2.1 Introduction

A literature review gives an overview of the field of enquiry: what has already been said on the topic, who are the key writers, what are the prevailing theories and hypothesis, what questions are being asked and what methodologies and methods are appropriate and useful.

According to Bourner there are good reasons for spending time and effort on a review of the literature before embarking on a research project. These reasons are:

- To identify gaps in the literature.
- To avoid reinventing the wheel (at the very least this will save time and it can stop you from making the same mistakes as done by others).
- To carry on from where others have already reached (reviewing the field allows you to build on the platform of existing knowledge and ideas).
- To identify other people working in the same fields (a researcher network is as valuable resource).
- To increase your breadth of knowledge of your subject area.
- To identify seminal works in your area.
- To provide the intellectual context for your own work, enabling you to position your project relative to other work.
- To identify opposing views.
- To put your work into perspective.
- To demonstrate that you can access previous work in an area.
- To identify information and ideas that may be relevant to your project.
To identify methods that could be relevant to your project.

Keeping all these facts in mind, the investigator studiously scanned the available literature related to the present study. The following existing concepts shall be helpful to get an insight into the role and influence of children in household buying decisions:

- Influence of children by product category.
- Children’s influence across stages of decision making process.
- Consumer socialization of children.
- Media effects on children.
- Changing pattern of the market.
- Changing structure of the family.

2.2 Literature Review

Berey and Pollay (1968) were the first to understand the role of children. They measured the assertiveness of the child (in favor of a brand preferred by the child) and the child-centeredness of the mother in the case of purchase of a brand of breakfast cereal. They found that high child-centered mothers purchased the child’s favourite brand less frequently, implying that when a mother is child centered, she would purchase a brand that is good for the child and not necessarily one that is preferred by the child. Berey and Pollay also found that the assertiveness of the child enhanced the recall of the child’s favourite brand among mothers. Examining shifts in such influence across age, Ward and Wackman (1972) found that attempts by children at influencing purchase were negatively related to the age of the child; however the tendency of mothers to yield to such influence rose with the age of the child but varied across product categories. Mehrotra and Torges (1977) and Williams and Veeck (1998) suggested that no particular attitude or set of attitudes uniquely determines for all
products whether a mother would be influenced by her child or not. Child-centered mothers were more likely to be influenced by their children and family-oriented mothers or women with close knit families were more sensitive to children’s influence. Mothers co-viewing television programmes with their children were more likely to yield to children’s influencing attempt for products advertised on those shows. Atkin (1978) found that while children do tend to make forceful demands at the point of purchase, their success depends on whether they “ask” or “tell”. Atkin reported a greater success rate in case of children that “tell” rather than “ask”.

Belch, Belch, and Ceresino (1985) later studied the diversity in the influence of children and reported that the extent of such influence varied with product and stage in the decision making process, thus supporting the assertion of Szybillo and Sosanie (1977) that the roles of husbands, wives, and children vary across stages of decision making. They found that while the role of the teenage child was most prominent at the initiation stage, it was limited thereafter. Belch et al. were also the first to report, in marketing journals, the discrepancy in reports of influence. They detected that while children attributed greater influence in decision making to themselves, they consistently attributed more influence to the father than mother. Subsequently, Foxman, Tansuhaj, and Ekstorm (1989a, 1989b) reported more evidence supporting discrepancies in reports. Foxman et al. (1989b) also found that personal resources of the child (such as grades in school) and perceived product knowledge determined the extent of the influence. Supporting Foxman et al.’s (1989a) evidence, Beatty and Talpade (1994) reported similar effects of the usage of the product by the child and child’s product knowledge on the extent of the child’s influence. Beatty and Talpade also supported Belch et al.’s (1985) findings about discrepancy in reports when they found that the discrepancy was greater between father and child, rather than between mother and child.
Moschis George P. (1985) has introduced the related concept of consumer socialization. He has given the conceptual framework and the measurement models of socialization. Along with the theoretical perspective he attempted to explain the family influences of the buying behaviour of customer, he pointed out various factors responsible for the purchase decisions. In his book, he gave 197 propositions on the consumer socialization. Out of which 14 propositions were only on the family influences, 19 proposition of peer influences, 37 propositions of mass media influences, 14 propositions of effect of other socializing agents, 38 propositions of effect of age and life cycle and 17 proposition of cultural factors along with a number of other factor propositions.

Ekstrom, Tansuhaj and Foxman (1987) took a reciprocal view of consumer socialization of children and proposed that children contribute to decision outcome through routes – one by influencing their parents by direct expression of preferences and secondly by communicating new knowledge to the parents and influencing purchases. They proposed that children whose family communication pattern is characterized by a high concept-orientation will influence (socialize) their parents more than children whose family communication pattern is characterized by a high socio-orientation. A child in a single parent family, higher socio-economic status, and higher personal resources and in a sex role egalitarian family will have more influence. A child will have greater influence for product purchase decisions that he/she considers important or for which he/she has high product knowledge. His/her participation in family decision making will tend to increase his/her satisfaction with family purchase decisions.

Singh (1992) studied the role played by family members while purchasing a television across five occupational categories: teachers, doctors, business people, lawyers, and engineers. Children of engineers and doctors were found to have remarkable influence in the purchase decisions.
Ahuja and Stinson (1993) examined the role of children in women led households and found that the influence of the child varied across several parameters such as product, the age of the child, and the sex role orientation of the mother. No conclusive patterns could be detected.

Robert Mayer (1994) has observed that it is quite evident that children not only attempt to influence their parents to make purchases of products of special interest to them, but also products of remote interest (e.g. laundry detergents). For which they see advertisements on television. Robert and Chris have argued that it is commonly expected that advertising effects will be diluted when consumers encounter ads for competing brands. Consequently, advertisers attempt to avoid competitor’s ads when buying media. It has been suggested that advertising for mature and familiar brands may not work in the same way as advertising for unfamiliar brands. Relative to information related to the more familiar brands advertised in the market place may be less susceptible to competitive inference.

Jennifer and Deborah (1995) has concluded in their study that younger kids tend to use fewer dimensions to compare and evaluate brands, use simple choice mechanisms based on single attribute rather than employing compensatory choice strategies of products in gathering information and making choices.

Jensen (1995) proposed that parents’ involvement is a function of financial risk, their role as users and their perception of product differentiation whereas children are mostly involved in the purchase due to their role as users. She explored the influence of children in making purchases and concluded that besides product for direct consumption, children display influence in purchasing products for family consumption where parents are less involved and perceive little or no product differentiation (for food products).
Johnon (1995) found that product type is an important variable in determining the way children will behave in family decision making. She observed that bargaining was the most common strategy adopted by children when trying to influence the purchase of products for personal use. Conflict avoidance was most commonly used for family use products. However, for products for home use, such as a personal computer, they resorted to problem solving tactics to resolve conflicts. The author also pointed out while bargaining is most common in dyadic interactions (Qualls and Jaffe, 1992), problem solving is more frequent in triadic interactions between mother, father and child. These results supported the results of Belch et al. (1980). In the study by Belch et al. (1980), it was found that children see the problem solving strategies being used less often. It was felt that children were either not a part of the decision making process for those products or that discussion took place outside the presence of children. A significant relationship was also found to exist between the situation in which the family purchase decision making occurred (for example, presence / absence of a family member decision taken in the retail shop) and the choice of a conflict resolution strategy.

Palan and Wilkes (1997) has conducted an adolescent parent interaction in family decision-making and concluded that younger children are more likely to simply ask for products, whereas adolescents are more likely to use a variety of influence strategies. It is through this interaction that adolescents attempt to influence decision outcomes. Adolescents do influence family decisions and that this influence may vary across different factors. For example adolescents have greater influence in household purchasing decisions in a concept oriented communication environment (in which children are encouraged to develop their own ideas) and when their personal sources are greater.

Schiffman (1997) has observed that over the past several decades, there has been a trend towards children playing an active role in what the family buys, as well as in the family decision
making process. This shift in influence has occurred as a result of families having fewer children, more dual-income couples who can afford to permit their children to make a greater number of the choices and the encouragement by the media to allow children to “express themselves”. Still further single parent households often push their children towards household participation and self reliance.

*Diancrispell (1998)* explains how baby boomer children differ from their parents across a broad spectrum of consumer preferences, attitudes, influences and demographics, including:

- Pervasiveness of technology especially computers and its effect and perception.
- More single-parent households and working mothers.
- Acceptance of racial and ethnic diversity.
- More control of things that are purchased by or for them, even to the extent of influencing family cars and homes.

*Claude Pecheux and Christian Derbix (1999)* have said that children’s attitude towards particular brand is more crucial to understand than their choice behaviour and this is important not only to understand their consumer behaviour as children but also their future behaviour as adults.

*D. R. John (1999)* classified consumer socialization stages of children as being the perceptual stage (3-7 years), the analytical stage (7-11 years) and reflective stage (11-16 years). On the basis of an exhaustive review, she contended that children in perceptual stage focus on perceptually salient features of products use direct requests and emotional appeals to influence purchases, and possess limited ability to adapt strategy to a person or a situation. They are expedient in making decision, are egocentric (as validated by *Johnson (1995)*), and have the emerging ability to adapt to cost-benefit trade-offs. However, children in analytical stage are more thoughtful, focus on important attribute information to generate an expanded repertoire of strategies (especially non-compensatory ones), and are capable of adapting strategies to tasks. In the reflective stage, children have substantial brand
awareness for adult-oriented as well as child-oriented product categories, posses ability to gather information on functional, perceptual, and social aspects, and are capable of adapting strategies to tasks in adult-like manner.

Dickerson Tasha, is of the opinion that consumer socialization of children includes many different elements, such as age, family communication structure, co-shopping and advertisements/ mass media. Consumer socialization also influences the development of brand preferences, as well as materialistic tendencies. “Consumer socialization is the Process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitude relevant to their functioning in the market place” (Carlson and Grossbart, 1988). In other words, consumer socialization is how children learn to be consumers. Children spend most of the time with their family members and thus family is the most influential agent of socialization.

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Products</th>
<th>Family Toiletries</th>
<th>Household Durables</th>
<th>Family Automobiles</th>
<th>Consumables</th>
<th>Financial Products</th>
<th>Vacations</th>
<th>Educational Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Users</td>
<td>Passive users</td>
<td>Decider / Buyers</td>
<td>Decider / User</td>
<td>Passive Users</td>
<td>Decider / Initiator</td>
<td>Initiator</td>
<td>Decider / Buyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decider / Buyer</td>
<td>User / initiative / Gate keeper</td>
<td>User</td>
<td>Co-decider / initiator / influencer</td>
<td>Influencer</td>
<td>Co-decider / Buyer / Gate keeper</td>
<td>Influencer</td>
<td>Influencer / Buyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer</td>
<td>User</td>
<td>User</td>
<td>Passive Users</td>
<td>Decider / Buyer</td>
<td>Passive users</td>
<td>Decider / Buyer</td>
<td>Influencer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decider / Influencer</td>
<td>Influencer / Decider</td>
<td>Influencer / Co-decider</td>
<td>Initiator</td>
<td>Influencers / Co-decider</td>
<td>Co-decider</td>
<td>Co-decider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencer / co-deciders</td>
<td>Buyers</td>
<td>Initiator / Gate keeper</td>
<td>Co deciders / Users</td>
<td>Influencers</td>
<td>Co-deciders / Users</td>
<td>Co-deciders</td>
<td>Co-deciders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source : Business Today, February 22 March 6, 1999, Vol. 8 No. 4)
Dobhal Shailesh (1999) explained the changing role of children for making the buying decisions in different product categories. He explained that children now act as influencers/co-deciders for personal product, for vacations and for consumables. Whereas they are buyers for family toiletries, initiator/gatekeeper for household durables and co-deciders/users for family automobiles, financial products and vacations. He also explained the changing role of father and mother regarding the consumer products.

In the same article Rajan Banerjee, Director Renaissance Management Consultants, Pune, (A and M) discussed the rising importance of children in the retail purchase decision, and how stores need to evolve to retain the adults of tomorrow. He also said that in the consumer products, international research shows that children tend to influence purchase decision of many products, which they consume. According to him in any Indian middle class family with a child between five and ten years of age, the child is often the most advertising ‘savvy’ person in the entire household. ‘Sabvy’ means aware and not necessarily discerning. International manufacturers of packaged food have gone beyond merely making the product accessible and attractive to the children. He counts two reasons for this, firstly in the era of double-income, families have more outing with the children and secondly, if we satisfy child of today he grows into the adult of tomorrow. In a nut shell, he wants to conclude that earlier, it was ‘sell to the parents and close with the child’. Now, the mantra is ‘Sell to the child and close with the parents’.

James U. Mc Neal (1999) explained that children represent three different markets:

a. children have money of their own to spend (current market)

b. They influence family decisions (influence market)

c. They are open to advertising campaigns designed to make them future consumers (future market)
Mc Neal further explained that in the 1960s, children aged 2-14 directly influence about $5 billion in parental purchases. Mc Neal wrote “In the mid-1970s, the figure was $20 billion, and it rose to $50 billion by 1984. By 1990, kids direct influence had reached $132 billion, and in 1997, it may have peaked at around $188 billion. Estimates show that children’s aggregate spending roughly doubled during each decade of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and has tripled so far in the 1990s”

Lee and Collins (1999) proposed that when more than two family members are in conflict during the purchase decision processes the third parties (children) may form alliance to aid one side against the other. They investigated patterns of influence and coalition patterns across three stages of the decision making process, namely Configuration (synonymous with problem recognition and search for information), Negotiation (Synonymous with evaluation of alternatives) and Outcome (final decision) stage. It was found that children tend to use emotive strategies to gain influence. At the same time, the influence of family members varies in response to the gender mix of the children. Daughters were generally more influential than sons and the gender of elder children appeared to have more significance on the influence structure of the family than that of younger children. Interestingly, fathers and elder daughters and mothers and sons were found to work together to gain influence. The influence of a mother in the family was the strongest during the Negotiation and Outcome stage when both her children were male. Her influence was also strong if her first child was male and the second child was a female. The mother-son and father-daughter pattern changed when parents had two daughters. The father had less influence during the Configuration stage when they had a younger daughter and his influence increased in the Outcome stage if the couple had an elder daughter and a younger son. Moreover, mothers in two girl families had greater decision power than when the family has an elder daughter and a younger son.
Abhilasha Mehta (Gallup and Robinson Inc. 2000) has concluded that print advertising performance is influenced by consumer’s attitudes towards advertising in general. Respondents with more favourable attitude towards advertising recalled a higher number of advertisements the day after exposure and were more persuaded by them. The research shows that to be effective, an advertisement should be something people should like looking at, believe and find utility with keeping up to date about products and services.

Gene Del vecchio (O and M, Los Angeles 2000) has argued that marketers must gain an intimate understanding of a child’s emotional needs, their hopes and fantasies in order to succeed in creating and sustaining bonds with almost universal child appeals.

Steven M. Edward (2000) has pointed to adolescent population of 30 million (in U.S.A) which is rapidly growing in both size and consumption power. Teenager’s preferences are also influencing household consumption choices and therefore advertisers must begin to understand and address the unique needs of this younger group of consumers.

Williams and Burns (2000) using social power theory, investigated the ways in which children make direct influence attempts. They found that when children feel ‘entitled’ or ‘privileged’ to act in their own way, they resort to negative influence attempts such as deception, displaying anger, begging or pleading to exert influence. If they find that their parents have the right or legitimate power to direct their actions, they utilize positive influence attempts such as asking nicely, showing affection or bargaining. When they feel that they can manipulate their parents, they try to deceive the parents, display anger, or beg and plead. If the children expect to be punished as a result of non-compliance, they behave in ways as is perceived positive by the parents. This implies that when parents resort to coercive tactics, the children try to have their own way by asking nicely,
bargaining or showing affection. Many times children also express compliance in exchange for a future gain; that is, they bargain for a future reward in exchange for a present one.

*Business Management Club (2001)* explains the present trend in the consumer market as:

**Table 2.2**  
**Present Trends in the Consumer Market**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Changing demographic environment where the 75 million “baby boomers” (born after the second world war) now account for about one third of the total population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>People marry later in life and have fewer children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The number of married couples continues to decline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Number of working women increasing drastically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>About 65% of women will be in labour force by 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>47% of all households will be non family or single parent households by the year 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Younger adults move out of their parent’s home earlier in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The divorce rate is increasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The percentage of the more educated people is increasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>People are becoming increasingly health conscious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>People generally live longer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Marketing and Sales Management, Business Management Club, 2001)

*Hundal (2001)* in a study of rural buying behaviour in the Amritsar district of Punjab investigated the role of family members in making purchase decisions for durables including refrigerators, televisions, air coolers, and washing machines. His findings projected that product selection decisions in rural families were mostly made by spouses together but they were highly influenced by children.
Kapoor (2001) collected information from families in Delhi in regard to their roles across stages of purchase decision making for six durables - televisions, refrigerators, washing machines, personal computers, audio systems and cars. She found that individual members were associated with multiple roles. The initiator for purchase in a family was typically a young female member, who was likely to be the wife or one of the children. She illustrated that the need for an audio system, personal computer and television was likely to be first expressed by the children in the family. As influencers, younger members, especially children, were found to affect purchase of a personal computer, audio system, and television. The final purchases were found to be decided upon after consultation with other family members, mainly the husband.

Deepak Halan (2002) opines in a focus group study by kids-link, the market research group of kid stuff promos and events with boys and girls in the age group of 13-15 years in Delhi, girls estimated that they were able to influence 50 percent of the decisions. The study highlighted that kids have a lot of information because of exposure to television, other media, and friends. They reflected that parents sought their opinion even in making purchase of products not directly related to the children, such as cars, because of their higher knowledge of brands, models and the latest trends. Also, children stated that parents bought products that made the kids happy.

Anup Shah (2003) explains that marketers see children as a future as well as current market and hence brand loyalty at a young age helps in the quest of continued sales, later. He further explains that the journal of American Medical Association has said that children between the age of two and seventeen watch an annual average of 15,000 to 18,000 hours of television compared with 12,000 hours spent per year in school. Children are also major targets for television advertising, whose impact is greater than usual because there is an apparent lessening of influence by parents and
others in the older generation. Nevertheless, $1 billion a year is spent on ads and commercials directed at children.

Kamaruddin Abdul Razak and Safeik Mokhlis (2003) investigate how the process of consumer socialization will determine adolescents’ decision-making styles. Eight decision-making styles were conceptualized as outcomes of the socialization process, which are acquired via interaction with socialization agents namely parents, peers, printed media, television commercials and in-school education. The study also proposes five social structural variables (social class, gender, ethnicity, residence and religion) as being associated with the socialization agents and decision making styles. There is a significant relationship between the social structural factors and socialization process. The most revealing finding of this study is that parents did not contribute to the formulation of decision making orientation for adolescents.

Singh and Kumar (2003) explains that children today do not only make their buying decisions themselves but also play a great role in other buying decisions of the products to be purchased in household. They not only attempt to influence their parents to make purchases of special interest to them, but also with regard to remote interest, e.g. laundry detergents, for which they see advertisements on television. They further analyzed that 90% of the children get pocket money which they spend on comics, ice-creams, toffees and on other eatables available in the market. So they are targeted by the companies with great efforts and are emerging as a big market. Thus this segment can very well be exploited in order to peep into parents’ mind.

Bansal (2004) opines that ‘It’s all a kid’s play anyway’. Today’s youngsters have profound influence over purchases in all kinds of product categories. They are the centre of the aspirations of the family. The findings of a survey named as New Generations 2001, conducted on Indian kids by Cartoon Network, reconfirm the power of the kids to make their parents dance to their tune when it
comes to purchasing a product. The study also throws light on some of the compelling aspects of the child as a consumer. Insistence power emerged as one of the New Generations 2001 study’s important findings by virtue of which the kids pester their parents and make them invest on their asked for favourites. In the study mothers were interviewed in order to validate the claims made about the children’s power of insistence. It measured the level of influence children have on purchase and brand decisions across 37 product categories. And the results primarily confirmed the stretch of the influence of the kids beyond traditional products, observes Duncan Morris, Vice-President, Research, Turner International Asia Pacific, advertisers ought to tailor their messages keeping the kid sector in their minds, he remarks. The survey indicates that today’s children usually have a strong opinion on brands. For instance, the study conducted on kids aged 7 -14 revealed that Santro is their favourite car followed by Maruti 800 and Zen. And Nokia was voted as their most favourite mobile brand. An international comparison on the extent of influence on parents’ purchases, conducted across 30 product categories, revealed that while South Korea and Japan were at the upper end of the spectrum, Singapore and Malaysia figured at the bottom and India hovered some where in the middle.

*Kaur and Singh (2004)* observed that children are individually active in initiating the idea to purchase a durable. In other stages of the decision making process, they exhibit joint influence along with other members of the family. This implies that they provide support to the member exerting influence to increase pressure but do not wield much influence individually.

*D.P.S. Verma and Neetu Kapoor (2004)* in their study revealed that parents give due recognition to the increasing role of children above the age of eight years in the family purchase decisions. However the parents’ response has been influenced by the age of the child, price of the product and income of the family. Children perceived their role to be highly important in the
family’s decisions. They claimed to play the role of influencer and decider in the purchase of a majority of personal products, consumables, household durables and even family automobiles. They also said that they play the role of buyer for a number of products.

Belch et al’s (2005) proposed that since teenagers are high users of the internet, they have greater access to market information which could impact their influence in family decision making. They found that teens who perceive themselves to be ‘Internet mavens’ (individual who are relied upon more for providing information from the virtual market place) as well as their parents, believed that teens were more influential in all stages - initiation and information search, alternative evaluation and final decision stages. However, their influence was higher in the initiation and information search stages as compared to alternative evaluation and final decision stages.

Kapoor and Verma (2005) investigated children’s understanding of television advertising in a comprehensive study in Delhi. Their findings revealed those children as young as six years could understand the purpose of television ads and distinguish between a commercial and a television programme. With an increase in the age of the child, cognitive understanding of the ads increased and children above the age of eight years were able to respond to television ads in a mature and informed manner. Heavy viewing was positively associated with favourable attitudes towards television ads and conversely, interest in ads decline with age. Children’s exposure to television ads was determined to a large extent by parents’ control of their viewing. Parent-child interaction played an important role in the children’s learning of positive consumer values and their parents perceiving the influence as positive on their children’s buying response. Both parents and children noted the impact of television ads on children’s purchase requests.
Children as Influencers

Kaur and Singh (2006) explained that children constitute three different markets: the primary, the influencer, and the future market. Certain products are simply children’s products for which they are the primary users / buyers. They sometimes either purchase a product themselves or select the product before it is purchased by the parents. For other products such as ones which are used by the entire family unit they may influence purchases made by the parents. There are some products where children wield direct influence or pester power by overtly specifying their preferences and voicing them aloud. For other products parents’ buying patterns are affected by prior knowledge of the tastes and preferences of their children. This ‘Passive Dictation’ of choice is prevalent for a wide variety of daily consumed product items as well as products for household consumption.
Mallalieu and Palan (2006) in order to identify the extent, to which shopping competence is
developed in teenage girls, developed a model of adolescent shopping competence in a shopping 
mall context. They investigated whether teenage girls were competent shoppers or whether they 
indulged in compulsive shopping behaviours. Shopping competence was defined as a multi-faceted 
construct composed of effectively utilizing environmental resources, having and using knowledge 
related to shopping and possessing the degree of self-confidence and self-control necessary to utilize 
environmental and individual based resources fully. The teenage girls described their mothers as 
being competent shoppers. The results of discussions with teenage girls indicated that they exhibited 
competence in using environmental and knowledge based resources ‘Partially’. This implies that if 
they revealed competency in some aspects of shopping, they came up short in other aspects they 
themselves perceived as being associated with shopping competence. The girls’ responses also 
indicated that they were lacking in self confidence and self control, and this also moderated the 
degree to which the teenage girls utilized environmental and individual resources in achieving 
positive shopping outcomes.

Nivedita Mukherjee (2006) says that the young Indian is emerging as the biggest and most 
influential consumer in the market place. Armed with an overload of information and entertainment 
options, they now induce parents, who grew up on a ‘necessary consumption’ life style to spend 
without a thought and challenge marketers to drum up stronger brand creation exercises. This is the 
age when channels like MTV belt out their favourite numbers at hours convenient to their segment, 
when multiplexes shy away from screening block busters during exam time, when consumers giants 
like unilever draw upon kid power to position a detergent as “dirt is good” and mobile operators 
play cupid with anonymous dates. Teenomics has hit the country with a vengeance.
Priya Srinivasan with Rahul Sachita nand and Archana Skukla (2006) explained that children, especially tweens, are the largest consumers of media and entertainment products. While adults spend just around two hours a day watching television, kids are glued to the tube for over four hours a day. And according to the media analysis, they are much more involved viewers than adults, “Ad recall among kids is much higher than adults, simply because they are quite active viewers as against adults who are largely becoming passive T.V. consumers” Says Sandeep, Tarkas, CEO Media Direction. That’s a fact; most children don’t just remember ads, they even do the Jingles that go with them. Not all the four hours are spent watching the kiddies channel, children actually spend more time watching Hindi movies and Hindi mass entertainment channels (the kind that feature game shows and weepies) than they do cartoons or other such programming targeted exclusively at them. And some of them actually watch news channel. However, the media habits of tweens have more to them than just television. Older tweens read news papers and general interest magazines; most tweens from higher income households surf the net; and a significant proportion frequent multiplexes with their parents sometimes with friends. All that adds up to a very media savvy...
consumer in the market. Fig. 2.2 and Fig. 2.3 shows viewership by channel and viewership by genre among the children of up to 14 years in all India market survey done by Business Today from October 16, 2005 to November 11, 2005.

*Fig2.3*

**Viewership By Genre**

![Pie chart showing viewership by genre](image)

(Source : Business Today, Jan, 1

*Malini Bhupta and Aditi Pai (2007)* explained that if India is a consumerist society today, where the adults are living it up, the juniors are not far behind from pester power to direct consumption, the teens and pre teens segment is driving consumption and forcing marketers to create new categories, product lines and service offerings. So from saloons, gyms to exclusive clothes and jewelry lines are available for the very demanding market segment. The market for kids is evidently on a boil, if the numbers are to be believed. According to Technopark, the overall market size for kids (12-16 Years) in urban areas is estimated to be Rs. 15,000 crore. The total market size of apparel for kids (12-16 Years) in urban areas is estimated to be Rs. 1,600 Crore. Which is growing at 25-30 percent per annum.

*Damyanti Datta (2008)* explained that time has gone when Indian parents controlled children with an iron rod. Obedience was expected and no was a household word. But in a world where
families spend “Quality Time” at the mall, those norms are going the way of the dodo. By every measure, parents are bending over backwards to please their children, over 50 percent want their children to move ahead in life. She further explained that according to a 2006-07 survey conducted by Cartoon Network on 9000 respondents, children want more because there’s so much more to get today: about 70 percent nag parents for things, 84 percent influence parents buying decisions, 40 percent have computers and mobile phones in 50 percent Indian homes.

In the same article Rupa Murghai, student counselor of IIT Delhi, points out that in the traditional set-up it was easier for parents to pull back as children grew older, But with modernity kicking in, children have moved from the margins to the centre of the family. And the struggle to set limits has become tougher than ever.

Garima Sharma (2008) explained that kids becoming as fashion conscious as their parents, it is no surprise that their preferences too are being addressed by top international brands. Proving the points are international brands like Reebok, Adidas, United Colors of Benetton (UCB), Kappa etc. which are offering kids wear based on animated characters something that children can relate to.

Singh and Khatri (2008) for their scientific investigation adopts a cross-cultural perspective in studying the relationship between parental over-indulgence and perception of parents regarding the influence of children in bringing in awareness, creating interest desire and influencing actual purchase decisions (AIDA) of food products. According to them child rearing practices differ from culture to culture and can be an important factor influencing the buying behaviour of families. Parenting styles in two cultures (American and Indian) were studied to gauge the level of influence of children to the four levels of AIDA and the results indicate that there exists no significant difference in the two cultures regarding the contribution of children in bringing in initial information, creating interest and desire about packaged food products in the family but the two
cultures differed significantly in terms of the contribution kids have in influencing the actual buying decisions regarding packaged food products. The influence of American children was lower in final purchase than Indian children. The level of indulgence was found to move backward on actual buying behaviour of parents. Their study points at the shift of Indian parents towards over-indulgence as a result of invasive marketing practices targeted at the children.

*Seema Schdeva (2009)* says that the bustling and burgeoning “Great Indian Family” has become a thing of the past. More and more young couples are not only opting for nuclear families but are also happy going in for one child. From something that was considered a rarity even 20 or 30 years ago, having a single child is fast becoming the norm in the urban milieu. This also makes sound financial sense in the current economic scenario wherein it is becoming imperative for both parents to be working so as to provide their child with the best of facilities and the outcome of these changes are that a child becomes only centre of attraction for the parents.

*Vikram Bakshi*, Managing Director, Mc Donald’s, India, says “kids are no longer passive members of the family.” Today, children are the essential part of the family decision making process, their likes and dislikes are taken into account by the family in taking decisions for the household and the family. They become friendlier to their parents. He also explained that the nineties in India really mirrored the baby boom period of the Americans – major shift to nuclear families, increasing democratization of the family decision making process and of course availability of wide variety of choice to the consumers.

*Witt Susan D* has done research on the influence of television on gender role socialization and explains that as children move through childhood and adolescence, television is an important influence on their gender role socialization.
Table 2.3

TV Facts

- American children, aged 2-17 watch television on an average almost 25 hours a week or $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day. Almost one in five watches more than 35 hours of TV every week (Gentile & Walsh, 2002)

- 20% of 2-7 year old, 46% of 8 – 12 year old and 56% of 13 – 17 year old have TVs in their bedrooms (Gentile & Walsh, 2002)

- Children spend more time watching television than indulging in any other activity except sleeping.

- Television’s impact on reading and other academic skills depends not only on the amount of television watched, but also on what is being watched as well as the age of the child (Reinking, 1990)

- 68% of 8 – 18 year olds have a TV in their bedroom; 54% have a DVD / VCR player, 37% have cable / satellite TV and 20% have premium channels.

- In 63% of households, the TV is ‘usually’ on during meals.

- In 53% of households of 7th to 12th graders, there are no rules about T.V. watching.

- In 51% of households, the T.V. on ‘most’ of the time.

- Kids with a T.V. in their bedroom spend an average of almost 1.5 hours more a day watching TV than kids without a TV in the bedroom.

(Source: http://www.mediafamily.org/facts/facts-childandtv.shtml)

The impact of television advertising on pre-school and elementary school-aged children occurs at multiple levels, including the relatively immediate product persuasion effects intended by the advertiser, as well as broader and / or more cumulative types of influences that accrue from
exposure to large number of commercials over time. For example a cereal may have the immediate
effect of generating product purchase requests and increasing product consumption, but it may also
contribute to outcomes. Such as misperceptions about proper nutritional habits. Celebrities and
cartoon characters (zoo-zoo in case of advertisement of Vodafone) are commonly used by marketers,
as children’s views of advertising appeals are largely influenced by them. The practice is largely
witnessed in restaurants giving a small toy as a token of remembrance to children such as Mc
Donalds (Wiliam and Veeck, 1998) or associating a cartoon character with a cereal.

Approximately 80 percent of advertisements target the children not only in the case of toys,
cereals, candies and fast food restaurants, but also in case of laundry detergent, water purifier system
(Aqua-guard and R.O. system), mobile phone advertisements and money investment plans like
Kotak Mahindra Bank.

‘National Institute on Media and the Family’ shows the following facts:

Advertising Industry Spends Billions to Target Kids

- More than $ 2 billion is now spent annually on advertising directed at children, over 20 times the
  amount spent just 10 years ago.

- Channel One is twelve-minutes in classroom broadcast and has a daily teen audience comparable
to that the super bowl the most watched television event of the year. In fact teens watch Channel
One 50 times more than MTV.

- A 1998 Federal Trade Commission Survey examined 212 websites aimed at kids and found that
  89 percent solicited personnel information such as name, postal address and security number,
  while only 23 percent were asked to seek their parents’ permission before providing information.
Little Big Spenders – Children and Teen Spending Skyrockets

- The spending, by children has roughly doubled every ten years for the past three decades, and it has tripled in the 1990s.
- Kids 4-12 spent $ 2.2 billion in 1968, and $ 4.2 billion in 1984, the figure climbed to $ 17.1 billion and only three years later in 1997 their spending reached $ 23.4 billion.
- Older kids 12-19, spent a record $155 billion of their own money in 2001, up from $63 billion just four years earlier.

The “Nag” Factor Works – Kids Influence on Parents’ Purchase Continues to Grow

- In 1960s, children influenced about $ 5 billion of their parents’ purchases. By 1984 that figure increased ten fold to $ 50 billion. By 1997, it has tripled to $ 188 billion.
- Kids marketing expert, James Mc Neal, estimates that by 2000, children below the age of 12 influenced household purchases to the tune of $ 500 billion.

Kids are Glued to the Tube and Bombarded by Commercials

- It is estimated that on an average a child watches between 20,000-40,000 commercials every year. That works out to at least 55 commercials per day.
- Children spend a daily average of 4 hours and 40 min in front of a screen of some kind-two and a half hour of which are watching television.
- The children have a television set in their bed room and it was found that 24 percent of children under the age of 6 also had a television set in their bedroom.

Creating Brand Conscious Babies

- At six months of age, when a child starts to follow the simple sounds like “Mama” he also starts forming mental images of corporate logos and mascots.
- In a 1991 study, 91 percent of six year olds correctly associate Joe Camel with camel cigarettes.
As per recent marketing industry studies, a person’s “Brand Loyalty” may begin as early as age two.

At three years of age, before they can read, one out of five American children starts already making specific requests for brand name products.

By age 5 children are ready to make their own (parent-financed) purchases.

And by age 7, they are totally in control. With this control comes power - a power to make own their decisions.

Experts say a life time customer may be worth $ 1,00,000 to a retailer, making effective “Cradle to Grave” strategies extremely valuable.

The studies conclude that influences of children in household buying decisions can be seen in India also. As so many changes in the social-cultural environment of India (such as emergence of dual career, single parent and nuclear families) have taken place, role of children has also increased in Indian households. But the review of previous literature has shown that maximum research regarding the children’s influences has been done by western researchers. In India research on household buying decisions has been confined to spouses. Women were seen to be the purchasing agent of the household and role of third party influences such as children have been neglected.

Only a few studies related to this topic, which have partially investigated the role of children along with other members in the household is found in India. Verma (1982) partially investigated the role of family members for purchase of a refrigerator. Singh (1992) studied the role played by family members while purchasing a television, Singh (1998) further investigated the role of children as buyers and found that purchase requests by children are strongly stimulated by commercials or by a friend who has recently purchased a product. Kapoor (2001) investigated influence of children in family purchase decisions for consumer durables and on the same time Hundal (2001) examined the
role of children while studying the consumer behaviour in rural market. *Singh and Kumar (2003)* studied children as an emerging market in India and *Kapoor and Verma (2005)* investigated children’s understanding of television advertisements and a role of parent - child interaction on socialization of children. In the same year *Mukherji* investigated family communication patterns, advertising attitudes and mediation behaviour with urban middle-class mother. *Sinha (2005)* further examined the gender differences among adolescent as influencer and impact of communication in the family purchase decisions. *Singh and Kaur (2006)* investigated the role of children in family purchase decision in India and in the West. She concluded that Indian society vastly differs from West in terms of family composition and structure, values, norms and behaviour which affect the role that children play in purchase decision making in the household sector. She further concluded that Western researchers have taken into account the effect of family type and composition, sex role orientation, parent style etc. to bring out a complete picture regarding the role of children, the Indian literature is more limited in this regard. Indian authors have gauged the influence of children only partially and have generally focused on spouses or all family members. So, research especially centred on children is needed.

Therefore, it can be concluded from the above review of literature that the problem in hand requires more research, as it is yet an emerging phenomena in the Indian society. Indian society is still characterized by a large proportion of rural population with joint - families. Emergence of the urban population with joint as well as nuclear families can also be seen. So a comparison of children’s influence in rural versus urban population or a backward versus advanced city by recognizing a variety of factors can definitely yield fruitful insight.