Chapter 9

Conclusions and Findings

9.1: Introduction

9.2: Objective-wise Conclusions and Findings

9.3: Conclusions related to Families
   a. General Conclusions
   b. Specific Conclusions

9.4: Conclusions Related to Children
   a. General Conclusions
   b. Specific Conclusions

9.5: Findings

9.6: Summary
9.1 Introduction

Once the research process started, it turned out to be the tip of an iceberg. Indian consumer is enjoying reasonable comforts and material prosperity. His needs are on a rise and so is his disposable income. Exposure and economic status has changed the attitude of upper middle-class consumer, towards different products. Consumers have started living in an ever-changing world of multiple choices and aspirations which are always on the rise. This has been observed by the young tweenagers who too want to follow suit. Children today are better informed due to a number of factors, all discussed in the above chapters. Children are been targeted from all sides and to such an extent that they can’t escape consumerism. Research work suggested that too much too soon that to on a platter, depression at such an early age, boredom, been there and done that feeling, all seems to have caught up with the new generation. These words were never heard of in 1980’s. There was ample place to play, a number of friends and many different games which could be played. Almost every product and service seem to have lost its charm for these youngsters, the results were very frightening. On the other hand, the marketers are trying to make the most out of this opportunity, at the cost of these youngsters which is even more shocking. A few recommendations have been put forth at the end of the sixth and seventh chapter respectively. The conclusions and findings have been an eye-opener. A number of facts have come to the forefront along with its positive and negative aspects.

Since the research work studies the parent’s involvement in shaping the attitude of young children as well as the children themselves along with a number of factors affecting them, researcher thought it was appropriate to give a separate set of conclusions and findings each in relation to Indian families and children. This chapter also attempts to give objective wise conclusions and findings that were derived from the study.
9.2 objective-wise conclusions and findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Objectives of research</th>
<th>Conclusions and findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>To study the conceptual framework of consumer behaviour and buying decisions.</td>
<td>• Researcher thought it was appropriate to first understand the basic concepts of consumer behaviour, application of consumer behaviour to marketing, types of buying behaviour, the consumer decision making process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• In order to understand the subject in depth, the third chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the conceptual framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Though much more could be included in the said chapter, the researcher has tried to explain only the pertinent and important concepts, without going into unnecessary details and yet covering the essential concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>To study the consumer behaviour among children in Mumbai metro region.</td>
<td>• Mumbai is a dynamic cosmopolitan city with people from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds staying together in harmony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The impact of any new trend or concept is felt more in metro cities. In this case it was the concept of nuclear urban families (which are growing at an alarming rate), dual income, media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. To study the change in society in terms of consumer behaviour among children. | invasion, impact of malls, technology which were studied in context to children’s behaviour.  
- These young children have acquired the status of ‘consumer’ at an early age due to a number of factors directly and indirectly contributing towards it.  
- Researcher probed into this particular subject after watching the marketers go overboard in wooing this segment. Since these young kids are the primary buyers, the influencers in decision-making in the household and the future buyers, a study of children’s behaviour within the parameters of Mumbai metro region was undertaken.  
  
- Researcher attempted to study the factors affecting the children’s buying behaviour in 1980’s where materialism had not caught up with these children.  
- Against this backdrop, the emerging factors responsible for turning young children towards consumerism were studied in detail  
- These factors are explained in detail, in chapter four, which also is the researcher’s contribution to the study. |
4. **To study the relationship between single child, rising disposable incomes and its impact on buying decisions of children.**

- On the bases of primary data the researcher has attempted to bring the crucial factors affecting children’s behaviour to the forefront.

- Primary data collected from upper middle-class families, pointed out that 47 percent of the parents interviewed, had a single child.

- Rising DPI is leading to parents splurging on luxury items more than the necessary products. Consumer durables, International holidays, branded goods have become a reality because of DPI.

- Reckless spending by parents does not go unnoticed, and children too follow suit. Their demands have just got bigger. They are no longer happy with board games and toys but prefer PSP, PS II, PC games and branded accessories whether their parents can afford it or not.

5. **To study the consumer socialization and its impact on children.**

- Children are constantly socialised by parents, peers and media.

- By far parents play an important role in socialising children as consumers, since an important part of childhood is spent with parents. Children accompany their parents on shopping trips, where they get acquainted to the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. To study the children's buying decisions in relation to the influence of peer pressure and pester power.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Out of 200 children interviewed, 50.5 percent parents took their children for shopping and 51.5 percent parents agreed to children piling up their trolley with junk food like Cola, biscuits, noodles and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perched on the shopping trolley initially, they slowly start assisting their parents in shopping by piling up the shopping basket with wanted as well as unwanted products. Eventually by the time they are 10 years old, they start making independent purchases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As the children grow older, peers and media too intervene and socialise the kids and broaden their sphere and knowledge about products in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media and technology invasion have converted young children into 'aware' children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• These children are smart, techno-savvy and are armed with various techniques of convincing their parents into buying what they want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children resort to crying, howling, emotional blackmailing, and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. To study the impact of materialism on children's buying behaviour.

- In a quest of providing the very best for their kids, parents are going overboard in spending on their children.
- This has resulted in parents fulfilling every whim and fancy of the child. The line between want and desire is fast vanishing.
- Hence friendships are judged by the material things that one possesses.
- Parental splurging also gives the idea about the financial condition of the family. Kids are smart to observe this and demand unnecessary things.
- As this generation is getting everything on a platter without even really asking for it, there is no satisfaction among kids. They are always yearning for more.
- A whopping 91 percent said they were
unhappy with what they had and yearned for more, with 53 percent wanting electronics.

| 8. | **To study the impact of malls and multiplexes, international food chains like McDonald’s, Domino’s etc influencing the children.** | • Parents along with their children spend nearly every (85 percent) weekend at the mall, shopping, watching a movie or eating in the food court.
• Out of 200 children, 89 percent children liked to shop at malls, the next favourite being the departmental store by 59.5 percent.
• About 34.5 percent parents spend Rs. 500 to 1000 per weekend, 82.5 percent visited the mall every weekend, 85 percent visited the multiplexes and 78 percent definitely eat out every weekend.
• Malls provide a wholesome entertainment for the entire family and are marketed as family destinations. Retail-tainment with shopping, multiplexes, food courts and video games are becoming a hot spot for every weekend outing. |

The specific findings in detail have been elaborately discussed along with the data analysis and graphs and diagrams, wherever necessary in the above chapters. Setting of objectives at the beginning of the study gave a certain perspective to the
entire study. Questionnaire was formulated based on these objectives which helped in focused data collection.

9.3 Conclusions Related to Families

The researcher has divided the conclusions on the basis of Indian families or Indian consumers and on the basis of children. This was done in order to bring out the relationship between children’s buying behaviour and parents. The main cause for children turning to consumerism early is the general and lax attitude of parents. Children imitate their parents as they think what their parents is doing is right.

A. General Conclusions related to Indian families:

1. The consumption of many products depends upon the lifestyle of the family which in turn is influenced by income, education, profession and their culture. With the rise in disposable personal income and emergence of malls and multiplexes, consumers have an excuse to spend.

2. In a family, all members do not have equal say or role to play in decision-making. Generally all the decisions regarding the toiletries are taken by the lady in the house. Whereas the decisions related to consumer durables is taken by the man, in the house.

3. Role of different members in a family are shifting. Indian women are actively participating in the family purchase decisions. Since the families are going nuclear, the entire attention is on the child or children. There is a willingness to meet the unreasonable needs and desires at the cost of parent hardship.

4. Working mothers prefer co-shopping with their children as it is a way of spending time with one’s child while at the same time accomplishing a necessary task. While doing so, they also easily give in to the children’s demands out of guilt of not spending enough time with them.

5. Family communication about purchases is the key to children’s consumer socialization. Children imitate their parents. Children grow up with certain
brands which they perceive are the best. This makes them future buyers of the same brand their parents have been using.

6. Rising incomes, multiple income households, exposure to international lifestyle's and media, easier financial credit and an upbeat economy are enhancing aspirations and consumption among families. Families are going out of their way to fulfil their aspirations. The dual career families have relatively greater discretionary income within a social-stratum to buy products that are otherwise out of reach, for single earning families.

7. Today's consumer is brave and adventurous, yet nervous and restrained, open and communicative, willing to trade and barter, yet demanding high levels of service and commitment. Hence greater affluence and earlier socialization by families is resulting in children taking dependant decisions.

8. Children's direct influence refers to joint decision-making, actively participating with family members to make a purchase. Children's influence may also be indirect, occurring when parents buy products and brands that they know their children prefer.

9. Family sets an example for the children to follow, which is absorbed at a very young age. If parents exhibit brand loyalty towards a specific brand, children perceive that brand to be good and in future buy the same too.

10. Children are socialised by their parents to act as rational consumers. After years of direct and indirect observation of parental behaviour in the marketplace, they gradually acquire relevant consumer skills from their parents. Family, peers, relatives and media are the key socialising agents for children.

11. Splurging is a result of parental need more than the child's need. The parents often read or hear about a must have item or a must do activity and feel that if they don't indulge, they will be outdone by other parents they know. Splurging also stems from either the need to flaunt their wealth to over-come low self-esteem, or due to the pressure they face from their children.
12. Reference groups expose an individual to new behaviour and lifestyles and influence attitudes and self-concept, they create pressures for conformity. Today’s set of parents are ready to buy anything, however expensive to belong to a particular reference group. Buying decisions and habit of consumers are influenced by consumer’s attitude, predisposition, motives, needs, expectations, likes, dislikes and income.

13. Their greater sophistication, access to more information and emphasis on value has led consumers to desire products more closely fitted to their needs. The parents have become more demanding, experimentative, price-quality conscious and open to new product and ideas, themselves which is being rubbed off the young children.

B. Specific conclusions related to Families:

1. Parents themselves are used to living high standards and lifestyle. Children observe this right from childhood and believe that this is what they have to achieve. Once they reach closer, they aspire higher and the vicious circle continues.

2. Nuclear families make it mandatory for parents to take their children for grocery shopping, most of the times as there is nobody to look after the children at home. Since children visit such departmental stores since they are very young, they are well versed with the products displayed on the lower shelf, and know exactly what to buy. In order to keep children occupied, while grocery shopping, parents often encourage their children to pick up a few things. This early socialization goes a long way in shaping them as consumers responsible for decision-making.

3. The most impressive aspect of this century is exceptional concern for children. Not that those children in this generation are more intensely loved than the previous generation, but children are given a lot of importance in a family. Greater affluence and earlier socialization of children is resulting in children taking independent decisions.
4. After entering the grocery store, children generally pile up a lot of stuff, which, most of the times is junk, and which they find interesting. At the end of the shopping spree, they negotiate with their parents and force them into buying at least two to three items from the stuff that they have picked up.

5. Children like to shop, with their parents, when young, and when they grow a little older i.e. 10 to 14 years, they enjoy shopping with their friends too. They like going shopping with their parents, as their parents give in to their demands, sometimes easily and sometimes reluctantly. Since parents too shop at malls and departmental stores, children like the overall shopping experience. Every mall has at least three kids shops devoted entirely to kids stuff. The air conditioner makes it comfortable place to shop, the video games arcade is interesting and most of the times lunch or dinner, after shopping is taken at the food court.

6. Children are given too many things too early in life. This has reduced the importance of a lot of things that they already possess. They constantly yearn for new things or upgrade old things, but do not keep their things, toys, and clothes in proper order. Children like to go shopping with their parents, as their parents give in to their demands, sometimes easily and sometimes reluctantly.

7. Weekend outing has become a must. With parents readily spending anything between 500 to 5000 on a weekend, eating out at plush restaurants, watching movies in multiplexes, and shopping at malls has become very common. Growing up in such surroundings, pushes children into consumerism, automatically. Such indulgences could be harder on them when they grow older, if they are not able to afford it.

8. Vacations are no longer fun, togetherness and entertainment. It is a way of showing one upmanship or flaunting one’s status. Hence an International holiday every year is preferred in order to fit into the ‘social circle’.

9. Parents often feel that these children should get the best. Or perhaps they should get all those things which they as parents were deprived of. In their
quest of providing for the best, they do not realise when they cross the line of reasonable and unreasonable.

10. In their enthusiasm to make children happy, parents provide branded goods such as watches, apparel, shoes, bicycle, mobile phones and also air-conditioner in their rooms. This is leading to extravagant ways of living. Once the children get used to such a vanilla lifestyle, without having to take any efforts, they cannot take no for an answer, and they also start believing that it is their right to such things and not privilege.

11. Convenience is the keyword. Parents prefer to eat outside or call for food from outside, twice or thrice a week. Children get used to such habits very fast. Eating out often promotes and encourages the consumption of unhealthy food. Junk food is addictive and can cause anaemia, obesity, high blood pressure among younger children.

12. Call it the curse of the information age or blame it on society that is in the grip of consumer tsunami. The first victim of this disturbing trend is childhood. Rather than discouraging such trends, parents are fuelling it, as they perceive it as a measure of social success.

13. Parents feel that children have mastered the knack of continuously asking for what they want and change their persuasion techniques from pleading to crying to threatening. Parents who are tired of this often give in to their child’s demand and thus contribute to ‘pester power’.

14. Kids are increasingly getting more curious about parental brand preferences and like to be a part of the conversation when parents are discussing a product or a brand. This makes their involvement in suggesting a brand, very high and in more than 50 percent of the cases; parents listen to kids in the final brand choice.
9.4 Conclusions Related to Children

Since the entire study lies on the children and factors affecting them, researcher thought it was appropriate to divide conclusions-related to parents as well as children.

A. General conclusions related to Children:

1. These young, brilliant and impressionable minds called children are given a lot of attention, not only because they have their own purchasing power and influence their parent’s buying decisions, but also because of the fact that they are future adult consumers.

2. The tween’s emergence as a deciding factor is also because of the temptations thrown at them by companies. Firms take advantage of their psychological drive, bulging wallets of the parents and changing attitude of these young consumers. Advertisements are aggressively driving brand messages into impressionable minds.

3. Staying connected 24 by 7 is a lifestyle change that hasn’t spared young children either, as they are born straight into the constantly connected era. Children want to explore and experiment with everything simply because they hold the reins of their parent’s wallets.

4. Children form some early attitude, brand preferences and choices by observing the consumer behaviour decisions of other family members. The influence of children increases as their age increases, partly because for certain items they have greater information from television, print media and friends.

5. Children acquire shopping skills by accompanying their parents and observing them and acquiring their skills, knowledge and attitude regarding shopping. Early influences of children are centered on toy purchases.

6. Children’s behaviour is characterised by the uniqueness of individual expectations, the preference for multiple options, propensity to abandon brand loyalty and switch to competing brands that give higher perceived
value. Time tested concepts on brand loyalty are being turned on their heads as they fail to gauge the behaviour of new generation kid.

7. Children of 90’s have more shopping options than their counterparts—departmental stores, speciality shops, super markets, mail order catalogues, home shopping network and the internet.

8. We are a nation with very young population. We have 500 plus million Indians who are below 22 years and are still adding 25 million newly born each year. Thereby ensuring that the median age in India remains in mid-twenties for the next 15-20 years.

9. Young consumers are far better informed than their counterparts; by and large, by virtue of their being better educated, having better access to a wide array of information channels, print media and Internet.

10. Children not only attempt to influence their parents to make purchases of special interest to them (cereal, candy, coke), but also products of remote interest (detergents, soaps, shampoos), for which they see advertisements on television. Birthday parties, outings and picnics are more about branded clothes than enjoyment. Since today children ‘have it all’, they have practically nothing to look forward to.

11. Children today, value material comforts and physical well-being more, they seek novelties, they are after variety and most of them are quick in adapting fashions. They are restless and self-centered. They want too many things the easy way, while taking the present for granted and moving on to a higher level in future all the time. The young are daring and experimentative in the light of new age parental permissiveness.

12. Children are becoming important as consumers because of their rapidly growing influence on adult consumption. They have strong views regarding what their parents should buy for them and even what they would buy for themselves. Children’s influence on decision-making is sometimes indirect, occurring when parents buy products and brands that they know their children prefer.
13. Children's consumer behaviour is absorbed at very young age so much so that if parents exhibit brand loyalty to a specific brand, children perceive that brand and product to be good. Urban children are emerging as a sizeable and distinct market segment. Marketers are now compelled to design their products and communication to suit the requirements of these tweenagers.

14. A significant number of 8 to 14 year olds use their own money to buy presents, books, fast food and sometimes even clothing and sports equipment. They are very difficult to predict.

15. Children's involvement goes beyond influencing parents. In some cases like deciding the family vacation, summer camps and school, parents and children make joint decisions.

16. Working parents feel guilty of leaving their children at home and therefore are more permissive in letting them buy what they want.

17. Children are significant sources of information in the family decision to eat out. They are aware of all the possible eating joints due to their friends and other sources of information.

18. Children often have more than an equal say in what goes into the shopping cart every week. Inspired by television advertisements and peer pressure among school friends, children will plead, whine and bargain with their parents to get what they want.

19. Increasing participation of women in ‘workplace’ has prompted a shift in this role as children are increasingly the ‘buyers’ of the entire family.

20. Young children are vulnerable to advertisements and yet that is the way they see themselves reflected in the media-as consumers, and advertisers are targeting younger children with their campaigns.

21. In Indian market scenario, a child-centered culture exists, as they considerably influence family expenditures. As the children grow with skills to communicate, they influence the volume of resource allocation, purchases and consumption.
22. Despite children’s buying power, relatively little data on their preferences, influences or spending patterns is available.

23. There are approximately 120 million children in India and about 45 million are in urban areas. A substantial chunk comes from double income homes and children from such homes are empowered early.

24. Children rely on pre-established preferences based more often on premium incentives offered on a purchase than the nutritional features of a product. Children are significant source of information in the family due to the influence of mass media and technology. Therefore as consultants, children are influential in realising the problem, in providing information and making the final decision.

25. Children exert more influence in higher income and larger families and families with less restrictive, less authorative and more concept oriented communication.

26. When getting things from parents become difficult, children resort to demanding, manipulating, nagging and screaming. Older children reason out, sweet talk or negotiate and sometimes they even offer to do some odd jobs in return for the products. Children use emotion-laden tactics including crying, withdrawing, pouting, and anger or giving silent treatment to family members in order to get their way.

27. The fundamental drift is towards a better life, an improved lifestyle and a desire to obtain more for one. With both adults in the family working towards more money and ensuring the very best for their kids, things are changing at a fast pace for these extremely privileged set of children.

28. Peer group is a determining factor in children’s lives, and the leaders of such peer groups have immense power and influence. As children go through school, the other children who accompany them from grade to grade assume an over increasing importance, and eventually opinion of peers influence them more than those of their parents. The transition from childhood to teenager makes the tween years a time of immense change.
These years are marked by a need to gain acceptance from one’s peers, often resulting in doing things to be ‘one of the gang’.

29. Television has changed the way kids learn, react and behave to a large extent. Earlier there were a number of television channels where cartoons were telecasted for a couple of hours, but now you have dedicated channels only for kids. Children in our country are shaped and moulded by the ‘idiot-box’ day in and day out. There are neither rigid rules nor strict monitoring by the government.

30. Greater access to pocket money and bigger say in purchase decisions have resulted in children being more informative and demanding.

31. The need for novelty makes kids active and experimental on the retail front where they are clamouring to try new products, promotions and brands all the time. Children value material comfort and physical well-being more, they seek novelties and most of them are quick in adapting fashions.

32. Today’s kids are well-informed, better than their parents as virtually from birth today’s children are exposed to television commercials, banners, billboards, logos and product promotions. Children are born in an environment where each day, they are offered more choices on which they can spend money. Whichever company or brand offers a better price-benefit value proposition gets the share of this customer’s mind and his parent’s wallet.

33. The number of hours, children watch television, their interest in TV advertisements, the attractiveness of the product, and the comparative features of advertisements contribute significantly towards children’s purchase request.

34. Many advertisements are directed at kids, who insist on parents getting them the same items as seen on TV. The product may not be of high standard, but the advertisements are catchy.

35. Children are aware that fruits and vegetables are more nutritious than highly sugared foods. But continuous hammering and highlighting of junk
food advertisements encourage children to try new junk food that is introduced every other day.

36. Since tweenagers are well travelled, computer savvy and interact heavily on the internet, they develop fairly sophisticated decision-making skills, which in turn influence family purchase decisions.

B. Specific Conclusions Related to Children:

1. Most of the young consumers have no recall or affinity to brands. This makes the job of the marketer very tricky. Young consumers have been born in times of increasing consumerism, in an environment where each day, they are offered more choices on which they can spend money.

2. Young children often attempt to influence family decisions as soon as they possess the basic communication skills, needed to interact with other family members. Older children like to participate more directly in family consumption activities. Children’s direct influence refers to joint decision-making, actively participating with family members to make a purchase. Children’s influence is also indirect, occurring when parents buy products and brands that they know their children prefer.

3. Children are significant sources of information in the family due to the influence of mass media and technology. Therefore as information sources, children are being influential in realising the problem, in providing the information and making the final decision.

4. While grocery shopping, children pick up chocolates, biscuits, noodles, chips, wafers etc. which appeal to their taste buds. Children are aware that such junk food is unhealthy, but television advertisements continuously hammer such advertisements, which drive the sales home.

5. Children today are better informed due to the invasion of mass media tools and the internet. As the new internet age evolves and increases its space, children of the 21st century are in the position to get more information in shorter time as compared to their parents and grandparents. This has
brought about greater exposure, greater knowledge among kids and have enhanced their decision-making powers.

6. Nuclear families make it mandatory for parents to take their children for grocery shopping. Since children visit departmental stores since a very young age, they are well versed with the products displayed on the shelves. While grocery shopping, children pick up chocolates, biscuits, noodles, chips, wafers and so on which appeal to their taste buds.

7. After entering the grocery store, children generally pile up a lot of stuff, which they find interesting. At the end of the shopping spree, they negotiate with their parents and force them into buying at least three items from the piled up stuff.

8. Since parents prefer the malls for shopping, children too like to visit malls. Every mall has at least three kids shops devoted entirely to kid stuff. The air-conditioner makes it a comfortable place to shop, the video games arcade is interesting and most of the time lunch or dinner is taken at the food court.

9. Children are given too many things too early in life. This has reduced the importance of lot of things that they already possess. They constantly want new things or upgrade their old ones, but do not keep their things, toys and clothes in proper manner.

10. It is the children who decide what to eat and where to eat. They have already been to various big and small restaurants repeatedly. Therefore eating out does not excite them anymore.

11. Children believe that since they are an important part of the family and are more ‘aware’ than their parents, they should be included in decision-making, while buying mobile phones and cars.

12. Children love watching TV and absorb all the advertisements and programmes that run on TV. Their sub-conscious mind stores this information and whenever they visit a mall or a store, they will buy the product, which was advertised.
13. The peer pressure is also leading to kleptomania as well as pathological lying. Kleptomania means conducting minor thefts which could further lead to bigger problems.

14. The incidence of childhood depression in India is on a rise. Children have to face the pressures with changing lifestyle. Peer pressure and constantly trying to fit into the group is taking its toll.

15. Children these days dream big and have stars in their eyes before they can even see the world clearly. By giving them too much, they are being robbed of the opportunity to realise their dreams and actually reach out for the stars.

16. Techno-savvy, worldly-wise, success-oriented that is the new age Indian kid. They are comfortable talking about new designer clothes as they are about the washing machine. They are articulate about their brand preference and like to influence his parent’s choice. They know which health drink is better and are also aware of the insurance policies.

17. Kids are salient member of the family, not a silent one any longer. They are actively seen and heard today.

18. TV advertisements are leading to unhealthy dietary habits and nutrition problems. The advertisements for junk food undermine children’s dietary preferences and also contribute to obesity and associated health problems among children.

19. With a growing number of TV serials depicting child artistes, children are looking at a career in modelling, TV and films. The desire to look and feel good is so strong that the children are not willing to let time run its own course. They are maturing early in terms of physical and emotional values.

20. Kids are increasingly getting more curious about parental brand preferences and like to be a part of the conversation when parents are discussing a product or a brand. This makes their involvement in suggesting a brand, very high and in more than 50 percent of the cases parents listen to kids in the final brand choice.
21. As the new internet age evolves and increases its pace, children of the 21st century are in a position to get more information in shorter time as compared to their parents and grandparents. This has brought about greater exposure, greater knowledge among kids and has enhanced their decision-making powers.

22. Kid's channels are the big gainers of the upturn in advertising revenue as advertisers are more than willing to put their money on these channels which has a major chunk of decision-makers. Marketers are finally taking the kids seriously. They are realising that the road to a customer's heart and mind is the child at home.

23. Kids may be confused, but they are confused pests that make them powerful and important. Children have a lot of convincing power; the upper middle class is influenced by this as they are more indulgent and take the risk of spending.

24. Children's market is an upcoming niche market. It is a marketing strategy that addresses a small group and unique customer segment that seeks a distinct mix of benefits and is willing to give a premium price for the same.

25. Latchkey children are the ones who are home alone for at least part of each school day, while both parents work. These children receive special attention from marketers because they rule the remote and are also independent decision makers. Marketers have realised that consumer loyalties established at such a young age have the potential to last a very long time.

26. Pester power is a common phenomenon today. It occurs when children influenced by advertisements, promotional characters, merchandising, below-the-line promotions and peer pressure, seek to mobilise their parent's spending power to get what they want.

27. Pester power unleashes impulse spending, thereby boosting market values. It not only leads to a parent buying an item for a child, but may also result in extra pocket money in order to buy the item in question.
28. A child wakes up in Disney character pyjamas, the toothbrush, toothpaste, the soap and even the shampoo are covered with cute cartoon characters. They have highly advertised cereals for breakfast, gather Pokémon or power ranger cards, carry their Nike backpack and head off to school. In this manner brand loyalties are established as young as two years old, even at this age they can recognise Maggie or McDonalds, and by the time the child is in school, most can recognise at least 100 logos.

29. Commercial pressures on children are encouraging continual consumption at the cost of ill-informed decision-making. Children with poorly developed consumer decision-making skills are unprepared to make wise purchases as adults, which has serious implication on the consumer habits and nutritional health of future generations.

30. Sophisticated technologies make it easy to collect information from young people for marketing research, and also helps target individual children with personalised advertising. Today's kids have more autonomy and decision-making power within the family than in previous generations, so kids are liberal and vocal about what they want their parents to buy.

### 9.5 Findings

The findings are as follows:

**A. Findings related to families:**

1. The families interviewed for the research belonged to upper middle class whereby 37.5 percent had an income of above 1,00,000 per month, 15 percent were in the income group of 76,000 to 96,000 per month, 23 percent were in the income group of 51,000 to 75,000 and 24.5 percent were in the income category of up to 50,000 per month. This goes on to prove that the data collected was from upper middle class families who could afford their children's unreasonable demands and had the financial power to back it.
2. Among the parents who were interviewed, 68 percent preferred and also shopped at the departmental stores 74.5 percent at malls, whereas only 35.5 percent shopped with local retailers. At least, 50.5 percent of parents sometimes took their children along with them for grocery shopping, 26 percent took them often and 15 percent of the times, children always accompanied their parents for grocery shopping. Parents cited various reasons for the same, the common answer being there was no one to look after the child at home and hence the kid had to be tagged along. Nuclear urban family was one of the emerging factors responsible for children turning into consumers at a very young age.

3. While accompanying their parents for shopping, it was noticed that 51.5 percent kids picked up junk food and accessories and piled up the shopping cart without asking prior permission from parents, 38.5 percent children helped their parents shop for groceries or at least took permission before piling the shopping cart with junk food. While grocery shopping, 70 percent children always picked up junk food, 11.5 percent picked up cosmetics and a small number, only 6 percent picked up food with nutritional value. Earlier consumer socialization and media invasion were the responsible factors for children being well-acquainted with different brands at a young age.

4. Of the parents interviewed, 95.5 percent were of the opinion that children today, are better informed than they were at their child’s age. With the invasion of mass media into the homes, 78.5 percent parents felt that the children have become more demanding, whereas 21.5 percent did not think so. 64 percent parents said that children persuade them to buy the latest and new gizmos that throng the market. With technology and media at the finger tips, today’s young consumers are smart and knowledgeable and constantly aspire for better things in life.

5. According to the opinion of parents, 28 percent children are active as buyers mainly due to peer pressure and 32.5 percent due to media exposure. Parents thought that 69 percent of the times children were expert
as buyers as they belonged to dual earning families. In such families, children have greater independence in terms of social and financial matters. A dangerous trend of dissatisfaction has caught on with the entire young breed of consumers. In spite of having so many luxuries, there is no satisfaction. This dissatisfaction has triggered pester power and 36 percent of the kids ask for every product that they set their eyes upon. With everything available on a platter, 44 percent of the children still felt left out and yearned for too many things too early in life.

6. Overall 71 percent parents admitted to their children watching TV incessantly. Out of which 88 percent kept a close watch on their children’s TV habits. Parents preferred to install the TV set in the living room so that automatic watch could be kept on children’s TV viewing. A few parents actually rationed their child’s TV watching time with children bargaining for more.

7. About 82 percent of the children were hooked on to Cartoon Network with sports and reality television taking a backseat with 21.5 percent. Music TV like MTV also seemed to be a favourite with the children especially with the 11 to 14 year olds. Hindi serials were not keenly watched expect for times when they were watched by the elders in the family.

8. Whopping 70.5 percent of the children had a direct access to internet either through the school PC or the home computer. Only 29.5 percent of the children interviewed did not have any access to internet. Schools these days are encouraging the use of internet by assigning school projects where it becomes necessary to download information from the internet. Internet is like a magic wand and if used correctly can provide a mine of useful information to the children. But with technology comes its shortcomings. Along with useful information a lot of unwanted and sometimes adult material can be downloaded with the click of a button. Hence a strict vigil needs to be kept on children who use the internet regularly. Parents who were interviewed were alert parents as 61 percent parents admitted to
keeping a vigil and only 36 percent parents trusted their children with the internet.

9. From the interviewed parents, 38 percent thought that children were beginning to be more demanding and indulged in pester power under the influence of TV. About 33.5 percent parents agreed to their children constantly wanting to try new products and 25 percent parents were sure that TV viewing lead to increase in children’s brand awareness.

10. Surprisingly 53 percent of the children interviewed were not into brands while choosing their clothes but definitely wanted expensive or expensive looking clothes. Though the fashion trends and where or which shops to purchase the same from was solely decided by these children.

11. Watching movies in multiplexes, shopping at malls, eating out (in this order), was what parents preferred doing on week-ends. About 85 percent caught up on a movie on week end, 82.5 percent agreed to that visit to a mall was a must on a week end. Since malls are positioned as family entertainment centres with food court and video games arcade, 82.5 percent children liked accompanying their parents to a mall. Eating out seemed to be another passion with these parents. The eating joints could be in a food court or even other joints in the city. Out of the people interviewed, 45 percent also liked to visit the clubs for dining and entertainment.

12. Earlier going out meant visiting the extended family that is social visits as well as gardens or parks. But children found social visits boring, even a visit to the nearby garden or a park did not excite them anymore. Therefore decision making for weekend programmes is highly influenced by children with 55.5 percent children playing an important role in decision making in context to weekend programme or schedule of their parents. Only a limited number that is 11.5 percent did not have any particular say in the weekend programme planning.

13. Overall 93.5 percent parents admitted that since they bought all they could afford for their children, children had no value for things. Parents owned up
the responsibility for providing children with too many things, too early in life.

14. Most of the families took one big vacation every year. About 66.5 percent of those parents interviewed, preferred to take one long vacation apart from the week end breaks that they would normally take. A small number of families namely 29 percent preferred to go a vacation at least twice a year and 4 percent even had a vacation, thrice a year.

15. Primary data collection brought a very interesting concept to the forefront. While 66.5 percent of the parents interviewed, preferred a domestic destination, 77.5 percent of the children interviewed, preferred to go on an international vacation. Children had a craze for foreign destinations which also stemmed from the need to fit into their ‘peers’. With increasing DPI international vacations have become affordable, and since majority of the children in the class go for one, parents are pestered into taking a international vacation.

16. Parents were of the opinion that they tried to provide whatever best they could to their children. In this bargain 79.5 percent parents agreed to going overboard in fulfilling their children’s desires and only a miniscule 1.5 percent parents disagreed with this theory.

17. As children, 43.5 percent parents admitted that they got whatever they demanded, against 37.5 percent parents who confessed to not being entertained as children when it came to buying by their parents. In 1980’s all children were brought up with similar ideologies with everyone around getting similar luxuries or things due to which pester power was negligible.

18. Parents directly took the onus of children’s extravagant ways of living. Overall 96 percent parents owned the responsibility of spoiling their own kids through unnecessary pampering, due to which 81 percent parents admitted to children not valuing what they have. Parents are trying to provide the best of what money can buy. But too many things on a platter are spoiling these privileged kids. Children are oblivious to the hard work and toil the parents have to go through to give them such a lifestyle. Due to
this children do not value whatever they have; the excitement of any product is very short-lived. The importance of the product is only till the new product is bought which too is practically every day.

19. Due to media and technology influence, 89 percent parents felt that children were being exploited as buyers as marketers knew that the only way to enter a household is through the children.

20. About 58 percent of double income families denied buying more gifts than necessary, out of the guilt of not spending enough time with their children.

21. Primary data collected pointed out that children from dual income families were more independent than their counterparts. Out of these independent natured children, 53 percent dictated terms to their caretakers and took the decisions regarding biscuits and chocolates on their own. Working parents (58.5 percent) agreed to their children being more demanding than their counterparts. This was because, left with either the maids or the grandparents at home while their parents were in office, they ended up deciding for the family. It does start from smaller things like brand of toothpaste or soap, but as the age increases, the children’s decision making skills are polished and they are ready to take major decisions or influence the decisions, armed with knowledge and confidence.

B. Findings related to Children:

1. On the onset, the term children were defined as kids between 8-14 years only. This age group is an electric mix of an 8year old as well as a 14 year old, where the needs and desires of both are exactly opposite. In order to cover the entire age group, researcher consciously further divided the age group into 8-11 years and 12-14 year old. Hence 48.5 percent of the children were from the age group of 8-11 years and 51.5 percent of the children were in the age group of 12-14 years. Conscious efforts were made to include both the genders equally since the concentration of the study was not based on gender. Therefore 51.5 percent were boys and 48.5 percent of children interviewed were girls.
2. This study was conducted on the basis of certain parameters and one of them was pocket money. The trend to give pocket money is on a rise, where children as young as 8 years receive pocket money. By doing so parents want to instil the value of money and also make the children smarter in handling money. Though only 48 percent of the children received pocket money every month, it gave them immense financial freedom. They bought stationary, wafers, Cola and candy from this money. While doing so, they did not feel the need to ask for permission as they felt it was their money.

3. About 61.1 percent of the children loved to shop, 30.5 percent children liked to shop sometimes and only 8.4 percent children were not interested in shopping. In the earlier generation, children in this age group were not interested in shopping as they were not aware of the products available. They were not tagged along for shopping by parents as there was always somebody at home to take care of the child, which does not happen with NUF, today.

4. Though children in the age-group of 8 to 14 years liked to shop, 87 percent children did not like to shop with their parents. They preferred to shop with their friends. Only 13 percent liked to shop with their parents. The main reason to shop with the parents was that 75 percent children said, their parents bought them whatever they wanted. 47.7 percent said that parents gave in to their demands, 46.5 percent liked to go shopping with parents, as these parents always shopped at malls or big departmental stores.

5. Those children who did not like to shop with their parents did so, because 67.7 percent children thought it was more fun buying with friends, as their friend’s opinion mattered (this was more so in the age group of 11-14 years). A few children complained of their parents not giving in to their demands. Therefore it can be cited that from the responses available, that children like to accompany their parents for shopping only if their demands were met and not otherwise.
6. Majority of the children i.e. 88.7 percent of them liked to shop at malls, followed by 59.7 percent who liked to shop at departmental stores. They liked to shop at malls and departmental stores because of the comfort and convenience offered by malls, followed by the ambience, variety available and video games arcade and also the food court serving all kinds of cuisines.

7. The number of children shopping at roadside shops was as low as 5.7 percent, while 20.7 percent shopped at regular local shops. This poor response for local retailers was because they found it totally un-cool to be caught shopping at the roadside places or local retailers.

8. Video games arcade and food court at every mall also tempts children into shopping at malls. The concept of shopping has changed totally; today it is all about spending quality time with family and friends along with the routine shopping that has to be done. If the entire family has to be enticed into going for shopping, there should be something interesting for all members of the family. Malls today offer shopping, entertainment, video games, and food courts in an international and comfortable ambience, hence majority of the children interviewed, liked to shop at malls.

9. Children were asked to name a brand that came foremost to their mind, when asked about a product. The products ranged from soaps, shampoos, junk food to jeans and cars. Children seem to be well-versed with international brands like Lee and Levi’s and car brands like BMW and Rolls Royce. Children particularly had all information regarding soft drinks, mobile phones and cars. There seems to be a rising interest in luxury segment with kids aspiring to own at least one of these brands after growing up.

10. About 94 percent of children owned a branded watch, 87 percent of them owned a bicycle and 85 percent owned a computer and 71.5 percent had an air conditioner in their room. This data goes on to show the affluence in which the kids are being brought up. At least 36 percent children owned a mobile phone and stated that it was a necessity as they went to different
activity classes and had to be reachable. Owning a brand was not a big deal as every friend owned one, at least.

11. It could be termed as lethargy on mother's part or affluence or pressure on parents too, in order to belong to a group that eating out has taken a different meaning. Whopping 83 percent of the children claimed to eat out or call for food from outside, at least once a week, with 24 percent of the children claiming to eat out minimum twice a week.

12. Kids played an important role in deciding as to which place or restaurant to visit and also the type of cuisine to be ordered. Overall 97.5 percent children influenced the decisions of their parents on deciding the venue and 92 percent influenced the decision regarding which cuisine to order. Parents too seemed to have happily taken a back seat when it comes to decision making on where and what to eat. In fact, parents take pride in admitting that it is the children who are the decision makers, after all and know exactly what to order.

13. With parents going out on practically every week end, children cannot be left behind. About 93.5 percent children confirmed that they accompanied their parents either for shopping, entertainments, movies or eating out. Since a very young age children start accompanying their parents and feel that it is a way of life. These same children, after growing up will refuse to spend the week end at home.

14. A few children that are 64 percent had no option but to accompany their parents for grocery shopping. Children stated that, tough initially they never used to like it, after a while they started enjoying it. While the parents shop for groceries, these young children have their own wish list to take care of. They either help parents in picking up products from the shelves or fill the shopping cart with the products they would want their parents to buy for them. About 64.5 percent of the children said that their parents sometimes approved of kids piling products the shopping cart with products of their choice. Whereas 31 percents children claimed that their parents always approved of the products picked up by them. Children very
well know how to deal with this situation. They fill the shopping cart with extra products and then negotiate with their parents and make them approve of the products picked by them.

15. About 61.5 percent children claimed that they were consciously included in the decision making especially when some expensive product like a car, a mobile phone or an IPod was to be bought. Whereas 23 percent children confirmed that they were sometimes included in decision-making while only 15.5 percent children were not included by their parents in decision making. The reason for inclusion was either the importance of the child in the family or that their opinion mattered as they had more information about these products then their parents. 53.5 percent children agreed to giving valuable inputs to their parents as they had a lot of information gathered through the media, internet and peer discussion. While 44.5 percent children thought that their opinion mattered as they were an important member of the family.

16. Children had varied views on branded goods. About 37.5 percent children preferred branded goods, 45.5 percent children sometimes preferred branded goods meaning they did not mind the brand provided it was expensive and only 17 percent of the kids were not into brands.

17. Parents regularly handed over money to children to buy stationary or other accessories. These children prefer to go out with their friends to buy the same. Though 97 percent said they liked to go out shopping with their friends, 34.5 percent children spent the money on junk food like chips and soft drinks, 36 percent bought stationary and 20 percent bought accessories, when out with friends.

18. Materialism has set in every aspect of life. Earlier birthday gifts were supposed to be board games or a book. The entire definition of birthday gifts has changed over the past few years. While 24.5 percent children preferred to gift t-shirts or accessories, 19.5 percent wanted to play it safe by gifting gift vouchers, 17.5 percent each preferred to gift stationary and computer games, PS II game VCD and a DVD and only 16 percent
preferred ike to stick to the traditional board games. Plus 69.5 percent children preferred to go personally and buy gift for their friends rather than relying on the parents for the same.

19. Out of 200 children interviewed, 71 percent claimed to like TV advertisements, with 40.5 percent children loving the Cola, wafers, and other junk food advertisement. Whereas 20 percent of the kids liked the car or the bike advertisements, 17.5 percent preferred cosmetic advertisements and 14.5 percent children liked the mobile phone advertisements.

20. Out of all the children interviewed, 91 percent children were not happy with the toys or things that they possessed. They had a big wish list which included a number of expensive electronic items like iPod, mobile phones, MP3 and so on.

9.6 Summary

The Indian consumer has been zipping ahead at over 12 percent a year for more than a decade now along with increased per capita consumption and population growth. Consumer India has always been tricky to guess, and now since children are playing an important role in decision-making, it has become trickier. Actually a lot of changes are taking place in the market. Each change, when viewed in isolation, could easily be rejected as not being particularly significant. But over time, and taken together, they have provided a critical mass of change. Slowly, from nowhere, children emerged as the most influencing factor while making the buying decisions right from cola, candy to cars and mobile phones.

Teenomics-is a word that has become a hot favourite with the multinational companies selling their ware. After all, these young consumers are the cash cows, leading to a high consumption of a number of products thereby shaping the economics of industry and the country. The young Indian consumer is emerging as the biggest and most influential consumer in the marketplace. Armed with an overload of information and entertainment options, they now induce parents, who grew up on a 'necessary consumption' lifestyle, to spend without a thought and
challenge marketers to drum up stronger brand creation exercises. The new Indian consumer is more pressed for time, more fickle, more individualistic, and more willing to spend on themselves. This phenomenon is making companies across consumer durables, financial services, food chains, online services and entertainment to furiously churn out products and services to cater to this fussy, fickle and brand-conscious consumer.

But where is all this leading to? Children at a very young age have to be referred to psychiatrists. The peer pressure, pressure to belong to a particular group, increasing materialism whereby satisfaction is measured in terms of material things, media explosion with its merits and demerits, all you can afford on parents part is all leading to children growing up before they are old. Their innocence is lost at an early age. What remains is constant competition to excel in terms of material things and consumerism. These children will grow up to be very unhappy adults-with too many things too early in life and with ‘been there, done that’ syndrome, they will have nothing to look forward to. Nothing will excite them anymore. This could lead to serious complications as we are encouraging a future nation which has nothing to look forward to. Right now marketers are making the most of this opportunity by using the 5C’s – Cajole, Characterize, Contrive, Combine and Convince to manipulate the young consumers. They are not realising that these customers, by the time they grow up will look through the marketer’s game plan. They could lose trust in advertisements and it would be really difficult to convince them.