# Chapter 7

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

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Chapter 7

Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

*Consumer Empowerment is the consumer’s subjective experience that they have greater ability than before to intentionally produce desired outcomes and prevent undesired ones and that they are benefiting from the increased ability.*

-Hunter and Garnefels (2008)

7.1 Introduction

A research study with the title “Role of Retailing in Empowering Women – An Exploratory Study of Unorganised Sector in Karnataka State” has been carried out with one main objective and six sub-objectives. In order to achieve the objectives mentioned hypotheses have been formulated. Accordingly field survey has been carried out to collect the data. The theoretical, data analysis and interpretation are discussed in detail in the previous chapters. The data being collected has been analysed with set of statistical techniques and a final resultant model has been developed as an outcome in the process. Now the gist of the study in the form of findings, suggestions and conclusion is presented here under. All the objectives in the study are well provided with respective findings, suggestions, conclusion and backed by a supporting set of hypotheses as follows. Also, managerial implications of the work and scope for further research are provided with a concluding remark herewith.
7.1.1 Major Objective

To identify major factors contributing towards the subjective experience of empowerment among the women consumers.

Findings:

The resultant consumer empowerment model derived from the exploratory factor analysis resulted in four major retail constructs viz (1) Retail Store Atmosphere (RSI) (2) Store Convenience (SC) (3) Relevant Communication (INFO) (4) Expansion and Control over Choice Set selection (EFC).

The retail construct Store Convenience (SC) has positive and significant (+2.11) impact on consumer empowerment, followed by Relevant Communication (+1.71) and Expansion of Freedom of Choice (+1.27). The Retail Store Image (RSI) has significant negative (-1.89) impact on Consumer Empowerment (CONEMP) (Table No. 6.12).

Suggestions:

Indian retailers have to concentrate mainly on improving their Store Convenience activity. Store Convenience affects consumers’ overall evaluation of the service, including satisfaction with the service and perceived service quality and fairness. The relationship between stores’ service convenience and service evaluation is moderated by consumers’ attribution of firm controllability. As a result retailers must focus on various types of conveniences inside the store viz. Decision Convenience, Access Convenience, Transaction Convenience, Benefit Convenience and Post-benefit Convenience which the consumers expect while shopping.

Next most important retail activity of consideration to the retailers is Relevant Communication or the Information (INFO) provided to the consumers. Relevant Communication is the crux of the success of many international retailers. Relevant information provided at the right time, to the right consumer segment, in a right way or form can really create a loyal customer base. An efficient Store Communication provided both inside and outside the stores reflects and enhances the image of the store in the minds of consumers. Especially women shoppers are very keen towards
the relevant information provided them. They also get quickly attracted to the offers and sales related information. But the retailers has to be careful in providing relevant information which otherwise can even affect their business adversely.

Expansion of Freedom of Choice (EFC) is another important aspect of concern to the retailers on which they are not at all focused in the present day scenario. Providing control and involving consumers in the retail related activities so that consumers perceive themselves as taken care and part of the organisation. Also the choice of their interest is available on shelves they feel confident about their selection process and try sharing strong relationship with the retailer. Ultimately, the point of having all this choice is so that people can improve the quality of their lives.

Since Retail Store Image or Atmosphere found having significant negative influence on Consumer Empowerment, it is important understand focus not much on materialistic physical settings alone. Rather working and investing on building valuable customer relationships matter a lot in winning the consumers' heart in the real sense.

Following are the supporting hypotheses for major objective of the study:

Ho: Pleasing retail store environment significantly influences the consumer empowerment among women shoppers. – Reject Ho (Z= 0.261 Insignificant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Store convenience does not influence the consumer empowerment among women shoppers. – Reject Ho (Z= 0.870 Insignificant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Relevant communication provided by the retailer has no positive influence on women consumer empowerment. Reject Ho (Z= 0.124 Insignificant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Control provided over Choice set selection and the consumer empowerment is independent of each other. Reject Ho (Z= 0.165 Insignificant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Consumer involvement has nothing to do with the feeling of subjective experience of consumer empowerment among the women shoppers. Reject Ho (Z= 0.402 Insignificant at 5% LoS)
7.1.2 Objective 1.

To identify the various product categories those are shopped by the women consumers in two different retail formats viz. traditional outlets and modern / organised outlets.

Findings: Following are the findings from the survey report analysis (Table No: 7.2A & 7.2B.)

Groceries / Vegetables: A majority 51.3% (Table No: 7.2A) of the women shoppers buy their grocery/vegetables from the modern/organised outlets. But still a significant of 48.4% prefers the traditional ‘Kiranas’ and neighbourhood stores. A negligible of 0.3% found shopping in both the formats.

Apparels: A majority 84% of the women consumers prefer modern/organised outlets for shopping apparels. This clearly indicates a shift from unbranded to branded apparel shopping. Brand consciousness and awareness among consumers are one of the main causes of increasing modern retail formats. (Table No: 7.2A)

Furniture: A significant of 78.8% of the women shop furniture in the modern retail outlets. The remaining 21.2% prefer the unorganised or (independent or) carpenter workshops to prepare their furniture.

Home decorative: The modern retail formats rule (67%) the market share even in this product category. Exclusive showrooms, department stores, hypermarket etc., formats attract the women shoppers with specially focusing on Home decorative products.

Major Appliances/Electronic gadgets: The high investment cost and risk associated with guaranteeing/service/repair etc., of the electronic and Homewares creates a wide opportunity for the modern retailers. The opportunity of being big and image makes the consumer feel shop in these modern formats. Majority 81.5% of the women shoppers prefer modern outlets over the traditional shops.

Jewellery: The most trusted neighbourhood jewellers are no more attracting the women of the metros. Organised chain of modern jeweller shops, trusted business families of the country (TATA’s, Reliance etc..) have made their foray into this business creating trust and attractive offers and schemes. A significant of 69.1% of the women shoppers prefer to shop jewels at modern outlets. But still the market for
the traditional jewellers sustains the competition by attracting the rest 30.9% of the women consumers based on their generations of relationship and trust.

Suggestion: The retailers must focus on building real relationships with the women customers. Every product category requires a different strategy towards attracting and retaining the customers. Customer ‘TRUST’ is very expensive but once attained again demands heavy investments to maintain it, but yields great business to the retailers for years together.

Supporting hypotheses relating to women consumers and nature of outlets

Ho: Age of the women shoppers has no significant influence on the nature of outlet selected for shopping – Reject (Z=0.891 Insignificant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Marital status of the women respondents has nothing to do with the nature of outlet selected for shopping – Reject Ho (Z=0.055 Insignificant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Qualification of the respondents has nothing to do with the outlets selected for shopping – Reject Ho (Z=0.382 Insignificant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Working status of the has no significant influence on the nature of outlet selected for shopping – Reject (Z=0.282 Insignificant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Monthly Household income of the respondents has no significant influence on the nature of outlet selected for shopping – Accept Ho (Z=0.045 significant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Use of credit cards by the shoppers has no significant influence on the nature of outlet selected for shopping – Accept Ho (Z=0.001 significant at 5% LoS)

Ho: Use of vehicle used for shopping and nature of outlet selected for shopping are independent of each other – Accept Ho (Z= 0.002 significant at 5% LoS)
7.1.3 Objective 2.

To investigate the product categories those are solely decided and shopped by the women consumers on their own.

Findings:

A significant 67.4% Apparels, followed by 46% of Grocery and Vegetables, 35.9% Jewellery, 7.2% of the Home Decors, and a least 6% of the purchase decision regarding the furniture is solely taken by the women. (Table No: 7.3)

Suggestions:

Looking into the increasing span of product categories list where in women started taking independent decision; retailers must focus on building new set of strategies to suit this confident women consumer segment. Utmost care should be taken not to simply use the existing strategies created for their male counterparts. In case of buying higher ticket products they should be counselled and provided with the right kind of products and services along with making them feel important and special. They should be involved and given control in process of Choice selection.

7.1.4 Objective 3.

To assess the amount of time spent by the women shoppers in shopping per week

Findings:

A majority 41.5% of the women shoppers spend nearly 20-30% of their time in shopping.

The following analysis based on demographics and psychographics of the customers considering only 20-30% of time category of time spent in shopping per week. (Table No: 7.4A. & 7.4B)

Age: Around 34%, 45% and 50% customers falling in the age groups of 18-28, 29-39 and 40-50 respectively spend nearly 20-30% of their time in shopping per week.
Marital status: Nearly 48% i.e 172(358) of married and 31% i.e 71(227) unmarried women shoppers spend nearly 20-30% of their time in shopping per week.

Qualification: Majority 42% i.e 148 (356) and 41% i.e 88 (212) women shoppers with PUC-Degree and Degree-P.G educational qualification found spending nearly 20-30% of their time in shopping per week.

Working status: An equal 41% women shoppers who are Employed and Homemakers respectively found spending nearly 20-30% of their time in shopping per week.

MHI: Around133 (287) with MHI 60,000-80,000 INR and 47(129) with MHI of 40,000-60,000INR found spending nearly 20-30% of their time in shopping per week.

Use of Credit card: Around 41% i.e 96 (232), 40% i.e 74(183) & 46% i.e 55(120) women shoppers with credit card using rarely, never and always for shopping found spending nearly 20-30% of their time in shopping per week.

Transport use: Around 40% shoppers using two-wheelers, 45% using four wheelers and 41% using public transport are found spending nearly 20-30% of their time in shopping per week.

Suggestion:

Looking towards the growing shopping trend, it is important to understand the concept of time spent in shopping per week by the retailer. The more the time spent in shopping or window shopping helps more of impulse buy and also helps women plan for future buy for instance, gift shopping etc., Hence retailers must focus on improving retail environment.

7.1.5 Objective 4

To study the impact of demographics and psychographics of women consumers in considering shopping as their best free time activity.

Findings:

Age: A majority 47.9% of 18-28 age group, followed by 38.3% of 29-39 age group and around 37% of the women shoppers of the age group 40-50 strongly felt that ‘shopping as their best free time activity’. Overall 41.7% of the customers of all age
group felt shopping as their best free time activity followed by 31.5% who had neutral opinion and 16.8% found disagreeing the statement. (Table No: 7.5)

Qualification: The survey analysis indicates that 41.9% (245 out of 585) of consumers of all the qualification categories viz. SSLC, PUC-Degree, Degree-P.G and P.G strongly agree that shopping has become their best free time activity. The remaining 31.3% could not decide and 26.9 % said they strongly disagree with the statement.

A majority 60% Post graduate consumer, followed 47.6% by the graduates, 38.5% undergraduates, and 33.3% less than SSLC qualified women consumers strongly felt that shopping as their best free time activity.

Marital status: Majority 48.5% of unmarried women, followed by 37.4% of married women consumers strongly felt shopping as their best free time activity.

Working status: Around 44.3% of the employed women and 39% of the Home makers strongly agreed that shopping as their best free time activity.

Monthly Household income (MHI): Majority 47.9% of the women shoppers with a MHI <80,000 INR per month, followed by 45.8% of 20,000-40,000 INR, a 41.1% of 40,000-60,000 INR and around 39% of 60,000-80,000 INR MHI women shoppers strongly expressed shopping as their best free time activity.

Psychographics of customers and shopping becoming their best free time activity

Credit card use for shopping: It is interesting to note that 36.6 % of the women shoppers who never use credit cards while shopping followed by a majority 46.1% of the customers who very rarely use credit cards and a 45% of the customers who always use credit card for shopping strongly expressed shopping as their best free time activity.

Transport means used for shopping: An interesting finding is that 43.2% of the women shoppers who use personal cars and public transport (auto rickshaw) are found equally interested in shopping and strongly considered shopping as their best free time activity. This was followed by 40.5% of two-wheeler using consumers and 16.7% of consumers commuting by city bus for their shopping purpose.
Suggestion:

Retailers have to develop and focus their strategies based on the demographics and psychographics of the women consumers. The strategies must differ based on the respective categories. Retailers should remember that one strategy won’t fit all.

Supporting hypotheses:

Ho: Marital status has nothing to do with the considering shopping as their best free time activity – Accepted (Z=0.03 significant at 0.05 level)

Ho: Educational qualification of the respondents and considering shopping as best free time activity is independent of each other – Reject (Z= 0.305 Insignificant at 0.05 level)

Ho: Working status of the women shoppers has no significant influence in considering shopping as their best free time activity – Reject (Z=0.371 Insignificant at 0.05 level)

Ho: Monthly Household income and shopping as best free time activity of women shoppers are independent of each other – Reject (Z= 0.081 Insignificant at 0.05 level)

Ho: Age of the women shoppers and considering shopping as best free time activity are independent of each other – Reject (Z=0.107 Insignificant at 0.05 level)

Ho: Using of credit card for the shopping and shopping being best free time activity of women are independent of each other – Reject ( Z=0.120, Insignificant at 0.05 level)

Ho: Using own transport means for shopping and shopping being best free time activity are independent of each other – Reject (Z= 0.279, Insignificant at 0.05 level)

7.1.6 Objective 5.

To measure the impact of demographics (Age, Marital status, Qualification, Working status and monthly Household income) and psychographics (use of credit card, vehicle possession) on the subjective experience of empowerment among women shoppers while shopping.
Findings:

First quartile consisting of 146 of the women shoppers are found on low Consumer Empowerment Index (CEI) range of 1.33-1.78. The consumers in the second quartile 292 (50%) found moderately empowered by falling in the consumer empowerment index range of 1.79-1.91 and the third quartile with 147 women shoppers are found experiencing high on consumer empowerment index range of 1.92-2.04. (Table No: 7.6A)

When Women Consumer Empowerment factor was analysed based on demographics and psychographics of consumers the following findings are resulted:

Age: Majority of 55.7% of the women shoppers of the age group 29-39 found highly empowered. Followed by a 36.4% and 7.8% of shoppers under the age group of 18-28 and 40-50 respectively experienced the high degree (CEI range of 1.92-2.04) of subjective experience of empowerment while shopping.

Marital Status: Around 61% of the married and 39% of the unmarried women experience consumer empowerment while shopping. It is interesting to note that a majority 28% married women consumers' experienced low degree of empowerment (CEI 1.33-1.78) and nearly 23% of the unmarried women consumers experienced low consumer empowerment (CEI 1.33-1.78) while shopping.

Qualification: A majority 60% of PUC-Degree qualified, followed by 36% Degree - P.G qualified women shoppers experienced consumer empowerment while shopping. A majority 30% (105 out of 356) women shoppers with a qualification of PUC-Degree and around 26% i.e 56(212) Degree- P.G qualified women shoppers moderately experienced the consumer empowerment while shopping by falling under the Consumer Empowerment Index (1.79-1.91)

Working status: A majority 51% of employed and 49% of Home makers felt the subjective experience of empowerment while shopping. A next most majority 28% i.e 82 (298) working women and miniscule of 23% i.e 66(287) Home Makers experienced a Highest degree of consumer empowerment while shopping by falling in the CEI (2.05-2.86).
MHI: A majority 35% of the women shoppers with a MHI range of 60,000-80,000 INR, followed by 27% with an income bracket of 40,000-60,000 INR and a miniscule 21% with a MHI 20,000-40,000 INR fall under the Highest Consumer Empowerment Index range (2.05-2.86). (Table No: 7.6B)

Use of credit card: Using the credit card for shopping indicates the life style factor of the women shoppers. Majority 25% of the women shoppers who rarely use the credit card, followed by 30% who never use credit card for shopping and 24% of the customers who always use the credit card for shopping experienced a low degree of Consumer Empowerment with a CEI of (1.33-1.78).

Mode of Transport used for shopping: Majority of 31% of the two-wheeler users, 26% of four wheeler users, around 26% of the auto rickshaw users and a major 50% shoppers using city bus transport facility for shopping experienced moderate consumer empowerment by falling in the CEI bracket (1.79-1.91).

Suggestions:
Retailers must concentrate more on the demographics of the women shoppers and develop their strategy accordingly. Maintaining the data base of the customer should be meticulously used just not to simply advertising. Customer data base management is a tough task and challenge in itself in the initial stage of development. But the retailers or the firms have to focus on developing a tailor made strategies to cater to the changing needs of the women shoppers. If doing so on one-to-one basis is difficult or costlier (for a small retailer with less investment), at least the strategies (sales offers, communication, display etc.) should be developed keeping a cluster of homogenous women shoppers in view.

The psychographics (such as shopping activity, image, esteem etc) associated with the usage of credit cards and vehicles (cars and bikes etc) for shopping provide vital suggestions to the retailers on improving their business. Even today there is a less penetration of credit card business in the Indian consumer markets. The findings reveal the fact that next most to the 35 % women shoppers who always use credit cards (with highest degree CE), it is the 23% women shoppers who transact with cash (never use segment) found experiencing highest degree of consumer empowerment.
This indicates that there is a strong relation between the credit card use for shopping and consumer empowerment and this where the retailers should eye at.

Supporting hypotheses:

$H_0$: Women consumers’ age has nothing to do with feeling of subjective experience of empowerment while shopping. – Reject $H_0$ ($Z=0.719$ Insignificant at 5% LoS)

$H_0$: Marital status of the women shoppers has no significant influence on the experience of empowerment while shopping. - Reject $H_0$ ($Z=0.569$ Insignificant at 5% LoS)

$H_0$: Qualification of women consumers has no significant influence on the experience of empowerment while shopping. – Accept $H_0$ ($Z=0.000$ significant at 5% LoS)

$H_0$: Working status of the women consumers has no significant influence on the experience of empowerment while shopping. - Reject $H_0$ ($Z=0.582$ insignificant at 5% LoS)

$H_0$: Monthly Household salary of the women consumers has no significant influence on the experience of empowerment while shopping.- Reject $H_0$ ($Z=0.396$ insignificant at 5% LoS)

$H_0$: The use of credit cards by the women shoppers for shopping and feeling of subjective experience of consumer empowerment are independent of each other. – Reject ($Z=0.383$ Insignificant at 5% LoS)

$H_0$: Use of own transport system for shopping and feeling of subjective experience of consumer empowerment are independent of each other. - Reject ($Z=0.832$ Insignificant at 5% LoS)

7.1.7 Objective 6.

To explore the characteristics exhibited by the empowered women consumers.

Findings:

**Product Expertise:** A majority 56% of 29-39, followed by 36% of 18-28 and an insignificant 8% of women shoppers under the age group 40-50 are found **product experts.** A majority [150 (213), 236 (326), and 40(46)] **moderately** product
expertise was found in all the three age categories 18-28, 29-39, and 30-50 respectively. (Table No:7.7)

**Confident Purchase Decision Making:** Around 213, 326, and 46 women shoppers in the age group 18-28, 29-39 and 40-50 respectively found confident in purchase decision making. A Majority 158 (213), 247 (326), and 37(46) of the women shoppers under the age group 18-28, 29-39 and 40-50 respectively found moderately confident, followed by [30 (213) and 45(326)] consumers of the age group 18-28 and 29-39 respectively found exhibiting less confidence in purchase decision making. And the remaining negligible 25 (213) and 34(326) of women shoppers were found highly confident in purchase decision making. Whereas 5(46) of the respondents in the age group 40-50 are found highly confident while shopping.

**Consumer Power and Rights:** Around 33% of 18-28, followed by 32% of 29-39 and an insignificant of 8% of women shoppers of the age group 40-50 are found having awareness about consumer powers and rights. But, it is interesting to note that totally 186(194), 288(305), and 38(43) women shoppers comprising a majority fall under the respective age groups 18-28, 29-39 and 40-50, are found having Moderate awareness about consumer powers and rights. And a negligible rest of total 2(194), 5 (305), and 3(43) women shoppers in same age groups found having high awareness of consumer power and rights.

**Freedom of Movement while shopping:** Around 36% of 18-28, 56% of 29-39 and 8% of 40-50 age group women shoppers found themselves free to take their own purchase decision without being obligated or influenced or pressurized (Freedom of Movement) by the retailer while shopping.

Totally 171(213), 269(326) and 38(46) of women shoppers of the respective age group 18-28, 29-39 and 40-50 found moderately free to take their own purchase decision without being obligated or influenced or pressurized (Freedom of Movement) by the retailer to buy the product. *This indicates majority of the shoppers somewhere in the process of buying or window shopping find themselves obligated to purchase.* On the contrary, a total of 30 (213), 35(326) and 5 (46) women customers of the above mentioned age group found highly free from the obligated buying.
**Attitude to Choose the Best:** A majority 56% of 29-39, followed by 36% of 18-28 and a miniscule of 8% of 40-50 age group women shoppers expressed an attitude to choose the products/brands while shopping.

A total majority 133(213), 208(326), and 322(46) women shoppers of the age group 18-28, 29-39 and 40-50 years respectively exhibited a moderate character of attitude to choose the best. *This indicates, this majority segment of the women shoppers are not 100 percent keen on buying 'the absolute best' of the products available.* This was followed by negligible number of 15(213), 13(326), 1(46) women shoppers of the age group 18-28, 29-39 and 40-50 years respectively found with high attitude to choose the best while shopping. *This category of consumers does not compromise on products and services. They look for the absolute best for them.*

**Suggestions:**

From the analysis it is implied that there is a high opportunity for the retailers to make the consumers product experts and confident in decision making. Also retailers must understand that all the age group of customers are in some or the other way have experienced obligated to shop and not set completely free to do whatever they want. This may be because of many reasons for instance, force to buy attitude exhibited by the salesman, angry attitude of the shop keeper and disinterest shown for waste of time in displaying various products or may be sympathetic / emotional pressure due to relationship bindings to go for the product etc., This is the true reason where some of the customers even setback from browsing or window shopping or even avoiding some of the shops based on their past experiences. So the retailers must take care of this issue seriously and try to give freedom of movement in the real sense of its meaning.

Also retailers have to address the issue of customers’ attitudes towards selecting the best for them it may be with respect to quality, price etc., and try creating awareness for the same.

**7.2 Managerial Implications**

The road from dependency to empowerment (Weil Birdseye Henry & Weil Endicott Elisabeth, 1999) is considered as long, unwinding, and always under construction.
This means the empowerment is an ongoing process and hence dynamic by nature. It is very well said as ‘La destination vaut le voyage’ which means ‘Consumer Empowerment - A revolution is underway’.

Effective customer information management drives a relationship value. The starting point is the customer experience, i.e. how is the customer treated, and how does he or she feel as a result. A positive customer experience is based on individualization (“We know and deal with customers as individuals and we treat them with respect, Honesty, and fairness”)

First engaging the customer depends on delivering value. The “value” can come in a wide variety of forms, e.g., a better deal, greater convenience, a sense of accomplishment, recognition as an individual, a feeling of confidence, a sense of accomplishment, a recognition as an individual, a feeling of confidence and control.

Second engagement over a period of time is required to build the customer’s trust. The worst thing to spoil the relationship is to frustrate, disappoint, irritate, or abuse the customer for instance, stepping over the ones “acceptable behaviour”.

Most important lesson is that the service provider must give up control of the relationship to the customer before the customer can empower the provider.

The empowerment relationship model is difficult to envision and complex to achieve. Success requires understanding, sensitivity, patience, commitment, and above all a positive attitude.

Don’t try to capture customers (i.e. Hold them prisoners), captivate them.

Don’t think about extracting value from customers (i.e. zero sum game), create and share value with them.

7.3 Future Research Directions

7.3.1 Theoretical Research Scope

There is a limited research contribution in case of retailing, shopping behaviours, retail formats and about consumer empowerment in the Indian retail and consumer context. The entire research work is based on five major retail factors viz. Retail Store
Image, Store Convenience, Relevant Communication, Consumer Involvement and Expansion of freedom of choice that cause the subjective experience of Consumer Empowerment among shoppers while shopping. These retail factors are considered only after reviewing vast literatures. But, there is an opportunity for further research identifying and considering other retail factors that may influence the Consumer Empowerment.

Also, the total research is studied from the consumers’ perspective, taking the perceptions of consumers towards the various aspects of shopping while shopping. Hence the future research can be focused from the retailers’ perspective by studying the views of retailers and outlets towards consumer empowerment.

There is lot more scope to develop marketing scales that can be used to measure the consumer empowerment.

7.3.2 Geographical research scope

The study was carried out in Bangalore city of Karnataka state. The city is considered as the research ground of all the traditional, organised and international retail outlets (Kaul Shubhashini, 2007). As a result one could see various types of retail formats in the city. The city being geographically wide spread challenges the researchers. This study was carried out classifying the sample city into five major zones viz. South, North, Central, East, and West. Further three major areas are selected from each zone and finally two retail outlets of different formats are selected for study from each area. Hence there is a wide scope for the future research if the city is studied considering some of the other classifications (based on consumer demographics, psychographics, etc.,) apart from the similar classification of retail formats.

Also, there is a scope to take up the studies in Tier I and II cities (Non metros, Districts, Taluks of state) of within the same state. This also provides an opportunity to study and compare the varying degree of empowerment across major cities in the state.

7.3.3 Demographic / Psychographic Research Scope

The study covers the demographics such as age, working status, marital status, education, monthly household income etc., of the women shoppers. The women
shoppers of the age group 18-45, both working and homemakers, married and single are considered in this case. Hence there is a wide opportunity to study the extremes of the age i.e. growing teenage segment and the 50+ years segment women shoppers, because this segment also contributes to the retail business to a great extent.

Gender studies in case of shopping and buying behaviour are of significant importance in the consumer research. Hence comparative gender studies can be undertaken to study the varying degree of consumer empowerment with the gender.

More psychographic variables like Activity, Interest and Opinion (AIO) of the shoppers can be considered in the forthcoming researches. Psychographic dimensions such as lifestyles, attitudes, activities, interests etc., of the consumers can be considered in order to measure their impact on the consumer empowerment. Since the changing demographics and psychographics of the consumers are considered as the major factors in the emergence of organised outlets, it becomes vital study these factors in depth.

7.3.4 Format Research Scope

The study was conducted with respect to six different retail store formats viz. Department stores, Malls, Hypermarkets, Exclusive Brand Showrooms, Supermarkets and Traditional Stand Alone Shops. With a lot more new formats coming up in the market there is a wide scope for the further research considering different retail formats into account. There is also an opportunity to study and compare the Consumer Empowerment across Organised and Unorganised retail formats.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

Retailing is considered as the world's largest private industry. Its contribution towards the economy of the developed nations is considered to be significant. Developed economies like USA, Europe are considered as the pioneers of the organised retailing in the world. Further the contribution of this organised retailing is considered remarkable towards the economy and employment generation.

However 'retail is not a new tale' to the Indian business. As the origin of 'trade and commerce' in India could be traced way back Indus Valley Civilization (one of the oldest civilisations of the world) and Vedic Civilisation (Associated with Aryans 200
BC) of the Indian society. The numismatic evidences from the archaeological department of India confirm the same. Today, Indian retailing has started of its journey ‘from mandi to marts to malls’ after opening up its economy to the world market. But even today Indian consumer market is ruled by the traditional retailers. Only four to five percent of the total retail market share is because of the organised retailers. The importance and significance of the organised retail trade is recognised very recently considering its potential for generating employment (85) and contributions to the GDP (8-9%) of the nation. With the evolving consumer market and foreign direct investments happening in the industry, the thought process is inclining towards organised retailing. Fierce competition, changing consumer demands, emergence of new consumer segments etc., have compelled the Indian retailers to focus towards the new and unique marketing strategies. In this direction an effort is made to understand the concept of ‘Consumer Empowerment’ from the developed economies. Further, an attempt is made to develop a ‘Consumer Empowerment’ model to suit the Indian consumer market and retail industry situation.

The concept of ‘Consumer Empowerment’ is not just a one go strategy. It is a long term investment of all types of resources of the retailer completely trusting the consumers. This path is going to be more challenging for the retailers as they are expected to first build the trust among the consumers and involve them tactically in the retail processes, with the aim of serving them better. The job of the retailer does not end here instead, their responsibility towards maintaining the customer relationship starts there and it is expected for the life time.

The increasing shopping trend among the women customers has given rise to a new set of opportunities to the retailers. Majority of the women shoppers are solely deciding on big ticket products and services. This has boosted their confidence in purchase decision making. Today, women shoppers are considered as ‘serious shoppers’ in comparison with their male counterparts. They are smart, well-informed and independent in decision making. HER purchase decisions are appreciated by the family members, friends and colleagues. As a result she feels more motivated and responsible while shopping. Some the qualities such as enjoyment and enthusiasm shown from browsing, to selecting, to rejecting and finally to buying (sometimes even ‘exchanging / returning’) goes incomparable. As Pierre Marineau aptly puts it, shopping makes woman feel as a ‘QUEEN for a day’…flattered and imperious. She
feels free, independent and empowered with the decision making ability while shopping. The women of this new generation are highly qualified, employed, exposed to foreign markets, experimenting and more demanding. As a result women consumers are on the radar screen of the retailers.

The feeling of 'empowered while shopping' mean a lot to the women shoppers. In their own terms a happy shopping makes them feel achieved, independent, confident, etc. In some of the instances, when women shoppers have been properly cared and given prominence by the retailers, they have felt and reminded of their 'unique identity' and 'self image'. Hence, retailers must focus on this long term building real relationship in order to make women shoppers a lifetime customers. This is possible only when they are treated as business partners and conveyed the meaning of their real importance in the business.

The real sense of empowerment among shoppers will come only when they are given actual control in the (some of the) retail activities. For instance, providing large choice set alone does not bring any change in the attitude of women towards retailing. Instead if women shoppers are given an opportunity to take part in some (feasible areas according to country/region/format specific) of the business activities by extending a optimal control over activities such as Choice set selection process, deciding the channel of delivery, pricing etc., they can feel empowered. This specific retail activity backed by the optimal combination of store convenience, relevant information and retail store atmosphere can result in the subjective experience of empowerment among women shoppers.

This concludes that subjective experience of consumer empowerment becomes more effective and successful only when women shoppers are given a degree of control over some of the retail activities by the retailers. This degree of control extended to women shoppers can vary across the regions, states and nations depending on the issues of legality of the respective country. But, **Empowering Women Consumers’ is going to increase the ‘responsible shopping or buying’ among women folk. This in turn helps the families to spend responsibly and strike a balance between earning and spending. A debt free family builds awareness in its community; a debt free community is potential enough to create debt free society and **economically stable nation.** Hence it can be construed as ‘Empowered Consumers’ are not only an asset to the retailers but even to the society at large.