CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reviewing the existing research studies is an important aspect which guides the researcher in identifying the gap in the related field of knowledge. The researcher has conducted an extensive literature review which has enabled her to understand the research problem and develop the focus point of the research. The findings of the significant studies are also helpful in developing factors for the study.

This chapter therefore tries to bring out the salient findings of earlier studies which throw light on various concepts in the related field. The reviews consist of various research work carried out by other Researchers, articles published in Journals and magazines and newspapers and PhD Thesis of other researchers. Since the present study is related to the consumer buying behavior of working women and home makers about the Ready-To-Eat Food Products - the review of literature refers to Consumer Behavior in general, Consumer Behavior on food purchase, Consumer Behavior for Ready-To-Eat food products in particular and Consumer Behavior of Women (working women and home makers). Hence the researcher has made an attempt to bring out the reviews in four different sections.

2.1 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Consumer behavior is an important aspect focused by research works. The field of consumer research developed as an extension of marketing research enables the marketer to predict how consumers would react in the market place and to understand the reasons behind the purchase decisions they make. Thus in this section of the Review of Literature the researcher has presented the reviews of some of the major research works, which highlight various aspects of consumer behavior.
2.1.1 Product

Consumer buying behavior is affected by various factors that determine the product and brand preferences of consumers. Marketing begins with identification of consumer needs and wants and trying to fulfill these needs and wants through various elements of marketing mix. A marketer can successfully satisfy the needs and wants of his customers by ‘offering something in exchange of money’. This offering is basically called as a Product. The consumer buying process starts when a person realizes that he has a problem and then tries to gather information regarding the product which will satisfy his need. Product knowledge is an important aspect which will affect the buying behavior of the consumers.

The meaning and measurement of consumer product class knowledge on information search behavior has been clarified by Brucks\textsuperscript{24} (1985) in his study titled “The effects of product class knowledge on information search behavior”. The measures of consumer product class knowledge can be an individual’s perception of how much he knows or the amount of purchasing or usage experience with the product. This study shows the need to take enough steps to create a positive perception in the minds of customers so that they can have a link with the product and brand. This can be done with the help of communications and promotions.

2.1.2 Promotion

In the case of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) like food, the brand name, logo, and other signs work best in creating an identity in the mind of consumers. This has been reflected by Narayan Krishnamurthy\textsuperscript{25} (1999) in his article “Signs speaks louder”. He has pointed out that

\textsuperscript{24} Merrie Brucks ; “The effects of product class knowledge on information search behavior”, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol 12, June 1985, pp 1-6.

Semiotics primarily works best for products that have low –involvement at the time of purchase and a very frequent usage. FMCG such as soaps, shampoos, tyres and tea were the ones that fit the bill best. Macmonics also becomes crucial to nurture and retain place in mind space. The shelf life of FMCG products was short enough for most to remember those products by their symbols, colours, and names or combinations of those elements.

2.1.3 Price

Price is the next element of Marketing Mix which has its influence on the purchase pattern of the consumers .This is one of the biggest challenges that marketers face. Sometimes they may feel that they have not set the right price. The effect of the pricing strategy of a firm will reflect on the perceptions of the buyers and their buying pattern.

The same point is made lucid by Akshay and Monroe\textsuperscript{26} (1993) in their study, “The effect of price, brand name and store name on buyer’s perception of product quality” they found that both price and brand name have significant but moderate effect on buyer’s perceptions on quality, where as the store name has only a small and significant effect.

A study was conducted by Soma Sen Gupta\textsuperscript{27} (2005) about the interrelationship between pricing, brand name and quality of various products. The study revealed a major aspect of Consumer Behavior, ie; when price is the only cue, a price – quality relationship could easily be implied. When other cues were introduced price – quality relationship was replaced by brand – quality relationship. The other cues include: brand reputation, features of the product, promotional efforts, store reputation etc. These factors provided insights for the researcher on consumer behavior aspects.


\textsuperscript{27} Soma Sen Gupta; “Consumer Behavior –Dynamics of building Brand Equity”, New Century Publications, New Delhi, India (2005)
2.1.4 Purchase place:

Selecting a source from which to make purchase is one of the buying decisions. The most common source is a retail store and the reasons a consumer chooses to shop at a certain store are called Patronage Buying Motives. Some common Patronage Buying Motives are Location Convenience, Service speed, Merchandise, Crowd Management, Price, Assortment, Service offered, Store appearance, Sales personnel, Offers.

Successful marketers evaluate their customers carefully and design their stores accordingly. Thus the purchase place is a major factor influencing buying behavior. This factor has been the focus area of many researchers. The ambience, and other value added facilities etc are some of the features of the shopping places which are used by the modern marketer to attract his customer. Today’s modern retail outlets and malls are the result of this revolution in the marketing scenario.

The changes happening in the scenario of purchasing behaviors and its impact on the retail stores has been cited by Manivannan and Raghunathan\textsuperscript{28} (2004) in their article “Changing scenario of purchasing pattern and the utilization of Department Stores”. The authors stress the importance of stationing service providers at strategic points at the Department Stores. Trained salesman, recreation facilities like music, ice cream parlour, movie pictures, lounge, reading and writing rooms, telephone booths, beauty clinics, crèche facility for small children, some free demonstrations and classes for arts, and cookery, fashion shows, exhibitions etc can be arranged to create a “home image” for the department store.

\textsuperscript{28} L.Manivannan and P.N.Raghunathan; “Changing scenario of purchasing pattern and the utilization of Department Stores”, Indian Journal of Marketing, Vol 34, no.3, March 2004
Research on ‘KIRANAfirst’ conducted jointly by Prof. Pannerselvam and Post Graduate Retail Management students of Chennai Business School, explains the Transformational strategies which have helped the kiranas survive despite the growth of modern retail. The Kiranas have realized that there has been a change in the consumer buying patterns since the onset of modern organized retail. The competitive strategy which are used by kiranas are termed as Transformational strategies viz; change in format, change in merchandising, change in customer services etc. With these strategies they are in a better state of readiness to regenerate and keep their business sustainable.

A study was conducted by Rani Leela and Velayudan (2008) about the determinants of consumer’s attitude towards ‘Retail store in Stock out situations’ and the extent of these determinants and influences on consumer’s attitude. The study focuses on “Unorganized retail in India with reference to- The General Store”. The study found that the consumers facing a stockout situation incur some psychological responses like frustration, irritation and inequity. The results showed that six independent variables which influence customer’s attitude towards out –of –stock retail store are: shopping attitude of the respondent, store loyalty, perceived store prices, store distance, shopping frequency and brand loyalty.

The advantages of hypermarket model of retail shops are highlighted by Purvita Chatterjee (2010) in her article “Aditya Birla Retail looking to raise PE Funds – Company finds Hypermarket model more lucrative, easy to manage”. According to Mr. Thomas

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KIRANAfirst is a not-for-profit organization devoted to enhancing competitiveness of kiranas.

30 Rani Leela and Velayudan; “Understanding consumer’s attitude towards retail store in stock out situations”, Vikalpa, Vol- 33, No.3, July-Sep 2008

31 Purvita Chatterjee; “Aditya Birla Retail looking to raise PE Funds – Company finds hypermarket model more lucrative, easy to manage”, Business Line-March 5, 2010, p 5
Varghese, CEO, Aditya Birla Retail, which runs the retail store ‘More’, the company is exploring new formats such as deep discount and home stores as it might look to go beyond its supermarket and hypermarket models. Making money from these big box formats is easier due to the advantage of scale. Supply chain efficiency is an added advantage. Thus the change in the retailing formats is creating a difference in the way the products are offered to the customers. People are more concerned about the place where they make their purchase decisions.

A study conducted by Nityanand Singh (2010) about “Status of Supply Chain Management in Organised Vs Unorganised Retail” explains that today’s COSMO consumer needs ambience and an entire shopping experience. The consumer today has shifted from Net Money Spot to Value for money attitude. This study also exposes that Experience, Value, Time Utility, Possession Utility, Merchandise, and Place Utility are the most influencing factors that drive the customer to a particular retail store.

A study conducted by Chandan A Chavadi and Shilpa S Kokatnur (2010) on “Driving factors and effectiveness of sales promotion in shopping malls-A consumer perspective” identified the factors governing consumers’ choice of shopping malls. In-depth product mix, good ambience, better shopping experience and desired service requirements like fast billing, parking, long operation hours etc are salient factors. Other factors such as convenience in location or proximity to home, promotional factors like price discounts and ‘Buy one Get one offer’ etc influence purchase acceleration where as samples given with the products has no influence on purchasing behavior.


According to Howard Schultz, CEO Star Bucks (2010) in the Café, Business people come every day. People use Starbucks Store as their own. Thus the growth of Food Company comes from optimizing the retail footprint. The Differentiated Model adopted by Star Bucks added the culture to it and gave the company the nimbleness and flexibility to offer products through multiple channels. As a coffee retailer there is a sensibility of the brand and a human connection that they have been able to create as a company. Thus the people in the company realize the deep level of respect they have for the work they do and how they act. Thus the significance of sales men in a retail concern is stressed here.

The importance of time factor in promoting sales for consumer goods has been highlighted by Sravanthi Challapalli (2010) in her article “Witching hour works magic for retailers”. The article includes the opinions of retail giants like Lifestyle and Landmark, that when they offered “A midnight off - sale” the customers’ response was shocking. More than 10% of the sales came in between midnight and 2AM. Mid-night sales (48 hour nonstop sale) coupled with a zero margin tag provided a formidable hook, offering convenience and rewards for the customers and helped the retailers to create a desire to get customers buy.

2.1.5 Brand

Brand can be all-important for many products, especially for food. For some consumers brands help to identify the goods and services and make quick purchase decisions. They also assure that the consumers will get consistent quality when they order.

“The most important element in a marketing program and the one over which marketing manager can exert control over is the branding part of the product”

34 Howard Schultz; “We had to own the mistakes”, Harvard Business Review: July –August 2010, pp 92-100

There are many studies which concentrate on the branding aspects of the products. Some of the important studies are listed here.

Padberg, Walker, and Kepner\textsuperscript{36} (1967) presented a model which qualifies the attractive display of the product and motivates the consumer brand preferences. In their study in a laboratory controlled experiment in the Ohio Metropolitan area, they arrived at the conclusion that: Brand, Price, the proportion of display space allocated to each brand, the quality of display, sales promotion, advertising and consumers brand preference influenced consumer’s purchase decision.

Barnad and Ehrenberg\textsuperscript{37} (1990) in their study titled “Robust measures of consumers’ brand beliefs” revealed that consumers selected brand name more frequently than any other information. Many people tend to associate a positive attribute with larger brands than associate it with smaller brands. The explanation is that a larger brand has more claimed users than a smaller brand and that users of a brand are more likely to give a positive attribute-response than a non-user.

Richardson et al;\textsuperscript{38} (1994) in their study titled “Extrinsic and Intrinsic cue effects on perceptions of Store Brand quality” revealed that Cues are evolved according to their predictive and confidence values. The predictive value of a cue is the degree to which consumers associate a given cue with product quality. The confidence value of a cue is the degree to which consumers have confidences in their ability to use and judge the cue accurately. Cues characterized by high confidence value and high predictive value assume the greatest weight in the quality assessment process.


\textsuperscript{37} Niel R. Barnad and Andrew S.S. Ehrenberg; “Robust measure of consumers brand beliefs”, Journal of Marketing Research, Nov 1990, Vol 27, p 477

A study conducted by **David A. Soberman, and Philip M. Parker**\(^{39}\) (2006) says that there are two types of consumers in the market—Brand Seekers and Product Seekers. Brand Seekers are those who are willing to pay a premium price for a National Brand which is well advertised, even though the non-advertised brands are quality ones. The authors have cited the experiments conducted by Anand, Holbrook, and Stephens (1988), Heath (1990) and Obermitten (1985) which shows that advertising can lead to higher brand evaluations because of the familiarity and mere exposure. This helps to infer that consumers will prefer and pay more for products because of the “Familiarity or Pleasurable association”

**T. Sarathy**\(^{40}\) (2007) in his research study “A Comparative Study on the Brand Preferences of Selected Fast Moving Consumer Goods Among Rural Consumers in Erode and Salem Districts” found that advertisements are the major source of influence in the purchase of biscuits where as family members are the major source for tea. The study also pointed out that place and age of the respondents has significant influence over the level of opinion about the price of tea whereas place has significant influence over the level of opinion about the price of biscuits. The study explains that good taste is considered as top priority for buying biscuits followed by nutrition value, crispiness, brand image, more cream/flavours and low price. The researcher also found that rural consumers are associating superior quality, reasonable price and social status to branded products. It is also suggested in the study that convenience is the key factor in packaging and the packaging should be simple and functional giving due importance to coloring. Hence these factor are to be considered importance for any food product.


An empirical study conducted by *Arvind Sahay and Nivedita Sharma*⁴¹ (2010) on “Brand relationships and switching behavior for highly used product in young consumers”, reveals that young groups love their brands and are more passionate about them, where as the older groups are more rational about their brand relationships. Factors identified for the same in the older group are, maturity, financial constraints, independence and increased responsibility. The study reveals that strong brand relationships reduce switching intentions by overcoming price changes.

The positive influence of the perceived advertising support, on the consumer’s attitude towards brand extension has been highlighted by *Sattler, Volckner, Riediger and Ringle*⁴² (2010) in their study titled “The impact of brand extension success drivers on brand extension price premiums.” The study further reveals that monetary effects associated with these success drivers (parent brand quality, perceived fit, marketing support and customer experience with extension category) offer important information regarding how to allocate resources to various success drivers.

### 2.1.6 Packaging

Consumers choices are influenced not only by the brand but also by package, design and other product features. As Packaging is becoming more and more communicative to attract consumers, it is considered to be an important component of overall marketing experience .The way the product is packaged, convinces and compels the consumer to drop a

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trusted brand for more attractively packaged ones. This is reflected by Bindu D. Menon\textsuperscript{43} (2010) in her article “Packaging an idea whose time has come”. This article brings out the views of Ashok Chaturvedi, Chairman and Managing Director, Uflex Ltd., one of the largest Packaging companies of India. He opines that consumer buying decisions are made at the retail shelves and packaging serves as a critical point of sale advertising, helping to increase brand awareness and grab consumer attention. The concept of Flexible Packaging are getting popularized due to the increase in consumption of convenience goods. The advantage and convenience of flexible packaging (moisture resistance, grease resistance, aroma retention, seal ability and printability) is weaning consumers away from rigid packs. All these involve understanding consumer preferences so that the packaging can be done to their fullest satisfaction.

Sehramet, Mahavir, Kundu and Subhash\textsuperscript{44} (2007) in their study on “Buying behavior of rural and urban consumers in India – The impact of Packaging” explain that rural consumers give more importance to packaging than their urban counterparts. They feel that the better packed products are more quality ones. The other factors which favor packaging are: ease of carriage, protection of the product, proper storage, transparency and consistency. Although labeling increased the value of the package, rural consumers had not considered it as important as urban counterparts. Moreover consumers are found eco-conscious with the package. There is also a shift from loose to packaged products.

A study conducted by Sanjeev Gupta and Preethi Mehra\textsuperscript{45} (2010), on the evolution of Micro Packs and the strategy of Micro packs adopted by FMCG sector, reveals that the

\textsuperscript{43} Bindu D. Menon; “Packaging an idea whose time has come”- Ashok Chaturvedi, Chairman and Managing Director, Uflex Ltd. Talks to Brand Line, Brand Line, Business Line, July 15, 2010, p1

\textsuperscript{44} Sehramet, Mahavir, Kundu and Subhash; “Buying behavior of rural and urban consumers in India – The impact of Packaging”, Vikalpa, Vol-33, No 1, Jan-Mar 2008, p 151

tool of Micro Packs is being successfully employed by food and beverage category companies as a ‘Pull Strategy’ to stimulate the customer to try a product and become loyal to it. The prime focus is on creating maximum innovators and on converting late adopters and laggards into early adapters. The study also suggests that micro packs in actual sense are not benefitting the customers. Companies charge more from customers in low unit packs. The study further states that product portfolio of Micro packs should be expanded to include items like sugar, rice, flour, pulses, oils, spices and processed foods. Adoption of Micro packs would lead to an increase in brand awareness and would trigger off overall penetration and would result in significant augmentation in sales.

2.1.7 Influence of others:

Buying behavior of the consumers is also influenced by the opinions of their family and friends. This is true especially in the case of FMCG products. Apart from family and friends, Opinion leaders influence the actions and attitude of the consumers.

The part played by people in the flow of mass communication is highlighted by Katz Elihu and Lazarsfeld46 (1955) in their study “Personla Influence”. This study shows that inter personal communication among friends plays a major role in many consumer decisions. In many situations the opinion leaders have central role in this process than others. The opinion leadership is important because the marketers might concentrate their efforts on such opinion leaders who are a small number of key individuals who persuade the rest of the population.

Mookerjee47(2001) in his study titled “Study of the influence of source characteristics and product importance on consumer word of mouth based on personal source” exposes that

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47 Amit Mookerjee; “Study of the influence of Source Characteristics and product importance on consumer word of mouth based on personal sources “Global Business Review .Vol 2, Marketing at the Management Development Institute, Haryana, India (2001)
in mature markets the information search mechanism of the consumers for purchase decisions includes personal sources where word of mouth communication is an important influence on decisions judged by diffusion process.

*Sampath Kumar* 48 (2003) in “A study of the consumer behavior with reference to selected products” observed that the marketers should take efforts to supply quality goods at reasonable prices and maintain good relations with their retailers, because consumers place more trust on retailers’ advice. Moreover marketing and distribution systems should be well established. This study also confirms the importance of well established marketing systems.

*Gil, Andres and Salinas* 49 (2007) conducted a study on “Family as a source of consumer based Brand equity”. Results proved that positive brand information provided by the family has effects on the formation of brand awareness-associations and perceived quality and this may in turn lead to brand loyalty and brand equity. The effects of the information provided by the family are higher than those of marketing variables studied. The study further highlights that brand loyalty is much closer to the concept of overall brand equity than brand awareness-associations and perceived quality.

### 2.1.8 Advertisements

Advertisements are another way adopted by the marketer to reach the minds of consumers. Here also the consumers’ preferences and attitudes are always shifting to new dimensions.

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48 Sampath Kumar R; “A study of the consumer behavior with reference to selected products”, Finance India, Vol. XVII, No.4, Dec 2003, pp 1478-1483

An article on “Reinventing media for Brand Visibility” ⁵⁰ (2010) points out that communicating the right value addition in products and services could be the key for successful branding. Today advertisers are becoming aware of the fact that buyer is demanding better experience with the products and this is possible only when he tries the product at least once. A person’s feelings about a company can be shaped by something as simple as Word-of-Mouth. Thus the influence of friends and family is significant. Apart from the influence of others, innovative media may prove more effective to arouse the curiosity and to endure an impression in the minds. There should be an innovative media, Out-of-the-Box, to register the brand in the mind of the target buyer. Not only the media, even the products and the way with which it is presented to the public should also be innovative.

2.1.9 Innovation

Innovation and how producers and suppliers engage with consumers in the innovation process are the major challenges to marketer in theory and practice in modern society. One piece of received wisdom in the marketing field is that it is vital for consumers to be willing to accept new products and brands. For the consumers the choice whether to accept and use the innovations is more to do with what they want from these products than some perception whether they are innovative or not. Thus whether there are any takeovers for these innovation attempts made by the companies? Is the question raised by Jessica Wohl ⁵¹ (2010) in her article in Brand Line wherein it is stated that consumer good makers face one of the greatest tests to lure the customers with innovation while unemployment rates remain high and


⁵¹ Jessica Wohl; “Any takeovers for these innovations? - Consumer good makers have many novel products on offer but will that help loosen purse strings?”, Brand Line ,Business Line, March 4,2010, p 3
shoppers prove to be selective about spending their money. Consumers are willing to accept innovation, but still not clear whether it’s going to be invigorating category growth or not. Retailers need to see the consumer is willing to Trade up. Food makers who have felt the brunt of consumers opting for cheaper store brands find out that the key role is to bring out products that are not easy to duplicate.

2.1.10 Cultural and social factors

Cultural factors like values, beliefs, education, etc are common factors that binds together the members of a society. Our culture reflects what we eat, wear, conduct and even the buying habits.

The impact of the education level of the consumers on their information needs for making purchase decisions are stressed by Thorelli 52(1953) in his study on 93 Norway sample Districts. The study titled “Concentration of Information Power among Consumers” found that those with more education might be more information minded than those with less education. Actual or potential buyers or owners of the product were more likely to be better informed than others. There might be product-informed elite and hence a concentration of information power among the consumers is needed.

Deepak53 (2004) in his article on “Gleaning consumer insights from sub-cultures”, revealed that one key to understand consumer behavior is to assess the consumer’s underlying culture, sales culture based on age, beliefs, religion, geography, language, ethnic edge, attitudes, values customs, symbols and rituals. The final outcome of the study states that MNCs manage to entice a few Indians away from their culture but they can never make

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all Indians completely strangers to their own culture. Society as a group is a stronger entity than any brand or product.

A study has been conducted by Pinaki Ranjan Bhattacharya and Sitanath Mazumdar\textsuperscript{54} (2009) about “Factors responsible for choice of FMCG products: A case study of consumers of Dental Care Products” has exposed that consumer evaluates a product based on beliefs, attitudes and intentions about that particular brand or product and after assessing the alternative product of brand available in the market. It has been felt that in FMCG and service sector “Perception” may be considered as an important attribute and as the “Eighth (8\textsuperscript{th}) P” in the marketing mix.

2.1.11 Stages in decision making process.

Consumers pass through different stages before actually buying products. The consumer experiences several cues at each stage of this process which has its effect on his buying decision.

Bruner II and Pomazal\textsuperscript{55} (1988) in their study titled “Problem Recognition: The crucial First Stage of the Consumer Decision Process” stated that since 1910, when John Dewey first introduced the five stage decision process it has been a widely accepted concept and still serves as the central pillar of a popular consumer behavior model. These stages are Problem Recognition, Information Search, Alternatives Evaluation, Choice and Outcomes. However attention has not yet come to the Problem Recognition stage, even though considerable attention was devoted to most of the stages in many textbooks. Some of these provide hypothetical descriptions that this stage is the trigger of the Decision Process.


Mittal, Vikas, Sarkees, Mathew and Murshad\textsuperscript{56}(2008) offer a framework to help the organization to objectively determine how unmanageable their problem customers really are and to guide them through the process of deciding how best to fix or end relationships. The approach proposes possible questions to ask and actions to be taken in each of the five options viz; “Reassess, Educate, Renegotiate, Migrate, and Terminate”. They concluded that managers must sparingly, mindfully and cautiously exercise the decision to reject /retain the customers.

Another empirical study conducted by Muhammed Ali Tirmizi, Kashif -Ur- Rehman and M.Iqbal Saif\textsuperscript{57} (2009) also deals with the consumer decision making stages. The study titled “An empirical study of consumer Impulse buying behavior in local markets of Rawalpindi and Islamabad (Pakistan)” The in-depth analysis found that pre-decision stage of consumer purchase behavior is the only variable that resulted into strong association with the impulse buying behavior, because these days stores are full of variety of products and a buyer can easily get interested in purchasing a product which appeals to him or her while shopping for the planned list of products and here “pleasure principle” comes into play.

According to Swaroop Chandra Sahoo and Prakash Chandra Dash\textsuperscript{58} (2010) in Indian context consumer decision making styles in shopping malls can be classified into six decision making styles ie, Price consciousness, Quality consciousness, Recreational, Confused by over choice, Novelty consciousness, and Variety Seekers. The study conducted


reveals that average Indian consumer is not very Brand conscious, but is price and quality conscious. They seek more recreation in their shopping. However the study did not confirm four other dimensions proposed – Fashion Consciousness, Brand Consciousness, Impulsiveness, and Brand Loyalty.

2.2 FOOD CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

An increasing share of Indian Consumers wallet is going towards Food Purchases. The recent trend is more inclined towards upgrading their consumption basket by allocating more to beverages and processed foods. Thus there is massive shift in demand for food commodities. Largely people are moving from a cereal based diet to diversified nutrition and more convenient food. The marketers are therefore interested in knowing the changes in the food lifestyle and its short term and long term impact on the consumption patterns so that they can draft their marketing strategies accordingly.

Very many studies have been conducted to determine the factors which are responsible for the food life style of the consumers. Various factors driving consumers’ attitude on food consumption found in these studies are reviewed in this section.

Consumers in today’s scenario are spoilt for choice. They want tasty and quality food. Food is the basic need and they go in search of good food even to a hole in the wall.

A Complementary view to the more traditional cognitive views of studying the relationship between knowledge of nutrition and food choices is provided by Paini Palojki and Trettu Tuomi –Groha59 (2001) in their study about “The Complexity of food choices in an everyday context”. The study aims at understanding the complexity of food choices in an everyday household context. It shows that at the individual level, the most important motive of choice is the taste and practical use of a product. At the level of households the tradition stemming from one’s childhood and the social aspect of acknowledging other family

members’ taste preferences are important. The influence at the level of society and culture leads towards healthier choices ie healthier food habits.

Another aspect of today’s consumer is that he is becoming more and more health conscious. Tea that makes you slim, or calms your mind, cooling oils that are good for your heart - products like these are a result of this perception. Modern consumer evaluates the effect of technology on the nutritional aspects of the food he consumes.

2.2.1 Health

Herne Delisa\(^60\) (1995) emphasized that to place all the various factors in the context of ‘Convenience ,Price and Appearance’ only exerted a mild influence on choice when compared to personal and family preferences . Perceived taste and health beliefs were stronger motives in food selection by older people than Price, Convenience and Prestige . Women appear to make consistently healthier food choices than men . The general result was that women’s diet were of higher quality than men’s and tended to be more varied .

The traditional view of the consumer behavior says that Price was a major factor while purchasing Food. But the modern view says that they are more interested in healthy, natural and nutritious food. The same view is emphasized by Kuznesof and Ritson\(^61\) (1996). They emphasized that price was one of the most important attributes to both traditional and undivided group. It has been further reported that “consumers are more interested in Nutritious, Healthy and Convenient foods”. This may justify the reason why context variables have been the most investigated extrinsic variables in food studies. He further states that health and convenience were viewed as important food product attributes.

\(^60\) Herne Delisa ; “Research on Food Choice and Nutritional Status in Elderly People- A Review” British Food Journal ; Vol 97; No 9; pp 12-14

Senaver Ben (2001) has undertaken a futuristic study on the food consumers in the 20th Century offering new research perspectives. This study tries to bring out distinction between the perception of the risks and benefits of the technology and in the underlying consumer preferences for risk avoidance and naturalness in food. He says that a far more complex set of factors are now driving food consumption. So attention needs to be given to the demand for quality – differentiated food products. The other factors which are listed here are food attributes, nutrition, health, safety, convenience, and diversity. The study also revealed that women’s entry into the work force and multi –ethnicity are fundamental drivers of food buying and dietary patterns.

Armstrong et al; (2005) in their study on “Marketing Health enhancing Foods: Implications from the diary sector” found that there is potential for the agri-food industry to expand further, particularly in the case of value added products, among which health – enhancing foods could be treated as an important subset. However product positioning and consumer segmentation need more concentration.

Jabir Ali, Sanjeev Kapoor and Janakiraman Moorthy (2006) in their study about the buying behavior of consumers for food products in an emerging economy say that there is a need to develop a marketing strategy for a modern food/grocery market based on consumer preferences and behavior. Preferences of the consumers indicated their priority for cleanliness, freshness of food products, price, quality, variety, packaging and non-seasonal


64 Jabir Ali, Sanjeev Kapoor, Janakiraman Moorthy; “Buying Behavior of Consumers for Food Products In An Emerging Economy”;Web Source : www.oppapers.com
availability. Convenience in packaging, additional services, attraction for children, basic
amenities, and affordability are other related factors. Food and grocery are purchased in
loose from the nearby outlets and fruits and vegetables are bought from near-by mandies and
are purchased daily or twice a week.

Certain studies have also mentioned that consumers will be more inquisitive about
how and where the food is grown, its freshness factor and the Carbon footprint of the entire
process.

*Lando Amy H and Labiner Wolfe Judith* 65 (2007) have made a study about
consumers’ views on making healthy food choices in Quick Service Restaurants. They
explain that respondents were interested in having nutrition information but would not use it
at every eating occasion. Food products typically consumed at the eating occasion should be
labelled as single serving. It was also opined that an icon on labels and menu boards that
signalled more healthful options could be helpful.

Though consumers are more interested in purchasing natural food, there always is a
question of price and availability of these products especially organic and sustainably
produced products. The price as well as the availability of these products is a big draw back
in the market.

2.2.2 Freshness /naturalness / Organic / sustainably produced food

A study conducted by *Ramona Robinson and Cherry Smith* 66 (2002) on
‘psychographical and demographic variables associated with consumer intentions to purchase

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sustainably produced food’ reveals that consumers were supportive of sustainably produced food but not highly confident in their ability to purchase them. The independent predictors of intention to purchase them included attitudes, beliefs, perceived behavior control, subjective norm, past buying behavior and marital status.

As reported in an article in *Packaged Facts* (2008) on Natural and Organic Food and Beverage Trends in US, the retail sales of natural and organic foods are projected to grow at 8% annual rates through 2013. While the sales of natural and organic foods are not immune to the recession, the growing consumer interest and commitment to sustainable products will continue to spur solid growth for this market. The online survey conducted by Packaged Facts in February 2009 indicated that one–fourth (26%) of the US adult population agreed that they frequently buy certified organic food and beverage products. Similarly one third (33%) of the respondents agreed that they are usually willing to pay more for organic food products.

This survey shows that there are a group of consumers who are ready to shell out extra pennies for getting the organic food products and it is evident that more and more people are becoming eco-conscious.

*Surabhi Singh* in her article “Consumer Behavior for Organic Food” explains that consumer’s value to make a choice for organic food can be seen in two terms. The first one is Use Values which are utility from taste, health and freshness ie; private good attributes which can only be enjoyed by actively consuming the product. The other is non use values which are public good values related to improved environment and animal welfare. Organic buyers

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are more health concerned, more focused on residues, animal welfare and environmental attributes, less focused on low prices and more often they preferred domestic products. The study further suggests that as customers are motivated by the values they represent, more awareness can be created about the benefit that may accrue for the eco-friendly products.

A study conducted by *S.V. Pathak and Aditya P.Tripathi* ⁶⁹(2009) on shopping behavior among modern retail formats in Delhi and NCR indicates that customers are apprehensive to buy fruits and vegetables from AC supermarkets. They still prefer to buy these from local mobile vendors or nearest sabji market. The factor of freshness while buying food, is thus given importance here. The importance of freshness is stressed in many studies.

An empirical study conducted by *Kriti Bardhan Gupta* ⁷⁰(2009) on the consumer behavior for food products in India explored the consumer behavior for food products from different perspectives. Cleanliness of the product, free from pesticides, freshness and its quality, good health and clean place of sale are some of the most important attributes which are rated highly by the people while buying food products. Value for money, overall quality, taste, availability of variety of products, at the same place, seasonality of the product, flavor, good display of the products, nearby availability and good ambience are some other parameters. Promotional offers and international origin did not rate much importance. The study found that although there has been an increasing trend of eating out in the restaurants and fast food outlets in major Indian cities, people still consider such restaurants and fast food meals as somewhat unsafe. It was also found that people continued to visit grocery shops.

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despite the fact that they are going more number of times to organized shopping malls as well.

Subramaniya Bharathy\(^1\) (2009) in his Research Study “Consumption Pattern and Buying Behavior of Fluid Milk Consumers in Salem District” found that in the majority of the respondents’ home, Meal Planners were making the decision in buying milk. It is also found that majority of the respondents are aware of the information about the Maximum Retail price and quantity printed on the sachets, where as they have not noted other details printed on the cover. The study also identified five underlying factors viz; freshness, nutritive value, low price, easy availability and brand image as the measures of consumers preference.

A report published by The Hartman Group and Packaged Facts\(^2\) (2009) on “Consumers and sustainability” covers the market for food and beverages and many other categories. The report explains that as consumers become more educated about the environmental, social and economic implications of their shopping habits, their health and wellness motivations dovetail with societal concerns. Many consumers resonate quality eating experiences, particularly freshness as sustainable in the food and beverage category. It is also shown that people are ready to pay a 20% cost premium for sustainable products. Moreover tradeoffs and cutbacks are less likely to be made in product categories that the consumers view as essential to their quality of life including food. Thus the factor of sustainability remains predominant in food sector. Though people seek out fresh and processed “Functional Foods” to decrease risks of chronic diseases and loss of weight, there are still more safety issues happening in the food sector.

\(^1\) Subramaniya Bharathi, R; “A study on the Consumption Pattern and buying behavior of fluid milk consumers in Salem District”; Thesis-Doctor Of Philosophy, Periyar University, Salem; August 2009.

\(^2\) “Consumers and sustainability- Food And Beverages- What motivates consumers to choose sustainable food and beverage?” Published by Hartman Group and Packaged Facts; September 2009 ,38 pages, id- LA 2108839
A study by Burson Marsteller and Penn Schoen et al\textsuperscript{73}; (2009) reveals that more than nine in ten US Consumers (93\%) have recently read or heard reports of Food Safety issues and recalls, and almost a fourth say that recalls will change their long–term food buying behavior. The study also found that 87\% of the Americans agree that the US has one of the strongest food safety systems in the world. The study said that “Companies with strong brand awareness are more likely to withstand an incident of food contamination than less well known companies. Such an incident at a familiar company is more likely to be judged an isolated event than a similar incident at a lesser known food company. The established Indian Restaurants as well as food firms are very well addressing these safety issues by ensuring quality standards and by maintaining quality throughout the Value Chain. Retort Technology in packaging is one such measure. Packaging is thus one important element in maintaining the quality and safety of the Ready-to-Eat Food Products.

2.2.3 Packaging

According to Baron and Mueller\textsuperscript{74} (1995) who carried out a study comparing the consumer perceptions of Bulgarians and Czech customers, it is important to assess which areas are sources of perceived product differences. Top five characteristics carried forward from the importance given in the food selection are packaging, convenience, freshness, price value, and taste.

An article by Maithli Ganjoo\textsuperscript{75} (2000) examines consumers’ behavior with reference to packaging. The analysis finds that the consumers pick the product at a price that they can afford. Certain products like eatables are bought in smaller pack sizes. The reason described

\textsuperscript{73} Marsteller Burson, Scheon Penn, Berland Associates – “Food –Safety worries change purchase Behavior”; Retailer Daily; web source: www.oppares.com

\textsuperscript{74} Baron P.J; and Mueller R.D; “Consumer perceptions in eastern European Food Markets”; British Food Journal, Vol-97,No-2, 1995, pp 34-38, MCB University Press Limited 0007-070x

\textsuperscript{75} Maithli Ganjoo; “It’s all about size”; Advertising and Marketing Journal; Vol XI, Issue XXIII ,15\textsuperscript{th} March 2000 , p 138.
by Ganjoo was that the products which were common to family members are bought in larger pack sizes, whereas individuals preferred in smaller packs. The storage life of a product also has a bearing on the decision. The affordability, storability and availability along with the usage are the reasons for rural consumers to look towards smaller pack sizes.

The importance of consumer satisfaction in marketing food products is reflected in the viewpoints of *N. Thirumbalam* (2010) of Heinz India, on their launch of Isotonic Energy Drink. The product is the result of not only satisfying unmet consumer needs, but also for delighting the customer by innovation in packaging and product form.

A study conducted by *Estiri* (2010) et al. acknowledges packaging as a strategic tool for enhancing competitiveness. The purpose of their study was to examine the relationship between packaging and the consumer behavior on food products in Refah chain stores in Iran. Here they have tried to evaluate and compare the effects of packaging elements on consumer behavior in the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages. Results showed that informational elements of a food package are the most important element at pre-purchase stage. The food product buyers mostly pay attention to information written on the food package, technology of package etc., when they make purchase decisions at the stores. However during the purchase stage, packaging with reliance on information and visual elements like color, shape, technology etc have a significant effort. In the post purchase stage, there are two sides. If the package provides desired condition for keeping products they are satisfied. When they compare the information on the package with the actual performance of the products and the latter is found lower, then the customers will be dissatisfied.

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“Food Products Packaging – A Study of its effect on consumer Behavior” conducted by Sunil Giri and Vishal Sharma⁷⁸ in Jammu region showed that only 4 factors affect the buying behavior of the consumers. These four factors are Creative promotion and social message, product labeling and information and finally outlook of the pack and price. Consumers keep these factors in mind before going for purchase of the packed products. The factors like packaging technology, number of flavours, and shape of the package are not considered important. However the visual element of the package influence the choice of the product to a great extent and labels with social messages, graphics and colors are found to be frequently influencing them.

2.2.4 Private labels

Due to the recession happening around the world and the food inflation the sparing prices as well as demand for quality products have created a niche market where customers require products with low price and good quality. Thus targeting niche consumers, Indian firms have found a variant of their products – Private Labels or Store Brands. These products are the result of a practice which is generally followed by the retailer of creating their own brand and selling it along with the Manufacturers’ brand.

In a news article published in Business Line titled “Spar sticks to large formats to expand food retail chain”, Vinay Singh⁷⁹, (2010) the Managing Director of Max Hyper Markets, explains that the decision to go in for a bigger format is for better customer experience, better brand equity and a higher level of productivity. They also stress on “The Value-Freshness-Choice- Service” formula to attract customers. They are also adding

⁷⁹ Spar Sticks to large formats to expand food retail chains- Business Line, The Hindu, March 3, 2010,p-5
expanded private label basket to the offering. This article shows that even in food category private labels play a major role.

2.2.5 Segmentation

Perhaps the most important marketing decision a firm makes is the selection of one or more market segments on which to focus. The companies to be very successful in its products need to carefully consider to target its products to the suitable segment.

An empirical study conducted by Shilpa Kokatnur\(^8\) (2009) about the customer reception of private brands reveals that store brands approximately sell for 30% of the total sales value and they are accepted in food and grocery segment because of maintaining consistent quality and innovative packaging.

Frank Cullen and Heather Kingston\(^8\) (2009) have identified the dynamics of new food selection and have provided a consumer profile for Urban and Rural market segment using labels of Uninvolved Consumers, Hedonistic Food Consumers, Adventurous Food Consumers, Careless Food Consumers, Conservative Food Consumers and Rational Food Consumers.

A new phenomena of Indian consumers is explored by the article “A play of Contrasts- Mapping the eating out habits of young Indians showed that they are as at home at fine dining outlets as at street food joints” published by Giraj Sharma\(^8\) (2012). He explains about the “Cool” consumers who have developed a new trend of ‘rejecting’ brands that may have provided satisfactory experiences in the past to choose newer, more attractive options.

\(^8\) Shilpa Kokatnur .S; “Consumer’s perception on Private Brands”- An empirical examination –Indian Journal of Marketing


\(^8\) Giraj Sharma , “A Play of Contrasts”; BrandLine , The Hindu ,BusinessLine , February 2012, p 4
The author terms this trend as “Contrasting”. This new trend will redefine the concept of segmenting which is so far used by the marketer.

On close examination of the consumer profile it can be recognized that the country has moved ahead in terms of consumer buying habits especially in the food life style. Average Indian family’s cuisine at home has gone international. There exists a niche between Indian street food and Global fast food. Along with the taste and variety of cuisine they also have to address hygiene and safety issues. Moreover people are also looking out for more convenient options. Thus to fill this gap the manufacturers have come out with a solution, which takes care of all the requirements of the people ie; Ready-To-Eat Food. This Ready-To-Eat Model is considered to be a recession proof one, as when people have money and they don’t have time, they resort to fast food joints. Conversely when they have time and are short of money again it comes handy. Thus the next segment of the reviews are related to the studies about Ready-To-Eat Food Products.

2.3 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS READY-TO-EAT/FAST FOOD

“Understanding The FMCG and Consumer Durables Purchase Basket and Buying Behavior of Rural Consumer” has been carried on by Rishikesh Raj Singh\textsuperscript{83} (2004) where he studied the various aspects of FMCG purchases with special reference to ITC –IBD Limited, Hyderabad. The brand awareness unaided test was conducted to know the popular brands of products like hair oil, edible oil, soaps, shampoos, salt, biscuits, candies etc. The frequency of purchases, the packs in which they purchase, decision makers etc were considered for the study. The study found that the reasons why the respondents go for a particular shop was that the retailers are friendly and they provide quality along with variety. The reason for going for a new store is availability of a better price, and more choice. The main factors which was

\textsuperscript{83}Rishikesh Raj Singh; “Understanding the FMCG and Consumer Durables Purchase Basket and Buying Behavior of Rural Consumer”; Summer Project Report, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, June 2004.
considered while making purchases are price, brand image, and outlet. At the same time the persons who influence the buying decision are women, children, shopkeeper and to some extent sanchalak and neighbours.

A study on the buying of chocolates on impulse conducted by Ajith Haridas\textsuperscript{84} (2002) revealed many aspects of chocolates buying of the respondents living in Delhi and Gurgaon. The findings of the study show that females feel that the emotional benefits are more important than functional elements in the case of a snack whereas the same is reverse in case of male respondents. In their case the functional attributes occupy greater role than emotional benefits. It was interesting to find that the main factors which influence the buying for females are ads on TV, Friends’ suggestion, availability of multi-user pack, availability of a particular brand, sugar content, attractive packaging, and energy-giving quality. Here it is interesting to point that the factors like point of purchase ads and store ambience do not have much influence on the impulse buying of chocolates. These factors in fact are known to be the main influencing factors in the case of impulse buying decision.

Another important and interesting finding of the researcher is that the Indian adult consumer regards toffees, chocolates, pastries, ice cream and sweets as indulgences and there is a feeling of guilt associated with the consumption of these foods. On the other hand fast food, biscuits and chips tend to be viewed more a hunger appeasers. Thus the conclusion is that the perception of chocolates being an indulgence is slowly changing and now it occupies anywhere between a pure hunger satisfier to having it as a snack in pure indulgence. Similarly the findings give scope for the present study to concentrate on finding the perception of the respondents towards Ready-To-Eat Food and whether they have any guilty feeling about consuming Ready-To-Eat Food Products in the place of traditional preparations.

A study on the Cheese Spread market in Delhi, conducted by Abhimanyu Bhuchar\(^85\) (2003) explains the promotional aspects and consumption pattern and preferences about the cheese spread. The factors which are considered by the respondents while buying cheese spread are ease of spreading, flavor, taste, brand, time, attractiveness and reusability of package etc. The main influencer for the purchases of cheese spread and the co-consumer was found to be young and teenage children. The spreading knife along with discounts and attractiveness for the children was the main promotional aspects which were influencing the purchases of the cheese spread.

A study on the Impulse channel and elements of the Marketing Mix for Time Pass Biscuits of Britannia Industries Limited has been carried on by Rohit Jog\(^86\) (2003) which revealed the effect of ideal merchandising and brand visibility on the sale of Time Pass Biscuits. The results of this experimental study found that the sales across the outlets did not increase significantly in spite of the merchandising efforts. So unlike other studies, this study concluded that increased visibility might not directly lead to an increase in sales. The study also threw light on many new aspects of the Biscuit marketing like the need to use smaller outlets and packs to drive the penetration and sales, improvement of pack fills by making the snack lighter and offering more quantity varieties, aggressive promotion of health benefits and direct comparison with chips and fried snacks which will enable consumers to perceive Time Pass as a direct substitute for chips. The stickiness of the snack and the difficulty in opening the packet was found as the drawbacks which need to be removed. This study explains the customer expectation from a biscuit snack, found to be flavor, convenience packing, health benefits compared to other fried snacks, stickiness in the mouth etc.


An aided and unaided recall of Time Pass (2004) biscuits was conducted to evaluate the promotional efforts for the Time Pass Biscuits. The study included recall of ads for packaged branded snacks or biscuits on TV ads, outdoor media like hoarding, wall paintings, bus shelters, bus panels etc, magazines, newspapers and radio. The study also included the point of purchase displays and also about the recall of sponsorship of events. Finally, the research also included analysis of satisfaction of the customers by various factors like flavor, pack reactions, price etc. The study has made many contributions towards the marketing aspects of Time Pass biscuits.

According to Davies and Smith (2004) healthy eating is important for health and endorsement is given to the Guidelines for the Balance of Good Health. The key message is enjoyment of a variety of Ready-To-Eat foods from four groups every day, including Bread, Other Cereals and Potatoes, Fruits and Vegetables, Milk and Dairy foods and Meat, Fish and Alternatives.

“Analysis of Mass Market in Creams – Impact of Low Price BIL Cream Brands on Treat”, is a study undertaken by Saurabh Bhargava (2004) and it throws light on the various aspects of consumer behavior towards cream biscuits. It was found that the purchasing decision of the cream biscuits was mainly done by children and ‘the between-meals, special occasions and evening tea’ are the main occasions to consume cream biscuits. Some of the desirable qualities which are sought in the cream biscuits are found to be crispiness, quantity of the cream, flavor, color of the cream, number and shape of biscuits in a pack and size of the packet, price of the pack, packaging design etc. The study also

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highlighted on the product concepts like size of the pack, the price they are willing to pay, promotional efforts preferred by them and their brand preference. The study was found to be helpful to understand the factors influencing the consumption pattern and buying behavior of respondents towards cream biscuits – one of the most preferred snacks. All these factors can also be found to be affecting the consumption pattern of the Ready-To-Eat Food Products too.

Another *Packaged Facts Report*\(^9^0\) (2005) throws light on “*On-The-Go Eating and snacking: Consumer mindsets, menu trends and product/packaging innovation*”. This report examines trends in convenient and hand held foods in Quick Service and Fast Casual Restaurants, Mass Market Food Retailers and other channels such as Convenience Stores and Vending in USA. The key trends covered includes steadily growing demand for gourmet sandwiches and their untapped market potential in different food outlets in US. The report also deals with the impact of litigation and new proposed legislation on food producers and marketers besides the increasing focus on combating obesity and related illness in USA via healthier fare for all, including kids.

A study on consumer behavior and attitude towards chocolates and other impulse goods was carried on by *Manvendra Chiranjiv*\(^9^1\) (2005). The study helped the researcher to identify the products which are preferred by the respondents when it comes to snacks. The products are classified into ice creams, confectionaries such as toffees, chewing gums, etc, Salted snacks such as chips, cheetos, Haldirams mixtures etc, Biscuits, Soft drinks, and Mouth fresheners. Some of the qualities expected by the respondents in these products are taste, good sharing, energy giving, use as gifts, attractive ads, hunger satisfying quality,

\(^9^0\) “*On-The-Go Eating and Snacking : Consumer Mindsets, menu Trends, and Product/Packaging Innovation*” Packaged Facts –July 2005

\(^9^1\) Manvendra Chiranjiv; *A study on consumer behavior and attitude towards chocolates and other impulse goods*, Summer Internship Project Report, Indian Institute Of Management, Bangalore, 2005.
reward for achievement, convenience etc. The study also listed the occasions for usage of these products like ‘during time pass’, ‘when at home doing nothing’, feeling hungry, shopping, on special occasions like birthday, festivals, when studying, and at movies. These may also be the various occasions for the Ready-To-Eat products too.

_Ac Nielsen, a Unit of The Nielsen Company_ 92, the world’s largest market research and information provider conducted an online consumer opinion survey in May-June 2006, to know about the drivers that influence the purchase of Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Meals. The survey found that Thai Consumers lead the world as the most frequent buyers of Ready-To-Eat meals. Lunch is the most common RTE purchase occasion followed by dinner and snacks. Thai consumers agree that RTE meals come in handy when there is no time to prepare a meal from scratch and convenience is the biggest purchase driver. They cited that RTE is cheaper than buying all the ingredients and preparing from scratch as their second reason for purchasing RTE meals. The most popular place for Thais to purchase RTE meals are food store, food shops, and restaurants. With consumers increasingly interested in healthier options, the trend may be for pre-washed, cut salads and pre-packed raw ingredients they can take home and assemble into a convenient yet healthy meal.

The empirical study conducted by _Kroshus and Emily_ 93 (2008) to assess the per capita expenditure on commercially prepared food as a proportion of total food expenditure finds that it varies by the sex and marital status of the head of the household in US. The results show that the proportionate per capita household expenditure on commercially prepared food was found to vary by marital status and gender. Regardless of married status,

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92 Nitjawan Khoola; “Thai consumers –The world’s biggest fans of RTE Meals” Ac Nielsen (Thailand) 2006.
ouseholds headed by women were found to spend approximately one-third of their total food budget on commercially prepared food outside the home.

A study was conducted by Jorge H.Behrens et al;94 (2009) about the consumer purchase habits and views on food safety in Brazil which aimed to evaluate the attitude towards food safety among consumers in the city of Sao Paulo, the major consumer market in Brazil. The results indicated a preference for super markets over street markets for the variety of foods, convenience and confidence in the safety assurance. On the other hand, the naturalness of the products in the street markets was the main reason for the purchases in those places. Consumers were also concerned with food additives, hormones and pesticides. Ready-To-Eat foods were considered convenient products meeting the need for time/labour savings in the kitchen although suspicion about the wholesomeness and safety came up among consumers.

An exploratory research was conducted by Kamini C.K.95 (2010) about the Consumer Profiling –BISCHIPS, ITC Foods Division in Bangalore. The study has been aimed at gaining an understanding of the health food products currently in the market, the prevailing health trends and consumer attitude towards health and consumer attitude towards healthy snacks. Cluster analysis was done to find a group which has homogeneous attitude towards healthy food habits. The health parameters included in the various factors are attitude towards Junk food and low calorie food consumption, Nutritional value of food, Food habits, Physical exercise.


A study was conducted by P.R.Sumangala and Yallawwa Uppar\(^96\) (2009) about the Purchasing Practices of Food, Clothing, and Consumer Durables among the farm families of Gadag District. The findings explain that maximum number of households purchased groceries, perishables, ready mixes, bakery and confectionaries from nearby town. The reasons were comparatively lesser prices, good quality products, and the faith on the shop keeper. It was also found that the families purchased ready mixes on a weekly basis, due to availability of money and lack of storage facilities. Neighbors, friends, and television were considered to be major sources of information for purchase of food.

According to a report published by market research publisher Packaged Facts\(^97\) (2010) which includes data collected from February 2010 from a survey of about 1800 respondents, 50% of the respondent restaurant goers say that they are more likely to prefer having food at home. Further 64% of adult consumers have purchased Ready-To-Eat and ‘Heat and Eat’ food from a grocery shop or supermarket .It was also found that sustaining momentum will require food retailers to continue their transition towards higher quality Ready-To-Eat products .It was further found that older consumers of age 55 and above seemed to be ‘more likely’ to be influenced by the ‘shopping efficiency’ of prepared foods. So food retailers can place prepared food in a central role and help them plan their purchases and make their shopping trip less stressful. An article published in Business Line “Following the freezer”\(^98\) ( 2010) explain the difficulties faced by US Food Companies while tapping the growing demand in emerging markets. The article says that India is

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\(^{96}\) P.R.Sumangala and Yallawwa Uppar ; “Purchasing Practices of Food ,Clothing, and Consumer Durables among the farm families of Gadag District.” ; Indian Journal of Marketing ;December 2009,Vol 39,No 12 , pp 49-56

\(^{97}\) “Food retail sales gain momentum as Prepared and Ready-To-Eat Foods lure Recession weary consumers away from restaurants and into supermarket aisles”; Packaged Facts ;February 2010 .

\(^{98}\) Brad Dorfman ;“Following the freezer- There are big gains and many travails for American companies attempting to do business in emerging markets”; Brand Line -Business Line ,The Hindu , March 4 ,2010 , p 4.
considered to be one of the fastest growing markets in the world. The US is a mature market for Packaged Food while emerging economies have a growing class of consumers who are just starting to have money for these products. Infrastructure and cultural barriers are found to be two hurdles for the companies who wish to enter the packaged and processed food industry of the emerging markets.

“A study on the factors affecting the consumer buying behavior of Ready-To-Eat industry”, conducted by Shruthika Kanchan (2010) reveals the market penetration, the customer perception, buying pattern and patterns influencing buyer behavior for the Ready-To-Eat Food. The study helps to understand the negative and positive perceptions about the Ready-To-Eat food products. The study finds that the main reason for the growth of the RTE segment is the rapid expansion of the retailing replacing malls with super markets, modern super stores and convenience stores and lifestyle changes with more and more people demanding value for money and time and quality.

Bimal Takkar (2010) in an article about American Dry Fruits (ADF) says that ADF Foods are emerging as a major exporter of ethnic Indian foods. One of the major factor which contributed for its success is “increase in the sales of higher margin items like ‘Meal Accompaniment category’ (pickles, cooking pastes etc.) The company promotes umbrella brand for Indian sub-continent “SOUL”, Ready-To-Eat curries with low sodium, no transfat etc. According to Bimal Thakkar, Managing Director, ADF, the company intends to provide the Indian consumer authenticity and convenience in the ready-to-eat products and cuisines so that consumers can have a restaurant experience in their homes too.

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100 Bimal Thakkar; “Truly Indian-ADF Foods is emerging as a major exporter of ethnic Indian Foods.” Business India; June 13, 2010, p 142
A study was conducted by Paul T. Mburu and Koketsu Paulos (2010) to find out the factors affecting preferences and motives in the selection of in-store cooked food in main supermarkets in Botswana. The findings reveal that male respondents prefer buying Ready-To-Eat meals while female respondents buy fast food items. Respondents agreed that fast foods are preferred over meals. In-store prepared food are found to be convenient to obtain and healthy to eat. It is preferred over street vending due to hygiene factors. Consumers also focus on the place of buying, aesthetics, hygiene, nutrition while making purchase decisions on food. Branding of ready meals will also help the retailer to change the perception that in-store prepared food are not good enough for family take away.

An article published in Packaged Facts (2010) gives significant information on the role of prepared foods and Ready-To-Eat Foods as the new competitive force in food service at retail outlets in USA. According to Packaged Facts Proprietary Consumer Research, 64% of adult consumers of USA population have got Ready-To-Eat Food from a grocery store or supermarket. Moreover in terms of total usage occasions, grocery related prepared foods lead both family and casual restaurant segments and trails in only fast food/QSR (Quick Service Restaurants). It is further given that at a time when food value is so closely associated with low cost and convenience and when consumers increasingly perceive private label food retail brands as competitive with branded ones on cost and quality, taste and convenience can not only compete with food service - fare but also can help food retailers adapt to modern life styles.

101 Mburu T.Paul and Paulos Koketsu; “Acuity of In-store cooked food retailing (An Exploratory study on Consumer Behavior on In-Store prepared food)” ; Indian Journal of Marketing, Vol 40, No.6, June 2010, pp 41-49
102 “Prepared foods and Ready-To-Eat Foods at Retail: The new competition to Food Service” - Packaged Facts; July 1, 2010-id- LA 2694891
According to a report about *Fresh Convenience Foods in US*\(^{103}\) (2010), published by Packaged Facts, there is a spurring shift by many consumers from restaurant meals to prepared food purchased at retail outlets. Thus the market for fresh convenience foods grew by 5.1% in 2009 to reach sales of $22.3 billion. The marketing efforts will continue to prove successful driving the sales of fresh convenience foods up another 28% by 2014 to 428.5 billion. The report gives details about 17 refrigerated product segments, from lunch kits and dinners to fresh soups and side dishes. The special feature of this report is the survey which addresses the consumer purchasing fresh prepared foods in a down economy. This highlights the importance of freshness even in the Ready-To-Eat food category.

The safety and health issues of Ready-to-Eat products have been explained by *The Canadian Food Inspection Agency*\(^{104}\). In the article titled “*Ready-To-Eat meat products recalled over food poisoning fears*” (2010), the Agency warns the public not to consume a number of Ready-To-Eat cooked meat products because they may be contaminated with food–borne pathogens. The affected products from G.Brandt Meat Packers Ltd of Brampton, were recalled to ensure public safety and health issues. This article highlights the fact that unless special care is taken during the preparation and packing, the Ready-To-Eat products may prove harmful to the regular users.

A study conducted by *Dr.Somnath Chakrabarti*\(^{105}\) (2010) on the consumer purchase behavior of Organic Food in Delhi NCR Region explains the importance of “Affective Commitment” in understanding the consumer buying behavior in Organic Food Category. It is found that only when consumers develop affective commitment towards the brand or service provider, they may be expected to remain loyal to the brand or service provider.

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\(^{103}\) “Fresh Convenience Foods in the US”- Packaged Facts ;January 2010 ;id –LA 2511642 , 214 pages

\(^{104}\) The Canadian Food Inspection Agency; “*Ready-To-Eat meat products recalled over food poisoning fears*”July 31,2010 .web source: [http://www.canada.com](http://www.canada.com).

\(^{105}\) Dr.Somnath Chakrabarti; “*A Select Study of Consumer Purchase Behavior of Organic Food in Delhi NCR Region*”; Indian Journal of Marketing ; August 2010,Vol 40, No.8,Pages 3-6.
because of the liking of the partner. The six motivational parameters which are considered for correlation with affective commitment are: health, curiosity, nutrition, taste, the need to protect environment and the need to look after unwell people.

Consumers’ impulsive choices have traditionally been attributed either to contextual factors, such as product attributes and store environment or to individual personal traits. However the research conducted by *Arul Mishra and Himanshu Mishra* 106 (2010) reveals that the type of food consumed can also influence impulsive behavior of the consumers. They say that food that enhances the levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin can reduce impulsive choice. The study conducted in a naturalistic environment supports that the influence of serotonin was greater on high-impulsive goods than on low-impulsive ones. The food which they have used for the experiments are turkey and carbohydrate-rich foods.

“A Case Study on the Consumers’ Buying Behavior and Brand Loyalty with regard to Processed Liquid Packed Milk in Guwahati, Assam” was conducted by *Brajesh Kumar and Mintu Gogoi* 107 (2011) which revealed that the consumers in Guwahati are well aware about their preferences set regarding the brands they use. Milk consumers in Guwahati are found to be very much involved with their brand. This is reflected from the study that they try to optimize their buying efforts by selecting their buying place near to their dwellings. However the study found that there is no significant difference notified across the occupation, income, and age regarding their brand preferences. The difference was only found across the brand. The brand choices are mostly influenced by peer group endorsement. However the influence is found only at the point of entry and later they become brand loyal once they get a

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106 Arul Mishra and Himanshu Mishra; “We are what we consume: The Influence of Food Consumption on Impulsive Choice”; Journal Of Marketing Research ;Vol XLVII : December 2010, pp 1129-1137

107 Brajesh Kumar and Mintu Gogoi; “A Case Study on the Consumers’ Buying Behavior And Brand Loyalty with regard to Processed Liquid Packed Milk in Guwahati, Assam”; Indian Journal of Marketing; May 2011; pp 48-52.
clear understanding about their requirements and the attributes of the products. The factors highlighted in this study are availability of the product, innovation in the packaging through segmented packet designing, improvement of quality which is the main constituent of taste, and enhancement of brand image to protect the brand image. These factors are also applicable to any segment of the food industry.

2.4 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF WOMEN

Most of the purchase decisions about the Food Products are made by the Women. Understanding their consumer behavior is an important aspect of the marketing strategy of a firm. The difference in the age, education, type of family, income, working status, marital status, members in the family etc influence to a great extent in the purchase decisions made by women consumers. Several research studies have been carried focusing on the factors affecting the buying behavior of women consumers. More focus is given here on the differentiation between the consumer behavior of working and non-working women.

A study conducted by Myra H. Strober and Charles B. Weinberg (1977) deals with “Strategies used by Working and Non-working wives to reduce time pressures”. They indicate that as compared to non-working wives, working wives were much less likely to report having excess spare time. Thus compared to non-working wives, working wives will more frequently and or intensively utilize strategies to reduce time pressures, such as labor saving devices like Micro Wave Ovens, Dish washers etc. It also shows that although working wives prepare fewer meals, working wives and non-working wives are generally similar with respect to the method of meal preparation and shopping behavior.

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Mohammed Abdel Ghany and Ronald A Schrimper\textsuperscript{109} (1978) in their study on “Food consumption expenditures and education of the Homemaker” state that the differences in homemakers’ education in addition to household income can have significant effects on the composition of household food expenditures. This study also found that in most cases the educational and income elasticities have the same sign suggesting similar directional effects of these two variables on expenditures.

According to Mary Lou Roberts\textsuperscript{110} (1981) four major factors are evident in demographic data which have potential for causing important changes in women’s consumer behavior. They are Delayed age of marriage, The decreasing fertility rate, Women’s employment, Women headed families.

These factors have both individual and interactive effects. The author also points out that products and services are sought both to implement the lifestyle choices and to reflect them. The concentration needs to be given to variations in product quality expected or preferred, in shopping patterns including outlet choices and timing of purchases and in attitudes and family practices with regard to shopping. Therefore these factors are concentrated in the present study.

Bonnie Ortiz, Maurice Macdonald, Norllen Aderman and Karen Goebel\textsuperscript{111} (1981) in their article “The effect of homemaker’s employment on Meal preparation time, Meals at Home and Meals away for home” say that the regression coefficients revealed that employed home makers spent less time in food preparation and that their families ate more meals away


\textsuperscript{110} Mary Lou Roberts; “Women’s Changing Role –A Consumer Behavior Perspective”; Advances in Consumer Research; Volume 08; Association for Consumer Research, pp 590-595.

from home. There was no significant effect of homemaker’s employment on the average number of persons served meals at home. Homemaker’s education, family income and the age of the youngest child are the three influencing factors.

A research conducted by Micheal D.Reilly\(^{112}\) (1982) about Working Wives and Convenience Consumption in US, conclude that there are no differences in the consumption as a result of wife’s employment. The two factors which are found to correlate with convenience consumption are Family Income and Social Status. The Model created includes a Factor “Role overload”, which is a type of role conflict that results from excessive pressure in time and energy supply of an individual. This factor is postulated as mediating the relationship between wife’s employment and family convenience consumption. Thus it shows an indirect relationship between working wives and convenience consumption.

 Mitchel Linda G\(^{113}\), (1983) in her study on “The changing patterns in consumer behavior engendered by the changing status of women” finds that the changes in the employment behavior and lifestyles have affected consumer behavior and for many purchases, price is less important than availability, convenience, service and time savings.

The fact that working wives have gained more equality with their husbands in decision making has had impact on all industries including food. Working wives are more likely to buy prepared foods or convenience foods and to skip items on their shopping lists because they are in a hurry. They shop less often preferably in the evenings and on weekends. They shop at convenience stores rather than supermarkets. She is interested in goods and services which complement her cosmopolitan lifestyle and challenge her intellectually.


\(^{113}\) Mitchel Linda G, “The changing patterns in consumer behavior engendered by the changing status of women”; p 16 ; Paper presented at the Southwest Social Science Annual Meeting (Houston , TX ); March 1983.
Women with a modern orientation (all responsibilities shared by marital partners) are less likely to enjoy housekeeping activities than the women with a traditional orientation (the husband is the provider and wife cares for home and children). Career women consider themselves broad minded, dominating, frank, efficient and independent. Housewives depict themselves as kind, refined and reserved.

A study conducted by Chakon Kim (2002) on Working Wives’ time saving tendencies investigates effects of wife’s working status on time-saving tendencies exhibited by wives in household production. The study was conducted using Nation Wide Canadian survey data. Contrary to many previous studies, even after controlling for household income and family life cycle and other co-variants, wife’s working status was found to significantly increase the likelihood of the family’s ownership of several time saving durables and the frequency of purchasing meals away from home. “Working wives, however did not appear to be heavier users of convenience foods than no working wives.”

Mohsin Aziz (2004) observes that Indian women have traditionally emphasized on homemaking and worked within the framework of family system. However with changing social dynamics, women are joining the workforce in big numbers. As such they have to perform and balance between two spheres- the family as well as professional role. This article shows the changing role of women in the society.

A study conducted by Jean C.Darian and Steven W.Klein (2006) on “Food Expenditure Patterns of Working-Wife Families :Meals Prepared Away From Home Versus

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115 Mohsin Aziz ; “Role stress among women in the Indian Information technology” ;Women in Management Review, Emerald Group Publishing Limited; Vol 19; N0.7; pp 356-363.

"Convenience Foods" investigates food expenditure pattern of working wife families, focusing on the allocation of food dollars between two major time-saving options in US: meals prepared away from Home and Convenience Foods. The findings suggest that the working-wife families prefer the purchasing of meals prepared away from home to that of convenience foods. In particular, families with high-earning, full-time working-wives buy most meals prepared away from home, while the greatest expenditures on convenience foods are observed for families with moderate-earning working wives. This study reveals that there is a relation between preference of Ready-To-Eat Food and the income and employability type of women.

A study has been conducted by Kroshus Emily (2008) to analyze the relationship between gender, marital status and commercially prepared food expenditure. The major objective was to assess how per capita expenditure on commercially prepared food as a portion of total food expenditure varies by sex and marital status of the head of the household in UK. The results explain that proportional per capita household expenditure on commercially prepared food was found to vary by marital status and gender. Households headed by unmarried men (divorced separated or never married) spent a significantly greater portion of food on commercially prepared food than their married male ones. Regardless of the marital status households headed by women were found to spend approximately one third of their total food budget on commercially prepared food outside the home. Thus marital status is significantly related to the dietary pattern of households.

Consumers hold a common intuition about their preferences for familiar things in times of upheaval. This theory is conversely arrived at in the research conducted by Stacy

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Wood (2009) in her article- “The Comfort Food Fallacy: Avoiding Old Favorites in times of change”. The study finds that consumers may occasionally make strategic decisions to seek out familiar products when they are surrounded by change. This coping behavior is likely to occur only in specific instances in which consumers are highly involved in choice deliberation and comfort food fallacy theory is salient as a suitable solution. The findings offer suggestion to the variety seeking behavior of the consumers that such options may be more attractive when many new things are happening in one’s life and this also speaks why and how firms encourage consumers to change as in the example of Videocon tagline “Experience Change”. The marketers consider this a best time to promote new brands. Thus the study concludes that when the consumers are in the changing environments, the consumer may demonstrate a “habit of change” in which variety seeking is facilitated by loosened ties to habitual choice of old favorites. Thus this study highlights that as there are changes in lifestyle and other demographic related changes, the tendency for the consumers is to accept change and thus the new variety of products are very much welcomed by them. Thus the entry of Ready-To-Eat food products is also well accepted by the consumers.

A study conducted by Dr. S. Saravanan (2010) about the consumer behavior of women with reference to durable goods in Coimbatore city in Tamil Nadu reveals that women play a major role in taking purchase decisions for non-durables. The study also finds that working women shop when the need arises and housewives shop weekly. The factors which influence the buying patterns of women include education, interaction and involvement with other family members, quality and budget.

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119 S. Saravanan; “A Study on the Consumer Behavior of Women with special reference to Durable Goods in Coimbatore City, Tamilnadu”; Indian Journal of Marketing; Vol 40; No.5; May 2010, pp 36-42.
The perception of the women that their ethnic traditions, preferences of family members and lack of time, limit their ability to provide healthier lower cost meals to their families has been explained by Steven Bradbard, Eileen F. Michaels, Kathryn Fleming and Marci Campbell in their study on: “Understanding the food choices of low income families”. The study showed that many low-income households are aware of key dietary guidance. The focus group participants said that they are aware of current guidelines of healthy eating and uncertain about the healthfulness of their own diet. The food purchases have been influenced by media attention, physician advice and increased knowledge about the relationship of diet to obesity and disease. They read food labels, experimenting with ingredient substitutions and trying to prepare more healthy meals for their families.

The question of whether healthy food makes one hungry is answered in the research carried on by Stacey R. Finkelstein and Ayelet Fishbach (2010) in their study “When Healthy Food makes you hungry.” The effects of healthy eating depend on the consumer’s perception that healthy eating is mandatory, therefore imposed healthy eating made consumers hungrier, whereas freely choosing to eat healthy did not increase hunger.

The marketing implications for this study is that marketers often use sampling to promote their food products and they would like to know when sample food decreases, what happens to the consumption levels? Whether the consumption increases, or bear no influence on consumption. The study finds that healthy sampling can increase consumption of foods in another store and in a different category as long as there is time proximity. That is because the increase in appetite depends on consumer’s inferences. Example, a grocery store that

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120 Steven Bradbard, Eileen F. Michaels, Kathryn Fleming and Marci Campbell; “Understanding the food choices of low income families”; US Department of Agriculture Food and Consumer Service Office of Analysis & Evaluation

121 Stacey R. Finkelstein and Ayelet Fishbach; “When Healthy Food makes you hungry”; Journal of Consumer Research; Vol 37; October 2010; pp 357-367
gives consumers healthy food when they enter the store might experience a boost in consumer purchases from that store more than from a subsequent one.

The importance of health aspect in the food especially in Ready-To-Eat Food has resulted in many consumers opting for home made food products, especially batter, and other products. According to an article by Soundariya Preetha 122 (2012) “Tapping the food sector for self employment”, many women are engaged in preparing such food and selling them to the needy ones. The demand is huge for such Ready-To-Eat and preserved food items. The subsidies given by the Government to promote such Self Help Groups is a motivational factor for such women entrepreneurs. However quality, variety and taste are the main criteria here. Though the studies and articles mentioned above has been very much useful for the researcher in identifying the factors and concepts for the related study, there are certain studies which were an eye opener for the present research. These studies have been very similar to the present study and they had provided a right path for the researcher in the conduct of the proposed study.

A study on the “Food Related Lifestyle (FRL) Segments and the Speciality Food Market in Great Britain” conducted by Cathal Cowan and Mary MC Carthy 123, (2008), has provided focus to the researcher to use the Food Related Lifestyle (FRL) Segments to determine the consumer behavior of the respondents. The study provided an insight into what motivates individuals to purchase Specialty Foods. The study has two main objectives of identifying Food Related Lifestyle (FRL) and Specialty Food Lifestyle (SFL) orientation segmentation of British consumers in order to profile the specialty orientation of these Consumers.

The results show that food consumers in Britain were categorized into six pre-identified FRL Segments. The segments are, Rational, Careless, Snacking, Adventurous, Conservative, Uninvolved.

The adventurous and rational groups were identified as the most specialty oriented in their beliefs. These groups believe that specialty foods are of good and superior quality and consider the specialty food to be authentic and to be a treat. These groups are regular purchasers of specialty food and are less likely influenced by what others say about these foods. The conservative and uninvolved are not identified as Specialty-oriented segments due to their lack of interest in and purchasing Specialty foods. Thus FRL Segments differ in their beliefs and behavior towards Specialty foods.

Second part of the study deals with further segmentation based on Specialty based statements. This study using (SFL) identified and profiled five Specialty food Lifestyle (SFL) segments. These segments are Indifferent, Foodie Adopter, Specialty Foodie, The Traditionalist, The uninterested.

Out of these Specialty Foodie and Foodie Adopters are the most Specialty oriented. These groups are the most regular buyers of Specialty foods. They perceive Specialty Food as being healthy, natural, superior, tasty, environment friendly, authentic and better quality. They seek variety in what they consume. The Traditionalists also have an interest in Specialty foods while the Indifferent and Uninterested are unlikely to accept the Specialty foods. Thus this study helped to find the beliefs and behaviors of consumers towards Specialty foods in Britain. Hence the study has provided a basic background for the present study.

Another important study which has influenced the researcher to take up the present research is the study conducted by Hyun-Joo Bac, Mi-Jin Chae, Kisang Ryun ¹²⁴(2010)

“Consumer behavior towards Ready-To-Eat Foods based on food-related lifestyle in Korea”

This study examine consumer behavior towards Ready-To-Eat foods and develop Ready-To-Eat food market segmentation in Korea. The study used Exploratory Factor Analysis and extracted four factors viz: Health Orientation, Taste Orientation, Convenience Orientation and Tradition Orientation.

These factors were used to explain the consumer behavior of Ready-To-Eat Foods products based on their food related lifestyles. This study aimed to fill the gap in the field of marketing strategies for Ready-To-Eat foods. The study used sixteen food-related lifestyle items estimated by a five-point Likert-type scale. The results show that the biggest purchase motivator for the purchase of Ready-To-Eat food Product is Convenience. Most of the respondents purchased RTE foods for meals and the most common source of purchasing was found and have direct comparison at the purchase place. Two completely different food-related lifestyle were identified using Cluster Analysis; viz Tradition Seekers and Convenience Seekers. The most significant point about this study is that unlike previous studies the findings of this study suggest that tradition seekers are an important target market for RTE foods and that Koreans are found to have a tendency to consume RTE foods with Tradition Minded purposes.

The demographic segmentation was used as main variable for the market segmentation and targeting and found that income level is not a major factor for segmentation. However education is found to influence the attitude towards RTE food. Regarding the purchase place of the respondents, the study shows that tradition seekers purchased RTE at Discount marts and Specialty stores, and consumed them more between meals whereas the convenience seekers purchased the same more at convenience stores and consumed them as meals. However there are no significant differences in RTE food practices between the tradition seekers and Convenience seekers by purchase motivation, decision.
maker for purchasing and co-consumers. Thus the findings of the study indicate that consumer behavior towards RTE foods differed between segments and RTE market segmentation based on food related lifestyles can be applied to develop proper marketing strategies.

“A empirical study of Consumer Involvement towards recently launched Ready-To-Eat foods- special reference to Aashirvaad range’, conducted by Venu Gopal Rao125 (2004) has given more exposure to certain aspects of Ready-To-Eat towards consumer behavior. This study attempts to provide a direction for the understanding of consumer involvement in a single product category viz; the Ready-To-Eat food segment (RTE). The study used factor analysis and Kapferer and Gilles dimensions to determine the variables which determine the involvement of the consumer towards Ready-To-Eat food. The first factor reflects on the issue that an involved consumer is emotional about possessing the product more than uninvolved consumers. The second factor reflects that involved customers are early majority pragmatists especially in such product categories. The third factor reflects that involved consumers are aware of the perceived risks associated with a product before they buy it. The study finally concludes that the products such as Ready-To-Eat satisfy the immediate need of any time conscious consumer .But what is needed from the marketers is to aim at developing the marketing strategies to create long term commitment towards repurchase whenever such a need arises.

Summary of the Survey of Literature:

An extensive survey of literature carried on by the Researcher reveals many areas in the Consumer behavior of food products. A good number of National as well as International research studies were carried on with main focus on Ready-To-Eat Food Products. The highlights of these studies are summarized as follows:

The consumption of Ready-To-Eat /Specialty Food is mainly influenced by Food Related Lifestyle (FRL) of the consumers which is changing rapidly. The recent changes in economy as well as the lifestyle of the people create a shift in their consumption pattern. People started to prefer having food at home than going to a restaurant which is a costly affair. As a result the Ready-To-Eat Food products are launched by the marketers to provide Restaurant Experience at home. This category of Food Products provided the much needed authenticity and convenience together. The transition in the consumer behavior also shows that there is a demand for high quality Ready-To-Eat Food. Apart from quality they also give importance to brand, taste, nutrition, environment and society. It also found in certain studies that consumers with traditional appeal also prefer Ready-To-Eat Food Products. Food value is closely associated with cost and convenience. Though Ready-To- Eat is preferred due to convenience, consumers focus on combating obesity and illness. Thus health is also a major factor in selection of food. Studies also show that there are some food products which are consumed as hunger satisfiers, while there are others which are consumed as pure indulgence. It was also revealed in some studies that there are mainly 3 appeals which are considered while making food purchases: Health appeal, Taste appeal, and Convenience appeal. There are certain products which are bought on an impulse. It was surprising to find in certain studies that the merchandising efforts taken by the marketers did not result in increased sales. Studies also point out that more than male respondent Female respondents are buying Ready-To-Eat Food.

Thus the review of literature has enabled the Researcher to identify a gap in the field of consumer Behavior of Food Products. Food Lifestyle of the respondents in the study area needs to be analyzed to understand the Ready-To-Eat Food Consumer behavior. As the female respondents are more towards buying Ready-To-Eat, their buying behavior is to be focused. It is to be found which appeal is considered by the consumers while buying Ready-To-Eat Food products. If the merchandising efforts are not very effective, then what influences the consumers to buy Ready-To-Eat Food Products on impulse? This is yet another question to be answered. Whether the health consideration of the people creates a guilty feeling in them about having Ready-To-Eat Food Products and how can the repurchases of these products be increased are certain questions which need explanation.

Thus the present study tries to answer these questions and provide more insights into the consumer behavior of Ready-To-Eat Food Products for working women and home makers.