CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
CHAPTER-II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the previous chapter the theoretical aspects related to the topic such as what is family, what are the different stages of family life cycle and how a family takes purchase decisions related issues were presented to put the topic of research in proper perspective. In the present chapter, review of related literature will be presented in order to explore what are the previous work in the field and what gap exist in the field so the it will enable the researcher to formulate the problem and devise the methodology to investigate the problem. Accordingly, there exist large number of studies exist related to the problem. They are broadly categorized in two parts:

i. Studies in India, and

ii. Studies Abroad

2.1. Studies in India

There are some studies in India on consumer behaviour with respect to purchase of selected durables. Following are some important studies related to the present research:

According to Hawkins et al. (2007), in India, the family has a multilayered structure, with joint family, and extended family pattern being common traditionally. However, transitional urban families which are nuclear and semi nuclear, are also growing at a high rate with greater urbanization. Despite this, maintenance of close links socially as well resource sharing wise, across the extended family is also common. Close links with parents, and often siblings is a norm rather than exception. Observance of social norms of support and presence during important family and social occasion across the extended family is also widespread in India across regions and faith. Fulfillment of familial obligation is still widespread across all levels of society. Age has always been accorded respect and right over resources in families and social settings in India. The many advertisements showing the elder advising their children is taken to certain advertisers of baby care product claiming that succeeding generations have used it to quieten an infants’ stomach pains help growth; and also, in the use of traditional ingredients in many beauty care products. One newly launched brand Ayurvedic Concepts, advocating its ayurvedic origins, specifically uses the smart, savvy, problem solving grandmother in all kinds situations, Concepts, highlighting the traditional nature, wisdom and effectiveness of its product. However, the changing cultural values laying stress on modernity, youth and specially being tech savvy and cosmopolitan, is often used by marketers to communicate a certain image. The use of youth icons is also in-
creasing with the target audience of youth, as well as older audiences and even children. The focus is on the association of good times or energy of the youth, as well as apparels, food products etc., are focusing on the unabashed consumer culture increasing material values of the younger generation, which is also more brand conscious and ready to experiment with the newer brands. Most ads are, therefore, getting oriented around youth than being age neutral or middle aged/young parent, as earlier. Ads speak of young mothers meeting their desires of being college girl again (apparel brands, slimming services, etc.). Characters portraying even older family roles such parents of teenagers, are shown as much younger than a generation earlier. The older consumers are seen as aspiring for youthful brands that may help retain their image of themselves as young, or being young at heart. Still, a lot of brands reaching the less cosmopolitan metro audiences are using the prevalent dominant cultures’ juxtaposition of youthful energy and fun with the advice and wisdom of older consumers. Another trend is that the so called older consumers of all ages, beyond the hazy notion of ‘youth’ or thirty years, are now being targeted specifically for product development efforts as well as communications and service design. They are now observed to be richer than the youth and with just as much a desire of lifestyle product as youth. They are also now seen as more ready to spend on themselves than earlier generations of consumers in their full nest stages. The role of youth in the family represents the typical Indian transitional culture: there is less interaction amongst the family members for more items of personal consumption, and yet they interact more often than in other cultures for common-use durables. Youth is seen as playing a leading role as initiators as well influencers in an increasing range of electronic and high tech product purchases as well as household appliances and white goods. Visible public consumption items which are high involvement or lifestyle related are seen to be more influenced by children and youth than earlier. On the other hand, private such as soaps consumption, low involvement items or items of very high involvement such housing, financial products, educational products, etc., seem to be involving the older family members to a significant extent.

Rich & Jain (1968) found significant differences in shopping behaviour between social classes. Ambani (1978) in their study found that social class is closely related to consumer behaviour. Dogra & Chouhan (1979) in their study on consumer behaviour in television found that social class influence the buying behaviour of consumers in television.

According to Dhar (2007), women in India are playing a rather significant role in the mainstreaming of the economy as well as in the domestic labour sector.
Over 118 million women are reported to be active members of the workforce in Indian economy. As workers in the informal economy, as farm workers, dairy workers, casual workers, domestic help, piece rate workers for garment and other craft and non-craft based small industries, and even as unaccounted workers in construction industry. Their role as providers and homemakers at one end of the socio-economic spectrum, especially rural, has always been known to India, but it has to be examined in terms of role in household purchase decisions, to fully gauge their impact on business. Nearly seventy seven percent of this over hundred million workforce works in the rural sector, engaged in agriculture and agri-produce based small/cottage enterprises, often with part time and multi industry engagement, but there are no fixed employment or fixed income patterns.

Das (1987) in his study found that:

1. With total sample of 150 respondents, 64.67% TV owners were influenced by their family members, 12.67% by friends, 7.33% by neighbours, and 15.33% by dealers and others to purchase television.

2. Among the family members in the total sample 39.33% were influenced by their children, 34.67% by their wives 10.67% by parents, 5.33% by husbands and 10% by brothers and sisters.

3. In the total sample, 73.33% of the respondents were also influenced by advertisement but 24.67% were not. Amongst those influenced by advertisement, 36.91% had seen from newspaper, 20.60% in posters and wall painting, 14.86% in magazines, 7.33% in T.V. and 11.16% from other Medias.

4. From the separate analysis of each individual factor like price, quality and concessions, etc. offered at the time of purchase, it was found that in total sample 86% were influenced by quality, 76.675 by price, 62.67% by manufacturer's reputation, 45.33% by after sales service and 8.67% by other reasons at the time of purchasing their T.V. sets.

5. While analyzing the individual factor in the mode of buying, in the total sample, 69.335 had purchased their T.V. sets against full payment, 17.33% in instalments, 7.33% received as gifts, 6% against bank loans.

6. About various problems faced due to television in the house in the total sample, 56.67% did not have any problem and out of 43.33% of the respondents facing problems, majority (35.10%) household's main problem was that study of their children was adversely affected, 29.80% felt the neighbours children were invading their privacy at house, 11.26% expressed non-availability of spare parts, 16.56% mentioned high electronic expenses and 7.28% indicated servicing problems.
7. In the separate analysis of each individual factors about the long term effects of T.V., 69.33% viewed that in the long run it weakened eye sight, 34% opined that due to the presence of television in the house family members got less time for exchange of ideas, 29.33% felt people were better informed, 28% opined television in the house made people introvert, 20% viewed that T.V. created more social consciousness.

According to Jain and Bhatt (2003), in India also there is tendency to consult children more and more as their age advances partly because for certain items they have greater information from TV, print media and friends. The influence of mother or wife is considerable for purchase of products for kids like soaps, powder, milk, and articles for husband like soaps, cosmetics, razor blades, ties and so on. Many items needed by husband or wife are purchased jointly if both have time but sometimes when they have no time to go together each one purchases products for himself or tells the choice to the other partner. In India when garments, jewelerry, shoes etc. are purchased for the marriage of daughter she is the main influence and when products are purchased for would be daughter-in-law her choice is found out and in more advance families she asked to accompany her mother-in-law, this concept is almost missing in the west because parents have no role to play in the marriage except giving some gift for which they find out the choice of the children or take him/her with them. In case of costly items like houses, car, refrigerators, AC, often it is joint decision of the family regarding the locality where house has to be bought, the brand and colour of car or refrigerator or the brands of AC. But in some matters husband or wife who is main financier has a dominant role to play. He fixes the financial limit and thereafter final decisions is taken jointly with the consent of all members. If a second car is purchased for wife or son or daughter they have the main say. In the matter of deciding the college for education besides parent child and his peer group has considerable influence. Thus it may be concluded that role of various family members varies according to the age of the children, the usage of product, the user of the product, the price of the product. The position of various members of the household in the family specially with regard to financing of purchases also have great influence on purchase decision.

In a recent study of “Brand Wise Variation in Selected Consumer Durables” Rao and Verma (2006) found that:

1. Age-wise variation is found in Electroloux-Kelvinator refrigerator, Esteem car, IBM computer and Philips T.V.

2. Sex-wise significant variation is found in Indica car, IBM computer and Philip T.V.
3. Education-wise variation is found in Motorola, Santro and Indica brands of car, HCL and HP brands of computer and Philip T.V.

4. Occupation-wise variation is found in Samsung refrigerator, Motorola and Nokia mobiles, Santro car, HCL and HP brands of computers and Philip T.V.

Accordingly they have suggested that:

1. In case of refrigerators some variations must be made advertisements of Electroloux-Kelvinator for the people of different age groups whereas variation is required for Samsung refrigerators for the people pursuing different occupation.

2. With respect to cars, age-wise variation is required in Esteem car, sex-wise in Indica car, education-wise in Santro and Indica brands, and occupation-wise in Santro car to enhance the effectiveness of the print media ads.

3. In mobile phones, education-wise variations are to be made in Motorola mobile and occupation-wise variation must be made in Motorola and Nokia mobiles.

4. For T.V.s, a variation is required only in Philip T.V. with respect to all the personal variables.

5. Age-wise and sex-wise variation is required in the advertisements of IBM computer and education-wise and occupation-wise in HCL and HP brands of computer.

Patro and Sahu (1991) in their study of cosmetic buying behaviour and brand preference found that cosmetic market is highly brand loyal in nature. Heavy users are majority in the 20-30 age group (57%) and this figure decreases to 12% and 7%, respectively in the 30-40, and 40 and above age groups. Both the middle and upper income groups are equally lucrative to cosmetic marketers. The intensity of usages of cosmetic items tends to increase with increase in education. As it is a life style product, psychographic variables are better indicators of cosmetic usage than that of demographic variables. Advertisements and word-of-mouth are the two most important sources of information to a cosmetic buyer. When it comes to the place of purchase, stationers are the most preferred outlet followed by ladies corner shops and grocery shops. Lakme is perceived as a modern, high quality and relatively better known brand. The image of Pond’s in the user’s mind of a well known, large company with items which come next to Lakme in terms of quality.

Khan (2004) is of opinion that the traditional view of the family life cycle has been criticized for failing to recognize that a single family unit may not exist throughout the life of an individual. Families may be created by second marriages,
and these may involve children from prior marriages. The traditional marriage also ignores the existence of single parent households. The modern family life cycle which takes into account the existence of working women, is a more complex and more useful model than traditional model.

It is realized that various purchasing tasks are performed by various members of the family. The products are bought for joint use of the family. Refrigerator, T.V., sofa set, car etc. The product is to be purchased by family funds where more than one person may be contributing to the fund. Sometimes the funds are not enough and other products may have to be sacrificed to own an expensive product. Some family members may not be agreeable to the choice made for the product, and may consider it as a profligate expenditure. These are the main influences in the family decision making, which are the outlets preferred by the family members for the purchase of the product. All the above considerations are important and once all this is known strategy can be formulated in a better manner.

Srivastava and Khandai (2002) have made three important observations about the impact family on buying behaviour as follows:

1. A family may be patriarchial, in which the father is the decision maker almost always. In a matriarchial family, the mother plays the dominant role and makes most of the decisions. In the equalitarian family, the husband and wife share somewhat equally in decision making. The Indian family is traditionally patriarchial as the society is male dominated. But in urban areas, there is a growing emergence of equalitarian families. Another emerging trend in urban areas is child-centered family in which children have strong influence in their parents’ consumption decision.

2. To understand the consumption and decision making pattern in a family, it is important to understand the power relationship within the family. A household may (i) automatic in which an equal number of decisions is made by each spouse, (ii) husband dominant, (iii) wife dominant, and (iv) joint or syncratic, in which most decisions are made by husband and wife jointly.

3. Automatic decisions are usually in the case of products like men’s business clothing, women’s jewellery, wife dominant decisions in the case of products like child’s clothing, kitchen utensils, etc. Joint decisions occur while purchasing consumer durables like a music system, T.V. sets, or while planning a vacation. The husband tends to dominate purchasing hardware, spares for a car.

According to Srivastava and Khandai (2002) cites the examples of Unit Trust of India advertisement as examples of how many families in India setting the buyer and user may be two different members. In the Children’s Gift Growth Fund while the mother is the buyer the user of the benefit will be the child. Similarly in WIPRO
advertisement they pointed out that it hints at socialization of the kind into selection of right educational tools. The child is initiated into process of learning. In another classic analysis of the advertisement by Philips, they observed that in modern families, husband and wife both perform equally important roles for the purchase of television both have expressed their choiceable desirable features and the final brand choice incorporated the choice of both.

Ramanacharyalu, Anitha and Dey (2003) in their study of awareness, perception and acceptance of a popular FMCG brand- college tooth paste in village market found that in most of the households the decision for making any purchase is taken by the parents. In some cases the influencers for purchase were shopkeepers. In other cases it was T.V., school, neighbour, parents, price, influence of the children and friends. It was found that the children had less exposure to advertisements. Most of the households possess T.V. or Radio or they purchase newspaper. Through these they get information about new product introductions and market itself. The people who do not have T.V. or Radio have other means of gathering information. Word of mouth was found to be one of the fastest means of spreading information. Regular chat sessions in evenings and nights with neighbours and friends enable this sort of information exchange. There is no specific pattern of discussing; they speak of everything that happened during the day, which also includes experiences regarding product usage, and recommendations to other friends regarding purchase of products.

The inhabitants of village also indicated that they do not go in for special offers for example – “buy one get one free”. They also said that companies would give special offers only when the products are of low quality or when they do not get sold. Out of sixty households that were visited the head of the family of fifty one households said that they would not go for purchase of cheap products. Quality was their first preference. Six out of nine children, nine out of eleven in the age group of 16-25 years and all people in the age group 26-51 years who use Colgate said that would not change the brand. This was not because they were satisfied with the performance but also they did not want to experiment with any other brand of toothbrushes. Many of the users said that they were not very much attached to the brand Colgate, but still they did not want to change.

Most of the people in all age groups said they are not very much influenced by the price of the toothbrush. They also said that even though they have T.V. and radio they would only go in for purchasing on the basis of experience, as the claims of the advertisements were not realistic. They were not confident enough to purchase the product even though they were very curious in collecting informa-
tion regarding various products and their performance including new products.

2.2 Studies Abroad

In comparison to Indian studies, a large number of studies are conducted abroad related to family and impact of family life cycle on the consumer buying behaviour. Following are some important studies conducted abroad on these issues:

Belk, and Coon (1993) identified that in recent years Halloween has become the second most popular holiday in the United States in terms of retail sales of gifts and home decorations - two consumer behaviour activities that convey a family's holiday spirit. Lavin (1993) found that women working outside the home in recent years coupled with changing spousal role has affected how couples divide their buying responsibilities. Qualls (1982) studied family decisions concerning vacations, automobiles, children's education, housing, insurance, and savings. Prior studies showed that decisions regarding these products were usually reported as wife or husband dominant. Qualls found overwhelmingly that joint decisions are now the norm for these products, with 80 percent of children's education and housing decisions made jointly. Increasing resources of women and shift towards egalitarianism are producing more joint decision making in product and service categories of perceived high risk. In contrast, however, time pressures, brought about by large number of dual worker families, may produce more autonomic decisions in categories of perceived low risk.

Bartos (1982) identified that homemakers and just a job women are more likely to read traditional women's magazines, whereas professional women are more likely to read general interest and business oriented magazines and newspapers. Ferber, and Birnbaum (1980) found that married working women have significantly less leisure time than their husbands or full time homemaker. This suggests that working wives would buy more time saving appliances, use more convenience foods, spend less time on shopping and so forth. Weinberg, and Winer (1983) identified that working and non working wives are similar in behaviour if income, life stage, and other situational variables are held constant.

Bellante, and Foster (1984) found from their study that working-wife families appear to spend more on food away from home, childcare, and some service. Jacobsen and Edmondson (1993) identified changing role of men in families in United States. They found that it is not uncommon in the United States for the woman of the household to buy new tires for the car while the husband stays
home to cook dinner or play with kids. As men’s share of family income decreases and as values shift in society, men are free to participate more fully in family functions and are taking on new roles in consuming and purchasing products.

Paxton, and Roedder (1995) found that children exert enormous influence over spending power in a growing number of product categories, including footwear and clothing. McNeal (1998) identified that in the year 1998 in United States children spent over $25 billion to buy confections, games, movies, and music from U.S. retailers. The fastest growing purchase category for children has been apparel, due in part to children assuming more responsibility for their own necessities. Children exert direct influence over parental spending when they request specific products and brands. Direct influence also refers to joint decision making – actively participating with family members to make a purchase. Children’s influence might be indirect, occurring when parents buy products and brands that they know their children prefer, without being asked or told to make that specific purchase.

Kim, and Lee (1997) found from their study that children tend to have greater influence in purchase decisions involving products for their own use. Hogg, Bruce, and Hill (1998) found from their study that children not only influence choices but also they make purchases with family money and with their own. Just as children affect family purchases, families affect young consumer’s perception and evaluation of product and brand choices. Hite, and Hite (1994) found that children’s consumer behaviour is absorbed at very young ages from familial examples so that if parents exhibit brand loyalty to a specific brand, children perceive that brand and product to be good.

Grossbart, Carlson, and Walsh (1991) found that much of consumer behaviour is learned as a child. Children learn primarily from shopping with parents, known as co-shopping. Co-shoppers tend to be more concerned about their children’s development as consumers, and they place more value on children’s input in family consumer decisions, including decisions on product not encountered on typical co-shopping trips such as automobiles, major appliances, life insurance, and vacations. Carlson, Grossbart, and Kathleen found that mothers who are restrictive and warm in relationships with their children tend to monitor and control children’s consumption activities more, whereas mothers who respect and solicit children’s opinion use messages that promote purchasing and consumption decision making abilities.

Spiro (1983) studied role structures in families and found that role and influence of family members vary by stage in the decision process. He identified
few questions to measure family influence. The questions are: (1) who was responsible for initial need recognition? (2) who was responsible for acquiring information about the purchase alternatives? (3) who made the final decision on which alternative should be purchased? (4) who made the actual purchase of the product?

Granbois, and Summers (1975) studied that husband’s responses concerning purchase intentions are better predictor of total planned cost and number of items planned although wives predicted better for certain products such as appliances, home furnishings, and entertainment equipment plans.

Labrecque and Richard (2001) conducted a study of children’s influence on family decision making with respect to eating out. They found that about 17 percent of the 9 to 12 year old children studied, considered themselves to be the main decision maker with respect to the decision to go to a restaurant, whereas 40 percent thought of themselves as the main decision maker with respect to the choice of restaurants.

Corfman (1991) studied husband-wife influence on family consumption decisions and classified family consumption decisions as husband dominated, wife dominated, joint, and autonomic (either solitary or unilateral).

Ford, John B., La Tour, Michael S., Henthorne, and Robert (1995) studied cultural influence on husband-wife decision making patterns in the People’s Republic of China and in the United States. They found that among Chinese there were substantially fewer “joint” decisions and more “husband dominated” decisions for many household purchases.

Ganesh (1997) conducted cross cultural study among three groups: Asian Indian living in India, Asian Indian living in the United States, and American nationals with respect to husband-wife decision making. He found from his study that there were a decrease in husband dominated decisions and an increase in the wife dominated decisions, going from Asian Indian in India, to Asian Indians in the United States, to American nationals. According to him this pattern seems to indicate the impact of assimilation on decision making.

Sullivan, and O’Connor (1988) found that four factors determine the degree to which decisions will be made jointly or by one or other spouse: (1) sex role stereotypes- couples who believe in traditional sex role stereotypes tend to make individual decisions for sex typed products (i.e. those considered to be “masculine” or “feminine”), (2) spousal resources- the spouse who contributes more resources to the family has greater influence, (3) experience- couples who have gained experience as a decision making unit make individual decisions more frequently, (4) socio-economic status- middle class families make more joint decisions than do either higher or lower class families.
Webster (1995) identified that family members interact in purchase decision on the basis of culture and sub-culture which exist in the family, the role specialization of different family members, the degree of involvement each has in the product area of concern, and the personal characteristics of the family members.

Ford, Pelton and Lumpkin (1995) studied marital roles in purchase decision process and found that America has less masculine orientation than many other cultures. Wives are more involved in a wider range of decisions in the United States than they are in cultures with a more masculine focus.

Meyers and Maheshwaran (1991) found that in relation to advertising and consumer decision making, females are more likely to engage in a detailed, through examination of a message and make extended decisions based on product attributes, whereas males are selective information processors, driven more by overall themes and simplifying heuristics.

Meyers (1988) found that males tend to be more sensitive to personally relevant information and women pay attention to both personally relevant information and information relevant to others. Rudell (1993) found that men tend to have more positive attitudes and higher levels of involvement towards high-tech products than women. She further identified that men are more likely to base these decisions on software, prior experience, and reputation, where as price is more critical for women.

Reilly (1982) found that the demand for both career and family (called role overload) leave less time for many activities, including cooking, housekeeping, and shopping.

Oropesa (1993) found that full time employment of married women is a major predictor of microwave oven purchase.

Fram and Axelrod (1990) found that because of less time for shopping consumers are more likely to buy the same brands, be brand loyal, buy impulsively, and use catalogues. Davis and Rigaux (1974) conducted a study to know marital roles in decision making in United States and identified four major categories of decisions: (1) husband dominant decision, (2) wife dominant decision, (3) autonomic decision; equally likely to be made by the husband or wife but not both, (4) syncratic decision; made jointly by husband and wife (e.g., vacations, refrigerators, TV, living room furniture, carpets, family car).

Spiro (1983) found that a spouse will have greater influence when the financial resources brought to the family are higher.
Filiarault and Ritchie (1980) found that demographic factors such as total family income, occupation, and education also influence the decision of husband and wife.

Foxman and Tansuhaj (1989) found that children are more likely to influence parents for child related products such as cereals, cookies, candy, snacks, ice cream, and frozen pizza. As well as according to Lackman and Lanasa (1993) they influence for cars, vacations, and new technologies (e.g., Personal computers).

Caron and ward (1975) found that seeing products or services on TV can lead children to make requests to their parents. Roberts, Wortzel and Berkely (1981) found that when parents are more involved in the decision process or are more traditional and conservative, children are less likely to have influence. Darley and Lim (1986) found that the older the child, the more influence he or she will exert. According to Nelson (1978) part of the reason is that younger children tend to have lower involvement in the decision process. Further Betty and Talpade (1994) found that teens believe they have greater influence when the decision is important to them and the family.

2.3 Justification of the Present Study

The size of the consumer market is vast in our country and it has increased manifold after globalization of Indian economy. Consumer’s preferences are fast changing and becoming highly diversified. With massive growth of information network and technology and fast movement of goods and services from one corner of the world to other and availability of a number of substitutes fro any product with competitive price, quality etc, the buyer today is exhibiting diversified preference and less predictable.

The marketer must decide towards whom he has to direct their promotional efforts. Some marketers may believe that the buyers of the product is the best prospect, others believe it the users of the product, while others still play it safe by directing their promotional efforts to both buyers and users. As consumers, we will be benefited from our own consumption related decision; what we buy, why we buy, how we buy, and the promotional influences that persuade us to buy. The findings of the study will enable the common public to be better and wiser consumer. The scholars of human behaviour will gain deeper insight in to why individuals act in certain consumption related ways and with learning what internal external factors impel them to act as they do.

As future marketers will be able to recognize why and how family life cycle influence the consumption decisions, so that they can make better strategies decisions by understanding how consumers will react to informational and environmental cues which will ultimately enable them to prepare the better competitive
advantage in the market place. The scholars of consumer behavior will gain deeper insight in why individuals act in certain consumption related ways and with learning what internal external factors impel them to act as they do.

As stated by Theodore Levitt, the marketing concept embodies “the view that an industry is customer satisfying process, not a good-producing process... An industry begins with the customer and his needs, not with a patent, a raw material, or a selling skill.” The general acceptance by academicians and practitioners that business functions to fulfill consumer needs and wants made by the study of the consumer essential.

Customer of today is the arbiter of corporate destiny. He is unrelenting, demanding, and finicky. He wishes to fulfill his needs in the most cost effective manner. Consumer spending is rising rapidly, while saving rates in India are falling. Alyque Padamsee says: “This is the land of karma, where everything is worked out for you, your destiny, your Kismet. But the generation now feels, “The hell with waiting for reincarnation!” they are breaking the karma handcuffs. Now everyone is deciding that what they want is a better for their life. If they have money, they want to spend it now”. Consumers today are spending intelligently, not indiscriminately. It is perhaps today’s realities for the marketer? Moreover, customer today is exposed to international quality, thanks to the entry of more players – from within India and abroad – in the market in post liberalized India have further intensified the competition. Further he dictates specifications, quality standards, and chargeable price he wants everything here and now and both budget shoppers and high spenders are demanding better return for the money they spend. This in turn has several lessons for the marketers. In fact a marketer has to act like a long-term investor and has to be prepared to accept minimum benefits. The need of the hour today for marketer is to constantly assess customer needs and respond to them promptly. Therefore, all the planning processes and the people of the organizations have to be reconfigured around the central character, viz, the customer. Above all, the marketing effort has to be directed at meeting customer needs, and not earning profit, or building markets. The latter will of course be fall out of the customer focus. Since in a competitive world, the marketer has to strategize to deliver customer value greater than that provided by his competitors, therefore, there has to be a paradigm shift. The corporation has to exist for the customer. The company has to customaries itself. Such an organization will have to establish a link between itself and the customers in the following manner.

The size of the consumer market is vast in our country and it has increased manifold after globalization of Indian economy. Consumers’ preferences are fast
changing and becoming highly diversified. With massive growth of information network and technology and fast movement of goods and services from one corner of the world to other and availability of a number of substitutes for any product with competitive price, quality etc, the buyer today is exhibiting diversified preference and less predictable. The marketer must decide toward whom he has to direct their promotional efforts. Some marketers may believe that the buyers of the product is the best prospect, others believe it the users of the product, while still others play it safe by directing their promotional efforts to both buyers and users. Just as consumers and marketers are diverse, the reasons why people study consumer behaviour are also diverse. The field of consumer behaviour holds great interest for us as consumers, as marketers and as scholars of human behaviour.

There are many external determinants which influence the consumer buying behaviour. Especially family life cycle (FLC) and its different stages have visible impact on buying behaviour of consumers, which could be revealed from majority studies conducted by researchers abroad in comparison to their counterparts in India. Hence, the present study is a modest attempt in this direction to assess whether family life cycle as a whole and different stages in particular do influence the buying behaviour of people within a state and across the states.