CHAPTER – IV

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study on The Dynamics of Purchase Decision in Cosmetics – College Going Girls’ Reaction’, is aimed at identifying various factors which play role in the buying process involved while the college girls purchase cosmetics and to analyse the process of their purchase decision. The study is presented in four chapters, the first being introductory, the second chapter identifies the various factors influencing the consumer behaviour and the third chapter analyses the influence of these factors in purchase decision. The final chapter summarises and concludes the study.

Summary of Chapter I

People use various appliances to appear pleasant. The substances used for such purpose are ‘cosmetics’. Cosmetics were in use since ancient times, Indian literature abounds with reference to a number of cosmetics.

India provides a vast market for cosmetics, Consumers of cosmetic products are ever in the increase. The consumers exercise ultimate control over the market. To satisfy the consumer is the ultimate task of a marketer.

Hence, the study of consumer behaviour is essential for the marketers to build their future and for the consumers to gain awareness of influencing factors.
With the advent of Europeans, women in Indian society have become more conscious about appearance resulting in the use of cosmetics. The study attempts to identify the factors influencing the purchase of cosmetics and the process of purchase decision among girls at college level.

Because of the limitations, the study is restricted to Nagappattinam district region alone and only three cosmetics, viz., Facial Cream, Shampoo and Nailpolish were selected for the purpose of this study.

The objectives of the study are to identify the factors influencing consumer behaviour, to analyse the purchase decision process, motives behind the purchase and the extent of brand and shop loyalties. Certain hypotheses were set anticipating the outcome of the study. Operational definitions are given for the terms cosmetics, consumer, consumer behaviour, Brand and Shop loyalties, Bargaining and purchase decision. Methodology is explained. Sampling technique and tools used are discussed. After the framework of analysis a brief, profile of respondents is given followed by chapter scheme.

Summary of Chapter II:

Factors influencing the buying behaviour of college going girls regarding cosmetics are identified and discussed in the second chapter, Demographic and psychographic factors influencing the buyers are discussed. Four major factors viz., Cultural (Culture and Social class), social (reference groups, family), personal (age and life style, personality) and psychological (motivation, perception, learning) are identified.
The subjects of the present study, forming a segmentation of the society undergoing vast changes because of the impact of the Western Culture, can be treated as student sub-culture. Being teenagers they are natural ‘triers’. Majority of them do make their own decisions in the purchase of Cosmetics. But they are influenced by parents, friends, sales personnel, media and other sources.

Four types of social classes are identified on the basis of parental income. They are upper, upper middle, lower middle and lower classes. Girls from upper middle class make their purchase decision with strong social implications. But girls from lower class exhibit Compensatory Consumption behaviour trying to emulate a good life. However, the analysis show that the impact of social Class is not significant. Among the social factors, the reference group consisting family, friends, classmates and neighbours, act as source of knowledge about products. The family in directly exerts pressure on the basis of parental income etc. No noteworthy personal factor is found.

Psychological factors include motivation, desire for efficiency and belief in dependability. The motives are mostly psychogenic. Mainly the motive is to please others and then to win social acceptance. The girls exhibit ‘problem solving learning’, leading to the evaluation of the products. It results in attitude leading to repeated purchases and specific shops. Thus the three major factors observable, influencing the college going girls ‘buying behaviour are: (i) Cultural, (ii) Social and (iii) psychological.

**Summary of Chapter III:**

Chapter III Discusses the decision process in the purchase of cosmetics by the college girls and their behaviour in this regard is analysed. The major aspects of the consumer’s behaviour are (1) external variables
having influence, such as culture, subculture, social class, social groups, the family and personal influences; (ii) individual determinants of behaviour, such as motivation and involvement, information processing, learning and memory, personality and self concept and attitude and (iii) the consumers’ decision process which includes problem recognition or recognition of need, information search and evaluation, purchasing processes and post purchase behaviour.

Problem recognition results when a consumer recognises a need. Once the consumer recognises the existence of a need, subject to other factors and constraints, the next stage in the decision making process involves a search for and evaluation of information. Search is internal as well as external. About 70.64 percent of consumers turn inward to their previous shopping experiences. Lesser number rely upon external factors such as nearness of shop etc, Simultaneous to search, the consumer is engaged in information evaluation. It involves appraisal.

Purchasing process involve not only the purchase decision, but also activities directly associated with the purchase. The aspects of brand and shop loyalties are more directly connected with making the purchase rather than with the search and evaluation activities.

Both personal and social motives influence the purchase process. Further, for some consumers bargaining is an enjoyable process. Thus consumers’ motives for shopping are a function of many variables. Personal motives differ for each product, while social motives are more or less common for all the users of cosmetics. Then the various motives behind the purchase of facial cream, shampoo and nail polish are discussed and analysed. The motives are found to be influenced by the area of residence,
parental income and education and the age of the consumers. Chi square test is applied to find out whether the impact of these factors in the purchase decision is significant or not. Thus the hypotheses were tested. The effect of area is found to be not significant. The factors of parental income and parental education are also found to be not significant. Age, as a factor, is not significant in the purchase decision. Hypotheses 1(a) to 1(d) is accepted. Personal motives tend to outweigh social motives, The area of residence has no significant impact upon the motives. Hence hypotheses stands accepted. Bargaining is found among a considerable number of consumers. Age factor alone acts significantly in the bargaining process. Hence 3rd hypotheses is rejected as far as age factor is concerned. Regarding other factors the 3rd hypothesis is accepted.

For the consumers, while shopping, a particular shop is either acceptable or not acceptable according to the shop experience. If the experience is favourable, it results in repeated purchase, leading to shop loyalty.

About 51 percent of the consumers show shop loyalty, subject to the availability of required merchandise. The reasons attributable to shop loyalty are quality and reasonable price.

The facts show that there are three types of consumers, economic personal and apathetic found among the college going girls. The general trend found is that majority of consumers are quality conscious rather than price conscious.

After the selection of shop, the purchase process is consummated. The important purchase process seen among the consumers is repeated purchases.
This is explained as brand loyalty. In this context, psychological variables alone are found to be important. Brand loyalty is found to be high among the users of facial creams followed by users of shampoo and nail polish in that order. Even in case of anticipated price hike brand loyalty stands steadfast. Main reasons behind brand loyalty are quality, popularity and believability.

Impulse purchase is found to be very confined, since mostly the purchases are preplanned and rational.

Once consumers purchase and use a product they become either satisfied or dissatisfied. Satisfaction level is highest among facial cream users followed by users of shampoo and nail polish. The level of satisfaction to be directly proportionate to the pre purchase evaluation where great care is taken and importance is given to the quality.

Thus it is seen that the purchase process among the college going girls in Nagappattinam district in their consumption of cosmetics, is motivated by the girls’ desire for quality from the initial stage itself. From the selection of a brand till the post purchase stage, quality alone acts as the major ingredient. This desire for quality in turn evoke strong brand loyalty.

Findings:

Three major factors are observed, influencing the college girls’ buying behaviour. They are cultural, social and psychological factors. Even though the cultural factors have changed the consumers in general regarding the perception about cosmetics and the extent of the use of cosmetics, as far as the purchasing process is concerned they have no significant effect. The consumers tend to exhibit class consciousness. Social acceptance is a major drive behind the use of cosmetics. Girls from lower class tend to use costlier
brands like their counterparts from upper class. But the reason behind this is only the desire for quality. The factor of price is not given importance. Hence the impact of parental income is not significant when tested.

Likewise the area of residence of the consumers doesn’t have much say. The tests show that it is not a significant factor in the purchase of cosmetics. The impact of parental education is also found not to be significant. The impact of age is not significant in the purchase of cosmetics. But in the bargaining process the impact of age factor is found to be significant. It is also found that with the advancement of age bargaining loses importance.

The impact of social factors such as reference groups and family is minimal as far as the decision process is concerned. But as sources of knowledge these factors are found to be important. Even then the factor of advertise and mass media outweigh the social factors. Even though it appears that friends and classmates influence the selection of a brand to a considerable extent, the selection is mainly subject to factors such as quality, dependability, price etc.

The motives behind the purchase of cosmetics are mostly psychogenic, focussing on the satisfaction of psychological desires. The predominant motive found is the desire to please others. Next comes the need of social acceptance.

The majority of the consumers are rational buyers. They rationalise the purchase on the basis of efficiency and dependability rather than on economical factors, strengthening the finding the quality alone is the single most dominant factor behind the purchasing process.
Three types of consumers of cosmetics found among the college going girls in the selection of shops. They are economic, personal and apathetic types of consumers. The economic types are sensitive to quality and price. The personalising type are attached to the shop by the courteous treatment they receive. The apathetic consumers chose the shop either because it is nearer or since it has become habitual. But at the outset, it is found that on an average half of the consumers exhibit shop loyalty, subject to the availability of the required merchandise. Shop owners seen to gain the confidence of consumers mainly on the basis of quality and reasonable price. Even though majority of girls think that shop owners usually demand higher prices, which is the main reason found behind bargaining, enquiries show that it is not correct. The cosmetics, generally are sold at fixed prices only. Retailers may be demanding five or ten percent towards profit when compared with large departmental and Cooperative stores. Conversely, the main reasons found for going to different shops are the convenience and the expectation of better quality. Expectation of price advantage and courteous treatment is very low when compared. After quality, convenience is given more importance in choosing the shop.

As far as brand loyalty is concerned psychological variables alone are mainly related to it. High brand loyalty is found in case of facial cream products. It is comparatively low in case of nailpolishes and intermediary in case of shampoo. More than half of the facial cream users are ready to suspend the use rather than change the brand. But it is less than half in case of shampoo users and nearly one quarter only among the nail polish users. A slight difference is seen in the hypothetical possibility of the introduction of a better brand. Shampoo users tend to adhere to old brands more than facial cream users. The reason behind this is that shampoo has became an essential it and mainly used for cleaning purpose, and most girls want to go safe in this regard.
But in case of anticipated price hike, brand loyalty does not change. Except in case of nail polish, the main reason behind the brand loyalty is standard quality, popularity and believability, in that order. In case of nail polish testimonial and colourful packing also have bearing.

Impulse buying is very limited. No noteworthy personal factor is found to influence the purchase of cosmetics. The post purchase feeling is generally found to be satisfactory, since the purchases are preplanned and based on quality.

One major factor, found to have effect over all variables and dominating everything, is quality. The craving for quality outweighs all others. It is the main reason behind shop loyalty, brand loyalty and the satisfactory post purchase feelings. The entire purchase process found among the college going girls in the consumption of cosmetics, is motivated by the girls’ desire for quality right from the initial stages. From the selection of a brand till the post purchase stage, quality alone acts as a major ingredient.

Suggestions:

It is clear that segmentation of the cosmetic market on the basis of social class or income class is meaningless. Irrespective of income or social class or status, the Consumers go for costly brands on the assumption of superior quality and quality is not sacrificed for gain in the price. Consumers select a brand mainly on the basis of quality and want to stick on to it even in the possibility of a price hike. The introduction of an even better brand only is likely to change the consumers. The consumers are not price conscious, not to be mistaken with price awareness, but quality conscious. Hence the prime concern of marketers and manufacturers should be quality only. The market will be completely lost if price factor is given
importance. Since most of the consumers acquire knowledge about a particular product through advertisements and mass media, it will be helpful for the marketers if they concentrate in this line coupling it with the projection of quality. Superiority over other brand can be pointed out qualitatively as well as quantitatively since each brand is marketed in different quantities. To avoid possible price between retailers maximum retail price can be mentioned including all the taxes. This will make bargaining and shop loyalty lose importance to some extent. As far as nail polish is concerned more importance can be given to attractive appearance and packing also with the quality. In short, quality should be the motto of manufacturers and marketers of cosmetics.

As far as the consumers are concerned what better thing can be suggested than quality, which they already aspire for.