.

10. Altogether 72.5 percent of the heads of households got involved in direct decision making process. These category of respondents either proposed the brand, recommended the brand or took the final decision to buy. Another 27.5 per cent of the respondents indirectly got involved in the purchase decision process, either by carrying out the act of buying or by using it. In 29 per cent of the households husbands took the final decision to purchase the product. While 26 per cent households husband and wife made the decisions jointly, in 17 per cent cases wife only took the Decision to buy. In 9.5 per cent households children took the decision to buy.

11. Regarding the mode of settlement of the purchase consideration, the study revealed that as high as 38.5 per cent respondents made the payment through credit cards, 30 per cent through installment schemes and 20 per
cent by consumer loans. Spot payment was made by only 11.5 per cent of the respondents.

12. The consumption pattern of the respondents revealed that 21 per cent of the respondents studied, owned durables worth the value between Rs.1,00,000 and Rs. 5,00,000. Another 24.5 per cent fell in to the category of Rs.5,00,001-Rs.10.00.000. But 32 per cent were owning durables of the value of more than Rs.10,00,000.

13. No regression relationship was found between the consumption pattern of the respondents for durables and their monthly house hold income. Similarly no significant relation was found between the consumption pattern and usage rate of the product. It was interesting to find that significant relationship existed between consumption pattern of the respondents and their exposure to media advertisements. It is indicative of the advertisement’s influence on the consumption habits of the respondents.

14. In total 40 per cent of the respondents were reported to have overall satisfaction in the consumption of the brand, 45 per cent were reported to have intention for purchasing the same brand again and 46 per cent expressed their willingness to recommend the brand. But the Customer Satisfaction Index revealed that the ‘secured’ or ‘loyal’ customers among them were only 10.5 per cent who were ‘extremely satisfied’ in the overall performance of the brand, reported to have strong intention for repeat purchase and ‘willing to recommend the brand.'
15. An interesting finding regarding the methods of disposal of the product is that as high as 40 per cent of the respondents are desirous of exchanging the product for a new one. Primarily 13 per cent made use of the exchange facility offered by the dealers while making the purchase.

**Exposure to Mass Media Advertisements**

16. About 42 per cent of the respondents were found to be highly exposed to media advertisements. But on the whole only 12 per cent of the respondents were in the habit of attending to the entire advertisement.

17. No significant relationship was found between the gender categories and the media exposure classification. The intensity of media exposure was found to be more or less same among men and women. Similarly no significant relationship was traced between the level of media ad exposure of respondents of different socio economic categories.

18. Significant association was found between the consumption pattern of the respondents and their level of media exposure to advertisements. This observation is further strengthened by the view that there is no significant relationship between the consumption pattern and the monthly household income.

**Overall Attitude Towards Advertisements:**

19. Majority of the respondents held favourable overall attitude towards advertisements in general. Analysis of the respondents’ beliefs and opinions forming the overall attitude revealed the importance of more
truthful advertisements. While the respondents found the advertisements useful for updating one’s knowledge about the brands and identifying brands matching their interests, most of the respondents held the view that the ads are more manipulative than informative and that there is crucial need for more truth in today’s advertisements. Majority of the respondents believed that the advertising is the main reason for the people being concerned with buying and owning things.

20. The variations in the overall attitude of the respondents were found to be significant among different media exposure categories. Those who were highly exposed to advertisements were found to hold more favourable attitude towards advertisements in general.

**Respondents’ Perception of Advertisement influence**

21. Regarding respondents’ perception of ad influence on consumer behaviour, 30 per cent of the respondents studied were of the opinion that the advertisement influenced their buying decisions. Respondents with high level of media exposure was found to hold perceptions of positive ad influence. Similarly the respondents who held more favourable overall attitude towards advertisement were also found to hold stronger perceptions of positive ad influence.

**Communication Effectiveness of Advertisements**

22. Among the respondents studied nearly 83 per cent per cent recalled more than one element of the and 13.5 percent remembered more than four elements of the advertisement of the brand they purchased. While 41 per
cent of the respondents studied expressed their liking for the ad 36.5 per cent expressed their dislike for the same.

23. The examination of the factors or descriptors of liking for the advertisement revealed that meaningfulness, information content and entertainment value are most important attributes of an advertisement contributing to the likeability of the ad.

24. The results of the analysis proved significant association between three communication effectiveness variables, ‘Recall of the ad,’ ‘Liking for the ad,’ and ‘attitude towards the ad.’ It is observed that all the three measures of recall, liking and attitude are important indicators of communication effectiveness of the advertisement. Mere recall of the advertisement may not mean liking for the brand. Only when the ‘liking’ or ‘attitude’ measure is used jointly with the 'recall' measure, a clear picture of the communication effectiveness could be explained.

**Behavioural Responses to Advertisements:**

25. More than 30 per cent of the respondents studied expressed their opinion that the advertisements for the brand purchased influenced their decision process at the pre purchase and post purchase phases through need recognition, information search, brand evaluation, purchase decision, consumption, post consumption evaluation and disposition. But only lesser number of respondents agreed that the advertisements influenced their decisions at the brand evaluation stage and the purchase decision stage.
26. A significant observation made was that those respondents who were highly exposed to advertisements, were holding stronger opinion about the influence of advertisements on the consumer decision process and believed that the advertisements encouraged them to buy the brand at various points in their decision process.

27. The possibilities of influence of advertisement was further strengthened by the observation that the socio economic factors were not significantly influencing the decision process of the respondents. No significant variations were identified in the consumer responses to advertisements among the socio economic classes of respondents.

28. Consumers’ overall perception of influence of advertisements was found to be determined by their responses to ads at different stages of the consumer decision process and regression relationship could be explained. In the present investigation, the responses at the pre-purchase and post-purchase phases covering need recognition, information search and brand evaluation, contributed significantly to the respondents’ overall perception of ad influence.

**Impact of Advertisements on Consumer Decision Process**

29. The influence of advertisements was found to be high among consumers of high recall of the advertisements. Significant relationship was found between the ‘Ad recall’ measure and the respondents behavioural responses to advertisement at each stage of their decision process.
30. The influence of advertisements was found to be high among consumers of high liking for the advertisement. Significant relationship was found between the ‘Ad liking’ measure and the respondents’ behavioural responses to advertisement at each stage of their decision process.

31. Mass media advertisements were found to have significant impact on the consumers’ **behavioural** responses at the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of the decision-making process.

32. The analysis of the consumer response variables of the ‘influenced’ and the ‘uninfluenced’ revealed that positive responses to advertisements are higher for the influenced group than the uninfluenced group. The overall attitude towards advertisement in general was found to be more favourable among the respondents of ‘influenced’ category. The investigation also revealed that the highly influenced group was exposed heavily to mass media advertisements.

33. Mass media **advertisements** were found to have significant influence on the consumer behaviour in Cochin Metropolitan Area.

**Summary of findings**

1. The analysis of the secondary data revealed that there is a steady increase in the demand for consumer durables and the market potential tends to be very high. An increasing trend in the mass media advertisements is also evident from the secondary data analysis.
2. The analysis of the primary data revealed that most of the respondents were seriously involved in the purchase decision process of household durables. The seven sequential stages of decision making were clearly identified along the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of their consumer decision process.

3. The analysis of the decision process of the respondents revealed that at the pre-purchase phase, the buyers’ need for information was related to the number of alternative brands considered at the outset of decision making.

4. In the order of importance the three purchase criteria used for evaluation of brand alternatives were price, product features, and brand image.

5. Majority of the respondents reported to have purchased the brand after seeing the advertisement for the brand. Finally all the respondents were able to recall at least one element of the advertisement of the brand under study.

6. The investigation revealed that the consumption pattern of the respondents was not determined by the monthly household income of the respondents studied. At same time the results of analysis provided evidence for the significant relationship between consumers’ exposure to the advertisements and their consumption pattern for durables.

7. It was revealed that the mass media advertisements had significant influences on the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of the decision process.
8. Indications of brand loyalty was revealed by the positive relationship between satisfaction and intention for repeat buying. At the stage of post consumption evaluation the advertising was found to have been effective in reassuring the respondents of their choice decision.

9. The study has revealed that the overall attitude of the person towards advertising in general has significant influence on the consumers’ opinion about influence of advertisements.

10. The investigation of the attitudinal components revealed that the respondents’ overall attitude toward advertisements depends on the belief factors they hold about truthfulness, reliability, information content etc. of the advertisements in general.

11. The consumers’ perception of ad influence was found to have significant association with both the intensity of ad exposure and overall attitude toward advertisements. Those respondents who were highly exposed to advertisements were found to have stronger perceptions of influence by advertisements.

12. The respondents’ overall perception of influence of advertisement was compared with the self report of the respondents about the ad influence at individual stages of the decision process. Those respondents who were highly influenced by the advertisements at various stages of the decision process, held higher overall perceptions of advertising influence. Functional relationship was established between the respondents’ overall perception of ad influence and behavioural responses to advertisements.
13. Significant association was found between the three communication effectiveness variables, i.e., ‘Ad recall,’ ‘Ad liking’ and ‘Attitude towards advertisement’. High recall and Liking were evident among respondents of high media exposure.

14. Significant association was evident between the communication effectiveness variables and respondents' behavioural responses to advertisements. The self report of the respondents' perception of influence was found to be a function of the influence of advertisements on each stage of the decision making process. The statistical significance of the relationship between all these variables provide sufficient evidence for the influence of advertisements on consumer behaviour of the respondents.

15. Mass media advertisement were found to have significant influence on consumer behaviour. The respondents of high advertisement exposure were found to be more influenced by the advertisements than others.

**Conclusion**

The investigation supports the view that the consumers of durables move through a sequential decision process covering identifiable stages of need recognition, information search, brand evaluation, purchase action, consumption, post consumption evaluation and divestment. The results of analysis do not provide perfect evidence for influence of advertisements on all these decision process variables. But the results do identify and to a great extent confirm the influence relationships among the advertisement effectiveness variables and consumer
behaviour variables. The self reports of the respondents revealed that the advertisements had significant impact on their sequential decision process. The relationship was found to be significant on all the variables at the pre purchase, purchase and post purchase phases stages of the decision process. Mass media advertising was found to be prominent in the consumers’ decision path. Significant variation was identified in the level of advertisement exposure of respondents of different levels of ad influence. The level of advertisement exposure was found to be high among respondents of high advertisement influence. The investigation revealed a significant relationship between respondents’ overall attitude towards advertisements and their perception of advertisement’s influence on the consumer behaviour. It was observed that no significant variance in the information search pattern and the behavioural responses to ad were present across the different socio-economic segments. This highlights the importance of behavioural segmentation in developing promotion strategies.

The procedure used in the study is tracking the consumer decision process with a view to examine their purchasing plans for consumer durables. The study has incorporated some of the traditional techniques like ‘recall,’ ‘liking’ and ‘attitude’ of measuring the effectiveness of advertisements. The investigation of the influence of ads on decision process produced similar results to traditional methods, but allowed a better understanding of the consumer behaviour of the respondents. But Compared to the traditional approach of analyzing impact of ads on the consumer behaviour using recall, liking, attitude and persuasion methods, the
current consumer decision process analysis provided a richer interpretation of the data. A number of significant implications have emerged from this study.

**Managerial Implications of the Study**

From a managerial perspective, the identification of distinctive stages of consumer decision process and the impact of advertisements on consumer responses at these stages have several implications.

1. The first implication is related to the information seeking behaviour of the consumers for durables. It is revealed by the study that people of different buying motives are having different information seeking behaviour. For example the number of retail shops visited, sources of information used and the number of alternate brands considered before final purchase decision are all different among respondents of different buying motives such as status seekers, economy seekers, comfort seekers etc.

2. Another implication is related to the proper targeting of the advertising effort. Even when the joint husband/wife decision making is found to be prominent, the indications of possible shift in the role of decision making was visible. In substantial number of cases the ultimate decision to buy was made by the wives and a few cases the decision makers were children. Knowledge of the role of the family members in proposing the brand, recommending it, deciding to buy the same, actual using of the product etc. will be of great use for strategy development.

3. Positive relationship between the respondents post purchase satisfaction and their intention for repeat buying was found to be an indication of brand
loyalty. The post purchase advertising can reduce the purchase dissonance, increase the satisfaction level and can drive the consumers towards staying loyal to the brand.

4. Another managerial implication is related to the method of buying adopted by the consumer. The growing importance of internet trading (8%) is a novel method of trading compared to the traditional method of retail shopping. Similarly the exchange facility offered by the retail stores were made use of by 5.5 per cent of the respondents which has managerial implications. The manufactures, the resellers and the consumers may benefit by accommodating the advertising and selling efforts accordingly.

5. An understanding of the media consumption habits of the consumers would be of great help to the marketing managers while developing advertising strategies. The intensity of exposure to advertisements in general is as important as the coverage or attention given to various elements of the particular ad.

6. An important implication was in connection with the consumers belief in advertising. The study revealed consumers’ opinion about the advertising strategies that they are in general more sales oriented rather than customer oriented. Most of them believe that the advertisements are generally more manipulative than informative. To be effective any advertisement must be truthful and realistic. Advertising is an important source of information and hence to be effective, consumers expect the advertisements to transmit relevant and valuable information. It is also important to note that greater
recall of the advertisement claims may not translate into more favourable attitudes if the consumer doesn’t believe the claims made in the advertisement.

7. Creating a favourable overall attitude towards advertisements in general is of managerial importance. The consumers’ belief in the specific advertisement claims depends to a great extend on their overall attitude. Hence formation of advertising development organizations and implementations of laws and regulations can be very useful to all including the business people and consumers.

8. ‘Recall of the advertisement,’ and ‘Liking for the advertisement’ are important measures of communication effectiveness of the advertisements and these measures are of strategic importance. In isolation these measures may not provide meaningful results. By increasing the likeability of the ads, better recall can be expected which may finally lead to buying decisions. Adjectives like, ‘entertaining,’ ‘informative’ and ‘meaningful’ are the important factors describing the ‘liking for the ad’

9. Majority of the respondents reported that the advertisements influenced their decision process at the pre purchase and post purchase phases. The advertisements influenced their need recognition, information search, consumption, post consumption evaluation and disposal variables of the decision making process. But at the time of evaluating different brands and for making final purchase decision the respondents seek information from friends and relatives, ones own experience and sales people. This indicates
that advertising is only one of the tools of promotion and it has to be supported by other methods to be successful.

10. Matching of demographic characteristics like income, gender etc. measures are being used widely by the marketers to identify and describe specific market segments. According to the present investigation, the behavioural variables can be a good basis to segment the market. Buying motives, usage rate, benefit sought etc can be used effectively to segment the potential consumers and to develop programs.

11. The above views are of strategic importance to the business community who takes care consumer interests. This will be enabling the companies to face the challenges of competition with better strength while satisfying the consumers and earning good will. The study also suggests that to be successful one cannot rely excessively on advertising. Instead they may have to effectively use other tools of promotion. Advertising is one source of information. Consumers rely on one’s own experience with the product, opinion of friends, relatives and sales men for getting more information in connection with purchase of the household durables.

12. The study also contributes to the growing body of knowledge about the impact of general attitude towards the ads on the consumers’ buying decisions. When the consumers have unfavourable attitude towards the ad, their responses to ads were often found to be minimal. Hence the study poses a challenge to the business community. Changing the mind set of the consumers and creating a favourable attitude towards advertisements in
general is a task for the modern business men. It is more of an ethical issue which lies at the root of the phenomenon.

13. The findings have several implications for management and the consumer behaviour researchers. The procedure used in this study to track the decision process of the consumers offers a general approach for researching consumer behaviour. The Ad influence Score developed in the study can be a useful tool for the managers of marketing to trace the impact of advertising and other promotional tools. Diverse applications of the procedure used here may provide different decision maps which will be of great use in the formulation of marketing strategies.

14. Consumer decision process analysis for the purpose of creating advertisements ensures that the advertisements are made in a relevant context and that final advertising is more likely to be informative and motivating. It is essential for a marketer to understand the factors motivating the consumer and to provide the right kind of stimulus.

15. While there is much more to be learned about the influence of advertising, the present study has brought to light the influence of advertisements on the sequential decision making process of the consumers. This is fundamentally important for any one facing the uncertainties of advertising strategy and creative executions.

16. Finally from a public policy perspective, the findings of the study have important implications. As considerable majority of the respondents were found to be using the advertisements as an important source of information
and the media advertisements were found to have significant influence on different stages of the decision making process of the consumers, the consumer education and protection might be areas of concern for the public policy makers. The investigation has brought to light the impact of advertisement on consumer behaviour the need for ethics in advertising.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of the study and the managerial implications some practical suggestions are made for the benefit of the advertising professionals, consumers and consumer organization.

1. Application of consumer decision making process shall be used effectively either to supplement or to support the conventional methods of copy testing.

2. The effectiveness of the promotional tools like advertising can be improved by targeting the behavioural segments of consumers based on their decision making process.

3. Advertisements must be informative and truthful. Consumer behaviour may be influenced by facilitating the consumers in their purchase decisions process rather than through misleading advertisements.

4. The factors motivating the consumers to purchase the brand must be considered while developing the advertisement. The advertisement shall position the brand in terms of the desirable product features.
5. Advertisements shall create strong brand associations reflecting the decision making process variables so that the they can impact the consumers while making purchase decisions.

6. While focusing on the attention creation aspect of an advertisement, special care shall be taken to see that the consumers are not distracted from the intended message.

7. The advertisement shall properly reflect the consumers level of understanding about the product and the brand. It should not be misleading and should not exploit lack of knowledge of the consumers.

8. Initiatives to empower the consumers should be strengthened. The consumer groups shall be encouraged to take up the issues of unethical advertising and also do counter advertising.

9. Voluntary code of conduct on advertising shall be promoted and review mechanism to ensure the observation of the regulations shall be made more effective.

10. Considering the importance of friends and relatives as a source of information, special care shall be taken to create long term brand image through advertising.

11. Any advertising program to be successful must take care of the changing requirements of the consumers and must not forget the psychological effects of advertising on consumers’ decision process.

**Scope for future research**
There is a need for future research to identify more variables at each stage of the decision making process. This would be of strategic importance while measuring the impact of promotional tools on consumer behaviour.

Future research is needed to closely examine the information search patterns among distinctive groups based on their position in the sequential stages of the decision making process. This would be useful to determine what appeals to be used by advertisers to the prospective consumers at different levels of decision making.

After sales service is an emerging trend in Indian consumer goods market segment which is not getting the expected popularity. The strong association between the post purchase satisfaction and the intention to purchase the same brand again points at the possibilities in marketing which can be brought out through research.

The concepts, framework and methods used in the study can be used to investigate the influence of different sources of information on the important decision variables of the consumers in the Indian consumer durable goods market segments. Though much remains to be done in developing reliable and validated measures of decision making process and perceived influence of advertisements, the methods suggested in the investigation brings out the importance of behavioural segmentation for better marketing actions. The conclusions suggest a number of hypotheses which may be developed into innovative strategies capable of being translated into sales and improved customer relationships.