**ABSTRACT**

In today’s environment many nuclear families have emerged and the role of elders have been limited in these places with the kids starting to gain dominance in decision making especially in the area of purchases. Today, kids have become powerful influencers in their role as consumers on various product categories; even on those products which they don’t use directly.

Commercial pressures on kids and teenage youth may encourage continual consumption and acquisition at the expense of informed consumer decision making and environmental sensitivity.

The purchase decision making by the consumers in today’s world is largely different from that of the past. Though the degree of influence of purchase decision and tastes vary from person to person, the kids of today have become powerful as influencers. It is under such a context that this research is being made. The theme was selected as “Study on Pester power consumer behavior among kids and its impact on family buying with reference to packaged convenience food in Kerala”

During the course of searching for any secondary data, it was also identified there were just a few minor research works that were carried out on kids influence in Kerala. There were no works related to the influence of kids in the purchase of packaged convenience foods behind which most of the kids are running helter-skelter.
An extensive review of literature was undertaken to ascertain research gap and to identify the relevant issues for the study.

It is believed by the researcher that this comprehensive study will benefit a large spectrum of consumers, retailers, kids and others general in understanding the purchase behaviour of kids towards convenience food items.

The major objectives framed by the researcher are:

- To identify the factors leading to pester behaviour of kids
- To identify the factors leading to purchase intention of parents
- To find the impact of pester behaviour of kids on the purchase intention of parents and its effect on satisfaction of purchase

The survey was carried out in the Gods own country of Kerala from which, three major districts - Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, Ernakulam (Kochi), the industrial city and Kozhikode (Calicut), the Northern part and the city with a large NRI population were selected for the study.

Further it was decided to conduct the survey among the parents of the students studying in unaided private schools which had been in the field of education for a period of minimum 10 years. As per the details of the Kerala State Government Education department Census report of 2009 conducted under the aegis of educationist, Prof. B. Hridayakumari, it has been pointed out that many parents belonging to upper and middle income groups as well as those belonging to Double Income groups (both parents employed) preferred to send their kids to unaided private schools in the city limits rather than to Government/ Government aided/ Unaided private schools in remote areas. This is to avoid being affected by strikes, conveyance problems and
also in view of providing a good curriculum support. The researcher thus preferred to choose the schools in the city limits only in these three districts.

On the basis of data available from the above mentioned report, there are as many as 52 unaided private schools in Thiruvananthapuram district, 58 in Kochi and 41 in Kozhikode which had put in a service of minimum 10 years. As many as 10 schools each belonging to Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode were randomly chosen for the study.

The respondents were parents having kids in the age group of 4 – 15 years and they were selected through Stratified random sampling method. Data was collected from the chosen respondents.

The data for the study were acquired from both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data were collected directly from the respondents during the field survey. The secondary data were sourced from journals as well as other reports, studies and magazines.

From the analysis it was found that Parents do make their choices while purchasing convenience food items for kids. It was also identified that the parents provide tips for their kids during purchases. The purchase decision when the kids accompany their parents is not dependent on the family status. There is significant difference in the level of influence induced through different promotional factors such as – TV commercials, references made by friends, print ads/ hoardings/ knowledge through Internet.

Similarly, there is difference between the perception of factors inducing pester power in kids as perceived by parents and the monthly amount that the parents are ready to spend on their kids’ pocket money is not dependent of the family style. Likewise, there is difference between the
frequencies of purchase of the different food items: Milk products and
nutrition, beverages, health drinks, ready to use food items, ready to eat food
items, chocolates, biscuits and ice creams.

It was also found that there is significant difference between the
perceptions of importance of the different factors considered while taking
purchase decisions and there is significant difference between the perceptions
towards ethical marketing practices.

The study also identified that there is significant difference between
the levels of perception towards unethical marketing practices and there was
influence of the reasons stated for focus on kids in the international level of
marketing on purchase behaviour.