PREFACE

Footwear has emerged as a consumer need in modern life. With changing lifestyles and increasing affluence, domestic and commercial demand for footwear is projected to grow at a faster rate. Rising income levels of the Indian middle class and demands from young fancy population is helping the market to grow and thus contributing to a very fast growing Indian economy. There are already many new domestic brands of footwear apart from leading foreign brands in Indian market. Standing on the threshold of a retail revolution and witnessing a fast changing retail landscape, the Indian footwear market is set to experience the phenomenal growth in the coming years. The topic selected for the study is “Marketing Practices of Leather Industry: A study with reference to the select footwear retail units in Tamil nadu”. The Indian leather industry is the core strength of the Indian footwear industry. It is the engine of growth for the entire Indian leather industry and India is the second largest global producer of footwear after china. The Indian footwear retail market is expected to grow at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of over 20% for the period spanning from 2008 to 2011.

The present investigation is about marketing practices - “of what is and what ought to be ”for footwear retail units. It is an exploration of how marketing practices could better serve retail units to achieve their objectives and societal responsibilities. Marketing is not something an organisation does, but participates in it. It is the way a retail unit contributes to its growth and social well being. Through marketing it adapts to the context,
competition and customer. This integration of marketing and retailing is what is analysed and presented. This integration is a process as footwear retail units continually define and redefine their products and services to consumer. It is therefore apt to say that Marketing of footwear products are constantly in a state of ‘becoming’—becoming more consumer-oriented than it was before. The patterns of marketing mix have been assessed, the pragmatics of implementing strategies has been scrutinized and creative practices have been unearthed through a comprehensive data collection. Various ‘issues’ concerning marketing practices in footwear retail units have been highlighted before attempting to suggest alternatives that are more adaptive and appropriate.

Chapter - I deals with introduction to marketing and marketing of products with special reference to leather footwear marketing. Products present special challenges that must be encountered and solved. They range from the inability to inventory, difficulty in synchronizing demand & supply, controlling quality dimensions and adapting to changes. Linking of customer to measuring store’s performance is pivotal for customer expectations and perceptions are what matter.

Chapter - II is an introduction to the history, evolution and developments in Indian leather footwear retail industry. It provides necessary and elemental background of innumerable systems and practices that are in vogue and how the system has come of age.
Chapter - III deals with defining the problem. Introducing marketing or strengthening marketing department in my opinion should go a long way in increasing the performance of retail units and growth. This chapter deals with defining the scope of the present research and describes the methodology adopted along with limitations. This chapter provides a comprehensive literature review addressing these and issues of pricing, positioning, packing of products in the retail industry.

Chapter - IV elaborates comprehensively the profiles of selected footwear retail units and various marketing practices adopted by these retail units have been discussed.

Chapter - V deals with organising and structuring of both primary and secondary data and to interpret thereof. It describes in detail the existing practices, lacunae and short comings in them, problems encountered by footwear retail units.

Chapter - VI provides a summary of conclusions drawn from the empirical study. Suggestions and recommendations based on these inferences have been made to strengthen retail units through synchronised marketing of their products.