INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

After Independence, the Government of India decided to modernize and mechanise agriculture. Accordingly importance was given to agriculture during the second Five Year Plan period and significantly to mechanise agriculture. Wider use of modern agricultural implements were considered necessary. Among the agricultural implements the use of tractor was considered prominent and significant. Before and after Independence, use of tractor for agricultural operations were rare and tractors had to be imported from abroad. Later India started to manufacture tractors. The Mahindra & Mahindra Limited first produced Indian Tractors in the name of International Tractor. There are at present about 14\(^1\) companies produce and distribute tractors in India.

\(^1\) Mahindra & Mahindra, Massy Ferguson, New Holland Ford, Escort, Swaraj, Eicher, Sonalika International, HMT, Hindustan, Tempo OX, Standard Tractors, Indo Farm and same Greaves.
All the fourteen companies manufacture tractors with the common feature of multiuse. On the other side the buyers and users of tractors may not be aware of the engineering concept, technology and product differentiation. Whatever be the brand of tractor a tractor possesses all the characteristics of multipurpose. Under this circumstance, it may be socially relevant to examine the buyers’ preference towards a company tractor in general and a model among the different models of a company in particular as there are product differentiations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are about 14 companies manufacture and distribute tractors. Further, there are product differentiations within a company products in several ways. All the company tractors have several common features as well as distinctive features when compared with other companies products. These distinctive features are not only in terms of visibility but also in terms of technical in nature. A buyer of the tractor has to choose a tractor in the midst of visible and technical differences.

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2 Multi uses

Ploughing, load purpose, Terracer blade, Ridger, Tractor mounted Spray pump, water pump, Disc ploughing, Tiller, cage wheels, Doser, Rotator and compressor used.
The technical differences among the different models of a company tractor and among different companies are beyond a common man's reach. Hence, there is a problem before the buyer of a tractor. How a buyer of a tractor overcomes his problem of buying in a market of product differentiation when buying a tractor is a question that may be answered through this study.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Now-a-days a tractor is considered a necessity and forms part of agricultural operations. There are about 14 companies manufacture tractors. Every company has its own product differentiation. So, there is a product differentiation within a company's products (tractors) and also in between different company products. However, almost all companies and their models of tractors can be used for all purposes for which a tractor is bought. Among all the tractors of various companies there are common features. Likewise there are also distinctive features among the company tractors. Hence, there is a scope to examine the behaviour of buyers in a tractor market of wider product differentiations and a large number of company products. There is also a scope to examine the factors which influence the buyers' preference towards a model or a company tractor.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Tractor market becomes a buyers’ market with numerous number of brands of tractors as well as a number of models within a brand (company). Hence, an attempt has been made in this study to examine the factors which influence consumer preference towards a company tractor. The specific objectives of the study are as follows.

i. To examine the theoretical nuances behind in studying buyers behaviour.

ii. To examine common features and distinctive features among within the various models of a company tractors and in between different company tractors.

iii. To analyse empirically the influence of the factors of a company tractor which influence buyers’ behaviour.

iv. To bring out suggestions, if any, in favour of strengthening a factor which influences the buyers’ behaviour most.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The proposed study on buyers’ preference towards a company tractor is significantly different from earlier studies on the ground that this study aims at studying the factors which influence the buyers preference when all the buyers are not able to under the product differentiations in terms of product positioning.
Studies relating to the subject matter of the study were searched and reviewed briefly in terms of the inferences and results.

A knowledge on consumer behaviour is very essential for the people in the field of marketing to make crucial decisions during various stages of a product's life cycle. Even a very minor aspect cannot be ignored as it may cause very serious repercussions.

On the one hand the purchase decision taken by the consumer is purely psychological. Owing to this feature one can't see what is going on in the minds of the consumers.

On the other hand it is very vital for the marketers to know what is flickering in the "black box".

Since a long period, research studies have been conducted to find out the affairs happening in the minds of the consumer through forming logics for the behaviour he is exhibiting at various points.

Consumer research is the methodology used to study consumer behaviour. As in any science, consumer behaviour theories must be tested and either supported or rejected before conclusions can be generalized as principle applicable to marketing practice. Some
consumer behaviour research is conducted on the basis of observations of actual behaviour in the market place; other research is conducted under controlled conditions in the laboratory; still other research is based on the manipulation of marketing variables within a simulated marketing context. Only through constant testing, evaluation, rejection, and support of related hypothesis can behavioural principles be developed to provide marketers with meaningful insights into psychological and environmental factors that influence consumer decision-making. Consumer behaviour research also enables marketers to carve out new market segments based on variables that emerge as important discriminators among consumers for a specific product or product category.
INTERNAL INFLUENCES ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

- Involvement
- Values/Beliefs
- Belief-Expectancy Models
- Attribution
- Information Processing
- Physiological
- Life Style
- Cognitive Dissonance
- Learning
- Perception
- Personality
- Learning
- Motivation
- Attitudes

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

- Persuasion
- Consumer Socialization
- Situation
- Culture
- Opinion Leaders
- Segmentation
- Group Influences
- Innovators/Innovations
- Communications
- Social Stratification
- Family Decision Process
- Demographics

CONSUMER DECISION MAKING

- Post-Purchase
- Evaluation
- Search for Information
- Purchase Decision Process
- Choice
- Brand Awareness/Loyalty

MISCELLANEOUS

- Public Policy
- Consumerism
- General
- Models
- Store Patronage
- Preference

Consumer behaviour research is conducted for every phase of the consumption process: from before the purchase takes place (when the consumer becomes aware of a need), to the search and evaluation of product alternatives (ranging from simple to extensive information search), to the actual purchase decision (including such factors as product and brand choice, store choice, and method of payment), to after the purchase takes place (through any periods of uncertainty, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, repurchase or further search in the market place).

As early as 1939, a Viennese Psycho-analyst named Ernest Dichter began to use Freudian Psycho-analytic techniques to uncover the hidden motivations of consumers. By 1950s, his research methodology, which has come to be known as marketers and advertising agencies, motivational research methods consist of projective techniques and depth interviews. Motivational research requires highly trained interviewer / analysts to collect data and to analyse research findings. Because sample sizes are necessarily small, findings cannot be generalized to larger populations. Motivational research findings are highly subjective because they are based on analysts interpretations used primarily to obtain new ideas for promotional campaigns. Motivational research is considered to be qualitative research.
Maston (1982) in his study situational influence on store choice concluded that time pressure is a main component of the usage situation. It depends upon the rush in the departmental store. Further it represents the consumer feelings that they can get in an out at the earliest, after selecting the product.

Shugan (1983) in his study on price and quality relationship exposed that price is an indicator of the quality. Consumers are encouraged to raise the quality of their product. He believes delivering a good quality of goods is the right image among and uses of the product.

Bitta (1984) in his study viewed that buying behaviour is “the decision process and physical activity which the individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using and disposing of goods and services”.

Dhunna (1984) in his study focused that “the consumer behaviour of soft drinks among 100 respondents representing fairly the various categories of people. He studied the brand with high awareness and preference value, and the consumption pattern of soft drinks. Taste was found to be important feature in preferring a particular brand of soft drink. Brand switching occurred because of non-availability of preferred brand.
Most of the respondents showed interest in soft drink advertisement more specifically by those who were in the teenage group.

Fairhurst, Ann Elizabeth's study (1985). This study was conducted to determine the relationship between the level of consumer clothing involvement and apparel store patronage behaviour. The specific object of the study was to determine the relationship between the level of consumer involvement, demographic, psychographic and salient store attributes and to develop market segment profit based on the consumer involvement. It results in general, indicated that the higher involved consumer perceived 10 store attributes as important and lower involved consumer tended to rate only store attribute as important.

Foxman, Ellen Ruth's study (1986). With the purpose of investigating the interpersonal influence as an explanatory variable in husband-wife decision making, Ruth of Louisiana State University, conducted a study on 60 married couples during 1986. Interview and observations of role-play were used besides questionnaires to get the demographic, psychological and sociological information. The data were subjected to muti-method (MTMM). After MTMM analysis results were further subjected to sequential analysis. The results revealed that there prevailed some significant influence.
Kim, Kyung Hoon's study (1987). A study of United States International University by Kim Kyung Hoon with an objective to explore the relationship between brand loyalty and “origence” and “intelligence” during the purchase of a low investment product revealed the following results.

i) “Origence” element of “consumer creativity” was not significant related to brand loyalty;

ii) “intelligence” an element was found to be one of the most important predictors of brand loyalty.

iii) While sex and family income were found most important in brand loyalty, age found significant.

Namasivayam (1988) in his study on impact of advertisement and consumer preference on Toilet soap focused that audio visual medium of advertisement is the catching point to inspire the potential customers in selecting their brand of toilet soap. This study was conducted based on the socio-economic and psychological factors.

The proposed study on consumer attitudes towards a model of Maruti Cars is significantly differ from earlier studies because it attempts to find out the factors which influence most in buying a model of Maruti car
from the same brand i.e. how product differentiation influences the consumers to make their preference.

LIMITATIONS

1. The data collected is based on the questionnaire. The result would be varying according to the opinions of individuals.

2. The sample size chosen for the study is confined only to three districts viz. Salem, Namakkal and Erode.

3. The statistical tools used to analyse the data have their own limitations.

METHODOLOGY

The proposed study is on consumer and buyer behaviour. Therefore, it is part and parcel of marketing research. Marketing research describes the existing situations and not the future. To describe the existing situations survey method of research is adopted. A statistical survey is conducted to analyse the existing marketing situations. Among the users of tractors a survey is conducted by means of questionnaire.
SAMPLING

The proposed study is intended to study the buyers' behaviour of tractors in three districts viz. Salem, Namakkal and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu. A sample of 100 buyers-cum-users of tractors of various companies were taken as sample. Random sample technique was adopted. Hence, in three districts 40 buyers from Salem, 30 from Namakkal and 30 from Erode were taken as quota sampling at random. There are 8 taluks in Salem District and hence, 5 sample at random from each taluk were chosen. The Namakkal district is comprised 4 taluks and hence 8 buyers from Tiruchengode taluk, 8 buyers from Namakkal taluk, 8 buyers from Rasipuram taluk and 6 from Paramathivelur taluk were chosen. In Erode district, there are 6 taluks viz. Erode, Perundurai, Gobichettipalayam, Vellakovil, Kangayam, Sathyamangalam. 5 samples from each taluk were chosen. The respondents are the owners or users or buyers of tractors and they are individually approached in person to get necessary information pertaining to the tractor.

DATA COLLECTION

Both primary and secondary data were used for purpose of this study. Secondary data were obtained from books, newspapers, magazines, brouchers, notices, Radio and Television, etc. For the purpose of empirical analysis primary data were by and large used. To describe the
existing situation of the market and to the survey the market primary data were obtained by way of questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to the respondents in person and got back the filled up questionnaires. Apart from questionnaires, informations from the respondents were collected by interviews.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data obtained as primary data were arranged and tabulated. The tabulated data were analysed and interpreted. The statistical tools such as averages and percentages were widely used. In addition to statistical techniques charts and diagrams were also drawn to give the clear picture of buyers' behaviour towards a particular brand of tractor.

CHAPTER ARRANGEMENTS

The study has been divided into five chapters.

CHAPTER - I

Introduction, statement of the problem, scope of the study, objectives of the study, review of literature, limitations of study, research methodology, sampling, data collection and analysis of data are explained.
CHAPTER - II

Several terms such as consumer, consumer behaviour, durable goods, non-durable goods, convenience goods, shopping goods and specialty goods have been defined. A few theories of consumer behaviour, such as Economic theories, Psychological theories, Psycho-analytical theories and socio-cultural theories have been stated briefly. A few major factors influencing buyers' behaviour such as cultural factors, social factors, personal factors and psychological factors have been briefly stated.

CHAPTER - III

Common features and distinctive features from among the available tractors in Indian Tractor market have been examined and stated.

CHAPTER - IV

The informations collected from among the 100 tractor owners in Salem, Namakkal and Erode districts have been analysed and interpreted.

CHAPTER - V

The summary of all the chapters have been briefly stated.