ABSTRACT
The present study examines the role of children in household buying decisions. It is a comparative study of two cities of Punjab – Bathinda and Ludhiana where Bathinda being the backward and Ludhiana being a developed study form basis for comparison. The study has analyzed - role of children in household buying, changing behavior of household buying, analyze the changing pattern of market in the children’s segment and identified the shift in household buying structure. For evaluating the influencing role of children in household buying decisions, secondary data has been collected from census reports, books, research magazines, journals etc. and primary data has been collected from parents and children of two cities of Punjab i.e. Bathinda and Ludhiana.

The study found that children today have more autonomy and decision making power within the household than in previous generations; they are emerging as influencers in household buying decisions. They are not growing only in size but also in influence as they are playing different buying roles in household sector. It was also found that there is rapid growth of market for children products over a past few years. The marketers are targeting the consumers by using children not only in the case of product meant for children but also for the product used or purchased in household sector. Further, parents agreed that media in its various manifestations has been able to carve out a niche for its advertisements in the heads and hearts of the children. Children with their instant grasping power give valuable suggestions to their parents when they intend buying a particular product. The study also found that children are turned into consumers at a very early age through the desires and encouragement of parents, who also provide the youngsters with the necessary financial support in the form of pocket money.

Further, the study confirms that Ludhiana is an advanced city as compared to Bathinda respondents as respondents of Bathinda have shown less stability in their responses than those of Ludhiana respondents, it is for the reason that the awareness about buying decisions has appeared in this area recently than Ludhiana where it already existed. It was also found that Ludhiana children have greater awareness about their needs and wants and are major influencers than children of Bathinda. The study also pointed out that no doubt children are emerging as major influencers in household buying decisions but still final decision regarding the purchase of a product is in hands of parents but parents though have a final say while deciding to buy a product yet they always keep in mind the recommendations made by their child regarding the purchase of the product. The study ends with certain recommendations for the help of marketers to formulate marketing strategies, for the help of parents to motivate and encourage the children to make more household buying decisions and for the help of children to become better consumers.