# Chapter 1
## INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The consumer behaviour as a scientific discipline has evolved in the latter part of the twentieth century. Robertson and Kassarijian (1991), the editors of the *Handbook of Consumer Behaviour* published by Prentice Hall College Class traced back the initial foundation of research in the field of consumer behaviour to economics and motivation research. Consumer behaviour establishes itself as a scientific field of study in the 1960s. The books entitled, *Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Management* co-authored by Myers and Reynolds in the year 1967 and *Consumer Behaviour* by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell in the year 1968 were one of the first books published in the field of consumer behaviour. Up this time, consumer behaviour researches were done as a part of Applied Psychology. But the traditional textbooks on consumer behaviour still have their focus on marketing aspects and are mainly influenced by psychological oriented research, including research on cognition, learning and motivation (Becker, 2003). But rather recently, there have been other approaches available incorporating biological, sociological and anthropological theories (Desmond, 2008). A group of researchers’ informal meeting at Ohio State University led to the formation of the Association of Consumer Research (ACR), an organisation composed of those interested in consumer behaviour research to advance and disseminate knowledge in this field. The first conference was held in 1970 and began annual conferences since then (Becker, 2003).

The concept of consumer behaviour is of prime importance in marketing. It is imperative to understand consumer buying behaviour as it plays a vital role in
creating an impression on commerce as a whole (Brian J Corbitt, 2003). According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), consumer behaviour can be defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they will expect will satisfy their needs. To elaborate further, consumer behaviour focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption-related items. That includes what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how often they use it, how they evaluate it after the purchase, the impact of such evaluations on future purchase, and how they dispose of it. This view brought out that consumer behaviour is more than just buying of goods/services, the process starts much before the products have been acquired or bought. A process of buying starts internally in the minds of the consumer, which leads to the search for alternatives among the products that can be acquired with their relative advantages and disadvantages. This peripheral search follows a process of decision-making for purchase. Importance should be given to post-purchase behaviour as it is an indication whether the product is valued or not. Thus, it can be said that consumer behaviour encompasses the psychological aspects of marketing (Mooij, 2003).

The term consumer behaviour describes two different types of consuming entities: the personal consumer and the organisational consumer. The personal consumer buys goods and services for his or her own use, for use of the household, or as a gift for a friend. In each of these contexts, the products are bought for final use by individuals, who are referred to as end users or ultimate consumers. The second category of consumer – the organisational consumer – includes profit and not-for-profit businesses, government agencies (local, state,
and national), and institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals and prisons), all of which must buy products, equipment, and services in order to run their organisations (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2008). This study will focus on the individual consumer, who purchases for his or her own personal use or for household use or both. As rightly pointed out by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), end-use consumption is perhaps the most pervasive of all types of consumer behaviour, for it involves every individual, of every age and background, in the role of either buyer or user, or both.

As noted earlier, consumer behaviour was a relatively new field of study in 1960s. Marketing theorists borrowed heavily from concepts developed in other disciplines such as psychology (the study of the individual), sociology (the study of groups), social psychology (the study of how an individual operates in groups), anthropology (the influence of society on the individual), and economics to form the basis of this new marketing discipline. Many early theories concerning consumer behaviour were based on economic theory, on the notion that individuals act rationally to maximize their benefits (satisfactions) in the purchase of goods and services. Latter research discovered that consumers are just as likely to purchase impulsively and to be influenced not only by family and friends, by advertisers and the role models, but also by mood, situation, and emotion. All of these factors combined to form a comprehensive model of consumer behaviour that reflects both the cognitive and emotional aspects of consumer decision making (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2008).
1.1.1 A simplified model of consumer decision making

This section presents an overview model of consumer decision making that reflects the cognitive (or problem-solving) consumer and, to some degree, the emotional consumer. This model is designed by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) which would tie together many of the ideas on consumer decision making and consumer behaviour discussed throughout this present study. This model does not presume to provide an exhaustive picture of the complexities of consumer decision making. Rather, it is designed by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) to synthesise and coordinate relevant concepts into a significant whole. The model, presented in Exhibit 1.1, has three major components: input, process, and output.
Exhibit 1.1
A simplified model of consumer decision making

1.1.1.1 Input

The input component of consumer decision making model draws on external influences that serve as sources of information about a particular product and influence a consumer’s product-related values, attitudes, and behaviour. Chief among these input factors are the marketing mix activities of organisations that attempt to communicate the benefits of their products and services to potential consumers and the non-marketing sociocultural influences, which, when internalised, affect the consumer’s purchase decisions.

Marketing inputs: The firm’s marketing activities are a direct attempt to reach, inform, and persuade consumers to buy and use its products. These inputs to the consumer’s decision making process take the form of specific marketing mix strategies that consist of the product itself (including its package, size, and guarantees); mass media advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, and other promotional efforts; pricing policy; and the selection of distribution channels to move the product from the manufacturer to the consumer. Ultimately, as suggested by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), the impact of a firm’s marketing efforts in large measure is governed by the consumer’s perception of these efforts. Thus, marketers do well to remain diligently alert to consumer perceptions by sponsoring consumer research, rather than to rely on the intended impact of their marketing messages.

Sociocultural inputs: The second type of input, the sociocultural environment, also exerts a major influence on the consumer. Sociocultural inputs consist of a wide range of noncommercial influences. The influences of social class, culture, and sub-culture, although less tangible, are important input factors that are internalised and affect how consumers evaluate and ultimately adopt (or
reject) products. The unwritten codes of conduct communicated by culture subtly indicate which consumption behaviour should be considered “right” or “wrong” at a particular point of time. For example, Japanese mothers maintain much more control over their children’s consumption than American mothers, because in the United States, children are socialised to be individualistic (to stand out), whereas in Japan children are socialised to be integrated with others (to stand in).

1.1.1.2 Process

The process component of the model is concerned with how consumers make decisions. To understand this process, we must consider the influence of psychological concepts. The psychological field represents the internal influences (motivation, perception, learning, personality, and attitudes) that affect consumers’ decision making processes (what they need or want, their awareness of various product choices, their information-gathering activities, and their evaluation of alternatives). As pictured in the process component of the overviewed decision model (Exhibit 1.1), the act of making a consumer decision consists of three stages: need recognition, prepurchase search, and evaluation of alternatives.

Need recognition: The recognition of a need is likely to occur when a consumer is faced with a “problem.” Among consumers, there seem to be two different need or problem recognition styles. Some consumers are actual state types, who perceive that they have a problem when a product fails to perform satisfactorily. On the other hand, other consumers are desired state types for whom the desire for something new may trigger the decision process (Bruner II GC, 1987).
**Prepurchase search:** This stage begins when a consumer perceives a need that might be satisfied by the purchase and consumption of a product. The recollection of past experiences might provide the consumer with adequate information to make the present choice. In contrast, when the consumer has had no prior experience, he or she may have to engage in an extensive search of the outside environment for useful information on which to base a choice.

The consumer normally searches his or her memory (the *psychological field* depicted in the model) before seeking external sources of information regarding a given consumption-related need. Past experience is considered an internal source of information. The greater the relevant past experience, the less external information the consumer is likely to need to reach a decision. Many consumer decisions are based on a combination of past experience (internal sources) and marketing and noncommercial information (external sources). The degree of perceived risk can also influence this stage of decision process. In high-risk situations, consumers are likely to engage in complex and extensive information search and evaluation; in low-risk situations, they are likely to use very simple or limited search and evaluation tactics. The act of shopping is an important form of external information.

**Evaluation of alternatives:** When evaluating potential alternatives, consumers tend to use two types of information: a “list” of brands from which they plan to make their selection and the criteria they will use to evaluate each brand.

1.1.1.3 Output

This part of the model concerns two closely associated types of post decision activity: *purchase behaviour* and *postpurchase evaluation*. The objective
of both activities is to increase the consumer’s satisfaction with his or her purchase.

**Purchase behaviour:** Consumers make three types of purchase: *trial purchase, repeat purchase,* and *long term commitment purchase.* Unlike trial, in which the consumer uses the product on a small scale and without any commitment, a repeat purchase usually signifies that the product meets with the consumer’s approval and that he or she is willing to use it again and in larger quantities.

**Postpurchase evaluation:** As consumers use a product, particularly during a trial purchase, they evaluate the performance in light of their own expectations. There are three possible outcomes of these evaluations: (a) actual performance matches expectations, leading to a neutral feeling; (b) performance exceeds expectations, causing what is known as *positive disconfirmation of expectations* (which leads to satisfaction); and (c) performance is below expectations, causing *negative disconfirmation of expectations* and dissatisfaction.

### 1.2 DEFINITION OF KEYWORDS

**Consumer** may be defined as one that consumes, especially one that acquires goods or services for direct use or ownership rather than for resale or use in production and manufacturing.

**Customer,** on the other hand, may be defined as one who purchases goods or services, not necessarily for his/her own use or consumption. One who purchases for others, resale etc. are customers but cannot be called consumers. However, in this study, the word *consumer* is used interchangeably with words like the *customer, buyer, etc.* The researcher has avoided dealing nuances and treats these terms as similar throughout the thesis.
**Households** The term ‘family’ was first defined by Census of India in 1872 as comprising of those who lived together and ordinarily cooked at the same hearth including their servants and visitors. In 1881 Census, it was defined as comprising of all those persons who actually slept in the house or compound on the night of 17th February, 1881. From 1891 till 1941, the term 'family' was used in place of ‘household.’ From 1951 Census onward again the concept of household was used in Indian Censuses. In 1971 Census a household was defined as 'a group of persons who commonly live together and would take their meals from a common kitchen unless the exigencies of work prevented any of them from doing so.' Although families sometimes are referred to as households, not all households are families (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2008). For example, a household might include individuals who are not related by blood, marriage, or adoptions, such as unmarried couples, family friends, roommates, or boarders. However, within the context of the present study, households and families are treated as synonymous.

**Urban and Rural areas**

*Urban areas* may be defined as

a) All places with a municipality, corporation or cantonment or notified town area;

b) All other places which satisfied the following criteria:

i. A minimum population of 5,000;

ii. At least 75% of the male working population are non-agricultural;

iii. Density of population of at least 400 per square km.
Rural areas may be defined as all those areas which do not qualify as urban areas within the Indian Union. The researcher has followed the above criteria while selecting the sample places for conducting his study.

Nondurables and Durables

Nondurables are tangible goods normally consumed in one or few uses. Because these goods are consumed quickly and purchased frequently, the appropriate strategy is to make them available in many locations, charge only small mark-ups and advertise heavily to induce trial and build preference.

Durables are tangible goods that normally survive many uses. Durable products normally require more personal selling and service, command a higher margin, and require more seller guarantees.

1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An intensive review of literature is undertaken to familiarise the researcher with the various aspects of consumer behaviour, to identify the research problem, to evolve appropriate methodology and to formulate a conceptual framework for the study. Some important international research works are reviewed hereunder to highlight their findings:

Thorstein Veblen (1899) suggested that conspicuous consumption was used by people to signal wealth and, by inference power and status. Thus, the utility of prestige products may be to display wealth and power and one could consider that highly visible prestige brands would dominate the conspicuous segment of the consumers.

Dichter (1960) was instrumental in advancing the view that consumer choice may be driven by noncognitive and unconscious motives. Certain goods
and services have been known to possess emotional value in excess of their functional utility.

Darden and Ashton (1975) observed that an understanding of consumers’ characteristics and the media they consume most heavily are valuable when directing selected promotional themes to target markets.

Russel W Belk (1975) highlighted the role of situation as one of the stimuli responsible for evoking certain behaviours. Further, literature review has shown evidence that, while the effect of consumer characteristics cannot be ignored, consumer behaviour is largely context-driven. The clearest means of defining consumer situations resides in the objective features which characterise a locus in time and space. Such elements include both antecedent conditions for the internal states the participant brings to the situation and the physical elements he attends there. These features lend themselves to direct behaviour taxonomy without the need to infer internal responses of the individual to the situation. While objectively defined situations are only one component of the necessary perspectives for researching situations, the objective situation is the common thread which is required of any study of situations, if it is to add to our ability to explain, predict, or alter consumer behaviour.

Schaninger and Donald (1981) found that consumers’ inherent characteristics, product characteristics and consumption situations are all vital in determining consumer behaviour. Numerous choice models have been developed by marketers based on the understanding of consumer characteristics to identify specific shopping patterns. For instance, the amount of information search was found to be a function of the consumer’s self esteem and trait anxiety. Cognitive personality traits were shown to act as moderator variables on the relationships
between depth of search in a set of Information Display Board (IDB) tasks and such "product-specific psychological" variables as confidence, danger-risk, and perceived decision complexity. High cognitive-capacity individuals tended to secure more information, and low-capacity individuals less information, when they perceived low confidence, high danger-risk, or high complexity in the choice situation. These results were substantially weaker for IDB tasks which were more complex and novel.

Gutman and Mills (1982) investigated the effects of lifestyle and self-perception on consumers’ purchase intention or behaviour toward clothing products and concluded that consumers with different self-perceptions have different attitudes or responses toward fashion/clothing products.

According to Rogers (1983) snob consumers may have higher socioeconomic status and may serve as opinion leaders since they are generally the first to adopt a product (innovator). The most innovative member of a system is very often perceived as a deviant from the social system. Typically, it is expected that followers or bandwagon consumers seek an opinion leader of somewhat higher status than their own.

Atlas (1984) viewed that psychographics are based on the characterisation of individuals according to their perceptions of self and their aspirations in association with characteristics such as age, sex, education and income.

Horiuchi (1984) observed that it made intuitive sense to classify luxury products as high-involvement rather than low-involvement. However, his work contributed to demonstrate that "the consumer decision-making process in the luxury goods market does not follow the high-involvement decision-making process of consumer behaviour, although the high-involvement model is generally
assumed to be applicable to both luxury goods and mass-produced high-quality goods”.

Dennis W Rook (1985) examined various dimensions of consumer behaviour.

Cobb and Hoyer (1986) marked that shopping lifestyle is the behaviour exhibited by the purchaser with regard to the series of personal responses and opinions about the purchase of the products. They find that shopping lifestyle and impulse buying behaviour are closely related but only in the case of impulse buyers. The study also states that impulse purchasers fell in the middle as of the measurement tools used by the researchers, indicated that purchasers will not pick the first brand they spotted in the shopping mall.

Modigliani (1986) suggested that population dynamics are embedded in the life-cycle from birth to death. In this sense, there is an association between demographic and macroeconomic concepts of income and consumption, because of, among other things, the close association between levels of income and stages of the life cycle. These factors also influence the nature of social roles and traits that affect consumer behaviour during different age-phases of the life cycle. Demographic events are often trigger for the consumption of goods and services during the life cycle.

Whan Park et al. (1989) found that temporal perspective serves as a determinant for the type and quantity of products purchased and that more unplanned purchases of products are done when consumers are shopping with minimal time pressure.

Campbell (1991) remarked that a degree of convergence of views that consumers behaviour in social contexts takes into consideration their own
interests as well as the interests of others. It is now more widely accepted that consumers’ choices may depend on emotions and habit as well as rationality. Further, that goods and services may be used as symbols and means to project a self-image and a given lifestyle.

Dwayne Ball et al. (1992) focused on segmenting the target market with different products that better match consumers’ needs under different consumption contexts. For example, single, working parents may be a potential market for convenient food because their kind of lifestyle generally implies a consumption context predominated by time pressure and hence the need to be quick.

Lise Heroux and Nancy J Church (1992) justified the change of behaviour of consumer on the occasion of wedding anniversary and gift giving rituals.

Giwen Rae Bachmann et al (1993) described the impact of peer pressure on children in selecting their purchase choice.

Groth and McDaniel (1993) supported the assumption that exclusive or unique perception of a brand is also related to its cost. They suggested applying of a prestige-pricing strategy to support the marketing of luxury or high-quality products.

Kate Fitzgerald (1994) described the role of lifestyle in consumer behaviour. The study was focused on Hallmark and found that the high-velocity lifestyles of modern day’s dual-career families, plus new competition in retail channels, have put Hallmark on the defensive as it struggles to maintain its leading 45% share of the estimated $5.6 billion greeting card industry. Women, who account for 85% to 90% of all greeting card purchases, are spending less time than ever lingering in Hallmark’s card stores, where a significant portion of its
profits are driven by sales of entertainment and decorative items. To win them back, *Hallmark* is becoming more aggressive in its marketing and stepping up its incentives through new products and alternative marketing tactics while experimenting with price strategies and new media messages.

Mary Curren and Katrin Harich (1994) transient observed that a consumer’s mood at the point of purchase exert both direct and indirect effects on his or her behaviour, as a positive mood swing is found to result in increased product purchase and a more positive product evaluation. Moreover, these antecedent states often interact with other situational factors such as physical surroundings and temporal perspectives to result in further changes in behaviour.

Eric Holl Reiser (1995) found that clubs and peer groups play an important role in developing a consumer culture and have given the reasons for developing different consumer images.

Robert Wilkes (1995) stated that consumer behaviour can be explained in terms of demographic and socio-economic backgrounds of the individual. A consumer’s inherent characteristics, such as personality, have been used in consumer behaviour research do develop useful marketing tactics. In the study, three spending patterns emerged: (1) a generalised inverted U pattern, with spending rising sharply as households shift from young single to young married, then remaining relatively high, and falling sharply at the older married and/or older single stages, (2) generally increasing expenditures across stages until the last one or two stages, and (3) generally decreasing expenditures across the life cycle. Expenditures are especially influenced by the presence of young children in the household. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Expenditure Survey provide empirical verification of changes in household
spending across a wide variety of products as households pass from one stage of
the household life cycle to another.

Arens (1996) suggested that advertiser’s primary mission is to reach
prospective customers and influence their awareness, attitudes and buying
behaviour. They spend a lot of money to keep individuals (markets) interested in
their products. To succeed, they need to understand what makes potential
customers behave the way they do. The advertiser’s goals is to get enough
relevant market data to develop accurate profiles of buyers to find the common
group (and symbols) for communications.

Gould (1996) suggested that the inappropriate interpretation/application of
gender identity to consumer research variables produced contradictory findings.

Ehrenberg, Schriven and Barnard (1997) found that consumers’ price
perceptions have effects on their purchase behaviour, they perceive price
differently for different products and have individual price perceptions and buy
products that are priced at what they are willing to pay for those products.

Kau Ah Keng and Serene Liu (1997) investigated the relationship between
personal values and complaint behaviour in an Asian setting. The List of Values
developed at the University of Michigan was used as the basis for measurement.
Respondents choosing these values were regrouped into those who are either
group-oriented or self-oriented. It was confirmed that these two groups differed in
terms of demographic and psychographic characteristics. In addition, they were
also found to exhibit different complaint behaviour when they were dissatisfying
with a product purchased. Group-oriented consumers were found to resort to
private action, while their self-oriented counterparts were more prepared to opt for
public actions.
O'Guinn and Shrum (1997) examined the consumers' use of television to construct social reality. Their study identified that the prevalence of products and activities associated with an affluent lifestyle were positively related to the level of exposure to television.

According to Auty (1998), a negative relationship was found between age and fashion involvement in this study, with younger ages indicating higher fashion involvement, income showed a significant positive relationship with fashion involvement; income increased with fashion involvement. Education was negatively related to fashion involvement with lower education levels indicating higher fashion involvement. Work status also was not a significant predictor of fashion involvement in this study.

Banks et al. (1998) opined that the age distribution of populations reflects the number and proportion of people in different phases of the life cycle. These are mirrored in differences in income and consumption patterns. The ageing process leads to product substitution partly as a result of changes in income, occupation and levels of physical and social functioning.

According to Holt (1998), the symbolic power of pecuniary distinction is declining. Objects of "elite" culture are increasingly available across all social classes, and the expression of distinction between classes has now focused on consumption practices (e.g., lifestyles) rather than consumption objects (e.g., materialism). Objects no longer serve as accurate representations of consumer practices; rather, they allow a wide variety of consumption styles ... As popular goods become aestheticised and as elite goods become massified the objectified form of cultural capital has in large part been supplanted by the embodied form.
Martin (1998) suggested that products convey different meanings to different people, consumers form differing attachments to them. Unique consumer-product relationships develop specific to the individual and the situation, but the nature of the product is also highly relevant. The meaning of products may ultimately depend more on the nature of consumers rather than the nature of products.

Vigneron and Johnson (1999) recognised that the definition of prestige may vary for different people, depending on their socioeconomic background. Translated into marketing terms, consumers develop prestige meanings for brands based upon interactions with people (e.g., aspired and/or peer reference group), object properties (e.g., best quality), and hedonic values (e.g., sensory beauty). Such interactions occur at personal and societal levels. Thus, a brand's prestige is created from a multitude of interactions between the consumer and elements within the environment. Prestige-seeking behaviour is the result of multiple motivations, but in particular the motives of sociability and self-expression.

Sha Yang (2000) concluded from his study that the consumption context should not be neglected as different drives and motives may arise in the face of different consumption contexts, or usage situations. As a result, consumers may exhibit different product preferences and buying behaviours stemming from specific motivations.

Babin and Babin (2001) found that in stores consumer’s purchasing intentions and spending can largely be influenced by emotions. These emotions may be specific to certain things for example, the features of the items, customer self interest, consumer’s gauge of evaluating items and the importance they give to their purchasing at a store.
According to O’Cass (2001), females and younger consumers possess much stronger involvement in the purchase of fashion clothing.

Palan (2002) suggested that males are independent and rational while females are connected to others and display emotional traits. This leads males to be concerned with self-consumption and big-ticket items while females are concerned with the purchase of products for children and other household items. Alternative theses assert that males and females share similar traits but that some gendered behaviour may be activated in some contexts and/or follow social expectations of male and female social roles.

Jennifer Edson Escalas and James R. Bettman (2003) stated that the set of associations consumers have about a brand is an important component of brand equity. The study focus on reference groups as a source of brand associations, which can be linked to one's mental representation of self to meet self-verification or self-enhancement goals. This conceptualises the linkage at an aggregate level in terms of self-brand connections, that is, the extent to which individuals have incorporated a brand into their self-concept. It is shown that brands used by member groups and aspiration groups can become connected to consumers’ mental representation of self as they use these brands to define and create their self-concepts. Results from Experiment 1 show that the degree to which member group and aspiration group usage influences individual self-brand connections is contingent on the degree to which the individual belongs to a member group or wishes to belong to an aspiration group. In Experiment 2, it was found that for individuals with self-enhancement goals, aspiration group brand use has a greater impact on self-brand connections; for individuals with self-verification goals, on the other hand, member group use has a greater impact.
Kirk Wakefield and Jeffrey Inman (2003) stated that significant situational effects were found on price sensitivity when the consumer is in company of family members or peers.

Tamara F. Mangleburg, Patricia M. Doney and Terry Bristol (2004) studied that while some retailers may discourage groups of teenagers from shopping in their stores, there is reason to believe that peer groups may affect teen behaviours and evaluations in ways that could benefit retailers. In their work, they examined the phenomenon of teenagers’ shopping with friends, and, in particular, whether shopping with friends might enhance teens’ attitudes toward retailing and their tendency to spend more when shopping with friends. They also examined why teens shop with friends. Specifically, the researchers related friends’ knowledge and teens’ age to teenagers’ susceptibility to informational and normative influence from friends. Susceptibility to peer influence is then related to various aspects of teen shopping, such as frequency and enjoyment of shopping with pals, which, in turn, are related to sentiment toward retailing and spending tendencies. With the exception of susceptibility to normative influence, results based on data from a sample of high school students generally supported the model.

Gordon Foxall and Yani-de-Soriano (2005) established the non-existence of a predictable link between consumer attitudes and their behaviour. According to the study, the attitude—behavioural consistency was only found when circumstantial factors such as consumption context are identified and controlled. The study described a model of attitude–behaviour relations, the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM), which suggests how situational influences on consumer choice may be categorised, and employ Mehrabian and Russell's (1974)
approach to environmental psychology to test that model in the contexts of attitude formation and attitude–behaviour consistency. Venezuelan consumers rated descriptions of consumer situations based on the contingency categories identified by the BPM in terms of pleasure, arousal and dominance. The results indicate that attitude responses to consumer environments vary as predicted by the model. Moreover, the model presents a framework for managerial action through the understanding of how structural components of consumer situations (namely, utilitarian and informational reinforcement and behaviour setting scope) are related to the generation of affective responses (pleasure, arousal and dominance) and approach–avoidance responses.

Dan Herman (2007) highlighted that motivations among a defined consumer group can vary facing the same situation. Combining purchase motives with consumption context is thus recommended when segmenting markets, where a segment is seen as a set of consumption behaviours qualified by a certain context plus a specific motivation. It is useful to remember that successful marketing relies on the ability to correctly interpret consumer behaviour, while market segmentation directs the kinds of marketing efforts to be made to influence this behaviour. Therefore, segmenting the market in a “right way” should minimise poor marketing performance.

Mindy Ji and Wood (2007) provided support regarding the “if…then” pattern of behaviour as everyday-life purchase activities can become associated with a particular consumption context which then guides subsequent responses without necessarily requiring purchase intentions. The formation of these purchase “habits”, particularly under low involvement purchase, results in consumer behaviour that is repetitive and customary. Such context-response
associations are so strong that behavioural patterns can be anticipated even when consumers reported their intentions to do otherwise. This is the equivalent of arguing that a fairly standard set of consumer behaviours could be evoked by certain consumption situations.

Apart from international works, a number of Indian research works on consumer behaviour are reviewed as hereunder:

Narang (2001) conducted a study on rural markets and buying behaviour of rural customers of UP. The items included in the study were nondurables like toilet soap, washing soap, toothpaste, face powder, face cream, edible oil, tea etc. Durables like electric fan, wrist watches and television sets are also studied. The hypotheses framed were: A significant proportion of buyers were not satisfied with the available brands and there was latent demand for additional brands; there was non-availability of desired brands in local shops; rural buyers made substantial purchases from the cities; the proportion of city and local purchases varied from product to product and a nominal amount of purchases were made from hawkers. The sample size of 200 respondents was distributed to three regions- Northern UP, Central UP and Eastern UP. The results indicated that majority of the rural population was not satisfied with the locally available brands.

Shivakumar and Arun (2002) studied the buying behaviour of rural Pondicherry and noted that they considered only one brand and visited only one shop before making a purchase decision. In the study, two products were highlighted, namely wristwatches and footwear. It was found rural buyers buy watches as and when necessary, unlike the urban buyers who considered watches as novelty and gift item. The study reflected that rural buyers buy watches and footwear when felt needed, without waiting for any offer or festive season.
Jyoti Kumar NVR (2003) intended to analyse the socioeconomic profile of the telegu newspaper consumers and their consumption characteristics. This study further attempted to find out the buying motives influencing their choice of the daily, and the extent to which they are satisfied of the daily, nondaily and Sunday features of their newspaper. This pioneering work on Indian newspaper marketing proved hypothesis of underperformance or unwanted performance of Telegu dailies, including the leader, in several segments of news. Scanty readerships of underperforming or unwanted segments of news are not capable of attracting sufficient ad revenues in the long run, justifying their costs. In the process, the customers are denied of an opportunity to satisfy their other pressing newspaper need.

Bidyut Jyoti Bhattacharjee and Dibyojyoti Bhattacharjee (2005) explored the impact of packaging, labeling and free samples on the buying behaviour of consumers of a communicationally backward area of India. The hypothesis is that the packaging, labeling, and samples have a strong influence on consumer buying behaviour. Two factorial approaches are adapted to analyses these influences i.e., sex wise and age wise. The study is based on a sample of 73 respondents taking from Karimganj town in Assam. This study highlighted that packaging is considered as necessary part of the product, hence customers of backward areas find packaging as value addition.

Pavleen Kaur and Raghbir S (2006) discussed about the children in family purchase decision making in India. According to them, “Children in India may not have the purchasing power comparable to their western counterparts, but they are still the centre of the universe in the Indian family system, and they not only
influence markets in terms of the parental decision-making to buy certain kinds of products, they are also future consumers”

Selvakumar K.N et al (2006) explored in-depth the demand of livestock products in Tamil Nadu. The study was conducted to understand the consumer preferences for different livestock products in the five major cities of Tamil Nadu. Most of the consumers preferred fresh milk rather than other milk grades like whole milk, skimmed milk, toned milk and double toned milk. The study indicated that the consumers preferred thigh meat in mutton, followed by chest piece, liver, intestine and other parts. As for chicken, the thigh meat is the most preferred by most of the sample consumers.

Verma D.P.S and Soma Sen Gupta (2006) conducted a study to examine the relationship between brand image and the buyer’s perception of quality for durable, semi-durable and nondurable products with 525 respondents from Delhi, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Noida and Gurgaon. For all the three types of products, consumers rely on brand image, which has a significant influence on their quality perception. For durable products like television, a respondent pay more attention towards price and features of the brand and are convinced that little known brands are risky to buy. As for semi-durable products like T-shirts, people prefer old established brands. Nondurables like toothpaste stages brand loyalty at later stage while for first time buyers, the reputation of the brand may matter.

Jha Mithisleshwar (2007) found that a complex set of factors influences rural consumer behaviour in India. Social norms, traditions and customs are more prominent in rural areas than in urban areas and the rural daily wage earners, with their limited purchasing power, buy on a daily basis and few quantities at a time.
Kashyap Pradeep (2007) indicates that all members of the urban households take part in buying process while in rural areas; it is the male member who took purchase decision as women lack the mobility and connectivity of the main market. Also, he observed that rural consumers are bound by the strong social practice than the urban consumers who can take independent purchase decisions.

Parihar B.B.S and Rajeev Agarwal (2007) studied the consumer awareness about consumer legislation in India by analysing the responses of 200 respondents from Agra region. The study brought about a compilation of various legislations to protect consumers in India, namely, the Sale of Goods Act 1930, the Law of Torts, the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954, the Trade and Merchandise Marks Act 1958, the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1969, the Standards of Weights and Measures Act 1976 and the Consumer Protection Act 1986. The study shows that majority of consumers are still not aware of the legislations. As far as the influence of demographic variables are concerned, education, sex and occupation significantly influence the awareness level of the consumer rights, but age and income do not influence their awareness level significantly. In general, consumerism in India is confined mainly to urban centres.

Shekhar V Sawant (2007) did a study on buying of two-wheelers from 100 respondents within Goa. It was inferred from the study that the required maintenance and mileage are important criteria for a consumer in the purchase decision process. People, in general, perceive a big difference in prices, suitability to lady drivers, mileage and resale value amongst various models available in the market. Although, people have not considered the safety factor to be that
important, they find that all models are more or less equally safe. The criteria that ultimately play a significant role in the purchase decision are: mileage, price, required maintenance, acceleration and maker’s reputation.

Anand and BS Hundal (2008) reflected on how rural marketing entails all those activities of assessing, stimulating and converting the purchasing power into an effective demand for specific products and services and moving them to the people in rural areas to create satisfaction and a standard of living, thereby achieving the goals of the organisation. The study was conducted to compare and analyze the significance given to various promotional schemes by rural and urban respondents of Punjab. They include: installment purchase facility, replacement, off-season discount, festival offer, free gift scheme and free after-sales promotion. The findings indicated that even though all these are important as motivating factors, the urban respondents reflected that installment purchase is ranked the highest, followed by off-season discounts and low interest system. The rural respondents rated liberally replacements, festival offers, free gift schemes, free after-sales services and exchange offer.

Devendiran C (2008) attempted to understand leisure and recreation patterns of Mizo youth. He explored the structural and dynamic factors associated with the patterns of youth in the context of evangelised Mizo tribe in North East India. The study has elaborated the leisure and recreation activities of Mizo youth in terms of food habits, savings and spending habits, listening to music, media exposure, sports and games and so on.

Maria Josephine W et al (2008) in the study of customer’s attitude towards advertisements of cellular service providers namely Airtel and Hutch, did a study to specifically address to the evaluation of customers attitude within Coimbatore.
In their study, it was found that ‘kiddish’ ads have adverse effect on the attitude of customers. Creativity in how the products are advertised in case of mobile service does not necessarily affect the sales, but then advertisements for mobile service promising to have its presence everywhere is what many mobile phone users want and are attracted to.

Panda BK and Pothal SS (2008) observed in their study that determinants like the total income, number of durables possessed, age and education level of the head of the household have significant positive impact on the ownership of durables. Income is one of the most important determinants having strong positive influence on ownership of more expensive durables. The study also indicated that level of education has significant effect on ownership of expensive durables. This study was done from the sample survey of 300 households of Digapahandi, Orissa.

Saraswathi (2008), in her study on consumer satisfaction on post-sales service with reference to two-wheeler automobile industry in Hyderabad and Secunderabad, reflected that Bajaj, Hero Honda and TVS as the main players in two-wheelers industry. The study indicated that most of the respondents are aware of service centres and receive reminders from dealers for free services. Most of the respondents are satisfied with the over-all service offered to them.

Kabra KC (2008) examined the role of business and industry in the economy of Mizoram. Tracing the factors that led to the development of trade and commerce, he analysed the role of government in promoting business in Mizoram.

Sunayna Khurana (2008) analysed the consumer behaviour, their expectations and the services actually provided by retail stores of Haryana. Ambience, physical facilities, modern looking equipments and store layouts are
important factors attracting buyers. The study shows that reliability, personal interaction, problem-solving capacity and empathy as strong factors for retaining customers.

Chandan A Chavadi and Shilpa S Kokatnur (2010) conducted a study in Bangalore on driving factors and effectiveness of sales promotion in shopping malls and found that major factors which drive the customers towards shopping malls include product mix, ambience and services provided by the retailers. Promotional strategies like price discounts significantly influence consumer behaviour. Among the various promotional tools evaluated, ‘buy one, get one free’ is the favourite, followed by the samples and free gifts. Time of the promotion plays a crucial role in the success of the campaign.

Lilly J (2010) conducted a study on perceptions and preferences towards branded products, with special reference to television set within Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. The study states that to move consumers from trial to preference, brands need to deliver on their value proposition, as well as dislodge someone else from the consumer’s existing preference set. Pricing, promotional deals and product availability all have tremendous impact on the position of the brand in the consumer’s preference set. The study also shows that demographic variables such as age, gender, and education do not significantly relate to the brand preference of TV sets.

Mallika Kumar and Altaf Khan (2010) identified factors influencing customer satisfaction with cooperative banking services in Uttarakhand. The study revealed that convenient locations, rate of interest, service quality and security influences customers’ responses. The local feel is what most of the respondents
attract and retain customers to a particular bank. The perceived quality variables among the customers are sincerity, trustworthy and confidentiality.

Manoj Kumar Paul and Arup Barman (2010) in their study explored customer satisfaction in the context of rural banking services in Southern Assam. The study observed that all the customers were dissatisfied with the service quality of the bank under study. It was found that the work culture is intimately associated with the time required for rendering services. Further, the more the waiting period for depositing and/or sanctioning of loans, the more is the dissatisfaction of the customers.

Mrinalini Pandey (2010) examined the impact of the multiple product endorsements by celebrities on consumers’ attitude and buying intentions. The study indicated that both females and males are equally affected by celebrity endorsers. The findings indicated that celebrity endorsements generate higher purchase intentions, positive attitude towards the ads and positive attitude towards the brand itself.

Nabi M.K et al (2010) examined the buying behaviour of consumers for durable purchases within Orissa. The study shows that promotion mix and price decisively influence the durable purchase behaviour of the sample. Another factor, namely, product attributes also plays a vital role in influencing durable product purchase decision of the sample respondents. The spending pattern of the Indian consumers is fast catching up with their western counterparts with the confluence of cultures and new lifestyles and therefore promotional measures are given importance. At the same time, price remains a major determinant in buying decisions with distinct emphasis on value for money.
Sakthivel Rani (2010) conducted a study on consumer behaviour in rural markets and concluded that the practical application of rural consumer behaviour findings has often posed a problem for marketers for two reasons. First, most consumer research in rural markets has used a piecemeal approach. Second, there has been no comprehensive framework to integrate the findings in a meaningful manner. As the rural markets are heterogeneous, the marketers should frame different strategies to sell their products. However, it is possible to capitalise on the similarities among rural markets. The difference between rural and urban markets is in the degree of sophistication of the consumers.

Urvashi Makkar and Vijendra Dhyani (2010) analysed the different factors that affect the choice and preferences of media vehicles in rural and urban consumers from NCR Region, western UP. Eight media options, namely, newspaper, magazine, movies, radio, TV, internet, out of home and mobile were studied. The study concluded that media have a dramatic impact on the consumption pattern of the consumers, irrespective of their affiliation to certain geographical locations – rural or urban and their gender. Even in the modern business environment where electronic transactions are becoming the norm, the use of other media options is equally important, specifically for the rural consumers. As per the study, it can be recognised that the role of other media options is not less in comparison to the world of electronic communications.

The review of existing literature on Mizoram leads to the conclusion that most of the earlier works related mainly to economic development of Mizoram. No work has covered the marketing aspects except very few studies on agriculture marketing and surveys done by professional agencies and governmental organisations. However, there has been no study exploring the behavioural
dimensions of customers in the State. Precisely, the study of consumer behaviour in Mizoram is an attempt to fill this gap.

1.4 THE PROBLEM

The present study on consumer behaviour in the State of Mizoram is a pioneering one. Consumer, as we know, is the life-vein of business activities. Without the buying population, the purpose of business is void. Consumer behaviour can be subjected as the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. A consumer’s buying process is a result of the complex interplay of cultural, social, personal and psychological influences. Researching the consumer is beneficial for the business community as it provides crucial information like who is buying the product and why, who is not buying the product and why. It takes into account by which individuals decide whether, what, when, where, how and from whom to purchase goods and services.

Mizoram, as we know, lies on the border-tip of India’s North East. Since there is no significant industrial value creation within the State, almost all the products come from the mainland India. Yet, contrary to the low productivity, it is worth noting that the literacy rate is almost on par with Kerala, which is India’s most literate State. This gave a more than proportional deep media awareness and penetration. This may be the reason that the hype and fad onset is so intense. This peak hype and fashion trend causes a peculiar pattern in the buying behaviour of the household customers in Mizoram. Popular culture is the keyword here. Thus, an empirical study on the consumer behaviour of household customers in Mizoram would be of prominence as it would help the business community,
media firms and policy makers to understand their everchanging needs and satisfactions. The study covers the select nondurable and durable products. It is needless to mention that services which are intangible fall outside the purview of the study. However, the services offered by media firms such as newspapers and TV channels are covered in this study due to their importance in influencing consumer behaviour.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study intends *inter alia*:

1. To identify the socioeconomic characteristics of the household customers in Mizoram.
2. To analyse the external influences and buying factors influencing the purchase of nondurable and durable products.
3. To understand the consumer decision making and postdecision behaviour of household customers in Mizoram.
4. To study media scenario in Mizoram and the media habits of the household customers.
5. To offer suggestions to the marketers and policy makers so as to improve their performance with a view to enhance the standard of living of people in Mizoram.

1.6 HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are proposed to be tested:

Hypothesis H1: *There is no significant difference between the rural and urban household customers with regard to need recognition of nondurable products.*
Hypothesis H2: There is no significant difference between the rural and urban household customers with regard to need recognition of durable products.

Hypothesis H3: There is no significant difference between the rural and urban household customers with regard to influence of family members in purchasing nondurable products.

Hypothesis H4: There is no significant difference between the rural and urban household customers with regard to influence of family members in purchasing durable products.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

The descriptive research design is applied for the study. In the first exploratory stage of this study, an intensive review of literature was undertaken to familiarise the researcher with the various aspects of consumer behaviour, to identify the research problem, to evolve appropriate methodology and to formulate a conceptual framework for the study. The study used the household (consumer or customer) survey as a tool of collecting primary data. A comprehensive questionnaire (see Annexure 1) was framed to enquire into the different aspects of consumer behaviour including:

i. Socioeconomic profile of the sample household customers

ii. Expenditure profile of households in a month

iii. Frequency of purchase of different items

iv. Prepurchase, purchase and postpurchase behaviour exhibited by the sample households

v. Media habits

In the second stage, the questionnaire was administered to the sample households identified with multi-level sampling method. All the eight functioning
districts of the Mizo State, namely, Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lawngtlai, Lunglei, Mamit, Saiha and Serchhip were considered for the purpose of the study to represent the Mizo household customers. All these districts were categorically classified as rural and urban areas. As the district headquarters are notified urban areas, household respondents were randomly selected from each of these district headquarters to represent the urban Mizoram. As for the rural sample, all the rural development blocks within the concerned district were considered. From these rural development blocks within the district, two villages identified as rural areas for implementing the rural development flagship programme, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), were randomly selected. From these randomly selected towns/villages, household respondents were selected at random. The sample rural households were taken from the following villages – Saitual and Aibawk from Aizawl district, Khawbung and Khawzawl from Champhai district, Bilkhawthlir and Vairengte from Kolasib district, Chawngte and Diltlang from Lawngtlai district, Hnahthial and Zobawk from Lunglei district, Rawpuichhip and Kawrthah from Mamit district, Tuipang and Sangau from Saiha district and N. Vanlaiphai and Thenzawl from Serchhip district. 40 urban households were taken from each district headquarters to represent the urban customers and 20 households from each of the villages mentioned to represent the rural customers, making it 40 rural households for every district. It may be observed that Mizoram has almost an equal proportion of rural-urban population (Statistical Handbook, 2008). Therefore, an equal number of respondents were selected to represent the rural and urban sample. In all, 640 households i.e. 80 households from each district, 40 from urban areas and 40 from rural areas were drawn as a sample to cover the whole State. As the researcher
served in the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) under Government of Mizoram during the administration of questionnaires, his experience with SIRD helped in contacting the sample household customers even in remote towns and villages in interior, hilly terrained State of Mizoram. Extracting responses to such an elaborate questionnaire took at least one hour of the respondent’s time. They were mostly contacted at their homes at their convenience. The survey was conducted during December, 2007 – February, 2008.

In addition to primary data, the secondary data are collected from books, reports, governmental organisations and business houses.

### 1.8 ANALYSIS OF DATA

As the derivative aim of the study is to examine the relationship between the rural and urban respondents in Mizoram, various statistical tools are used to analyse the representations of responses made by the two samples for testing the homogeneity and uniformity between the responses of rural and urban samples. For correlation analysis, Pearson Correlation and Spearman’s Rank Correlation are used depending on the variables on which the samples are to be tested.

*Pearson Correlation* is used to determine the relationship between the two sets of responses viz. urban and rural population. Coefficient of correlation ‘r’ can be calculated using the formula:

\[
r_{xy} = N \frac{\Sigma fx_\text{y} - \Sigma fx \cdot \Sigma fy}{\sqrt{[N \Sigma fx^2 - (\Sigma fx)^2][N \Sigma fy^2 - (\Sigma fy)^2]}}
\]

The output will be between -1 to +1. Positive value signifies positive correlation i.e. both the data sets move in same direction while negative value signifies negative correlation i.e. the two data sets move in different direction.

As for *Spearman’s Rank Correlation*, the responses of the rural and urban households are converted into ranks. Correlation ρ is calculated using the formula:
To arrive at the significance of correlation between rural and urban samples, the coefficients (r) are subjected to *T-Test* which is calculated as:

\[ r/\sqrt{(1-r^2)} \times \sqrt{N-2} \]

Where, \( N \) = Number of observations. The value so calculated is compared with tabular *t* value to arrive whether the coefficient is significant or not. The significance level is determined at 95%, which is optimal for behavioural sciences.

*F-Test analysis* tries to examine whether two sample variances equate to each other. Essentially, the analysis compares the ratio of two variances. The assumption is that if the variance is equal, the ratio of the variances should be equal to 1. Variance may be defined as the square of standard deviation, standard deviation being the dispersion about the data set’s mean. Standard deviation is calculated using the formula: \[ \sigma = \sqrt{\sum fd^2/N - [\sum fd/N]^2} \] and variance will be \( \sigma^2 \) (Mohan Singhal, 1999).

*Chi-square* or \( \chi^2 \) is calculated using the formula - \[ \sum (f_o \cdot f_e)^2 / f_e \] where \( f_o \) = Observed frequency and \( f_e \) = Expected frequency. This calculated value is compared with the \( \chi^2 \) Table value to arrive to the significance of uniformity. The table values of Chi-square are indicated in *Annexure 2*, followed by *T-Table* (*Annexure 3*), and Pearson’s product critical value table (*Annexure 4*). The degree of freedom (d.f.) is calculated as (No. of rows-1) X (No. of columns -1).

In this study, the level of significance \( \alpha \), also known as the size of critical region or region of rejection is kept at 5%, which means that the level of confidence interval (also known as confidence limit or fiducially limit is 95% i.e.
that the probability at which a sample fall within a region of acceptance is 0.95. This can also be interpreted in another way. The probability of committing Type 1 Error i.e. rejection of true $H_0$ is 0.05.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study being a pioneering work in the field of consumer behaviour in Mizoram, there is hardly any secondary data to fit within the scope of consumer behaviour. Although the Census reports and Statistical Handbooks published by the State government are utilised, such information has only a limited use to support the present study.

2. As the main earning member of the household was interviewed, it is assumed that the responses given were made on behalf of the entire household sic.

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**Notes**

1. *Economic psychology*, as a discipline studies the psychological mechanism that underlies consumption and other economic behaviour. It deals with the preferences, choices, decisions and factors influencing these, as well as the consequences of decisions of choices with respect to satisfaction of needs. These characteristics are aims of *Journal of Economic Psychology*

2. Village or Town is recognized as the basic area of habitation. In all censuses throughout the world this dichotomy of Rural and Urban areas is recognized and the data are generally presented for the rural and urban areas separately. In the rural areas the smallest area of habitation, viz., the village generally follows the limits of a revenue village that is recognized by the normal district administration. The revenue village need not necessarily be a single agglomeration of the habitations. But the revenue village has a definite surveyed boundary and each village is a separate administrative unit with separate village accounts. It may have one or more hamlets. The entire revenue village is one unit. There may be unsurveyed villages within forests etc., where the locally recognized boundaries of each habitation area are followed within the larger unit of say the forest range officers’ jurisdiction. It is in defining the Urbans areas that problems generally arise. However for the 1971 Census the definition adopted for an urban area which follows the pattern of 1961.


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