In recent times, with more families becoming child-led compared to the traditional patriarch and matriarch structures, children have immense potential in influencing family decisions. Marketers interested in age based segmentation are considering children as an important demographic segment. This has given rise to the tweenagers and teenagers – a segment with a huge potential because of their large population and significant influence in family decisions. With their ability to nag their parents repeatedly until they give into their demands for various products, they tend to exercise their pester power. Children constitute three important customer groups – primary (for the purchase of children related products), influencer (for their influence on family decisions) and future customers (for their future purchases). With children being a gullible target, more marketers are now targeting children for their brands with a proposition to ‘catch them young’. Hence the present study aims to fill the research gap with an empirical approach by studying the impact of pester power on parents’ buying behaviour for six selected product categories.

The following shows a brief overview on the contents of chapters included in the thesis.

Chapter 1: Marketing To Children

Pester power, as described by McMillan dictionary, is the children’s ability to make their parents buy something or do something for them by continual asking until the parents agree to do it. The present chapter reveals the impact of pester power and discusses the role of the child as a customer. A brief overview with select illustrations from the marketing world is presented to clarify how marketers target children.

Chapter 2: Growth of Pester Power

Pester Power is no more a phenomenon restricted to a particular region or nation but transcends across borders as children have universally become more powerful than ever and wield a great influence over their parents. Pester power stems from various socio-cultural, psychological and market forces which have been discussed in this chapter. A glimpse of International differences with respect to marketing environment, legal
policies, advertising regulations, socialization habits and cultural values related to pester power is also presented for better understanding of the subject.

**Chapter 3: Child Development**

The study of Child Development is central to understanding ‘child psychology’. Hence before foraying into child’s consumer psyche, it is important to understand the underlying personality and psychological aspects related to children. The present chapter deals with the concept of Nature and Nurture. The two schools of thought in this study include the most famous and largely referred work on Cognitive Development Model by Jean Piaget and the “Social Power theory” developed by French and Raven (1959). Other seminal works related to child development referred to are Vygotsky’s Socio-cultural theory, Deborah John’s Three-Tiered model of Consumer socialization, and Roedder’s Information Processing theories are also included here to provide the basic framework to understand the cognitive skills of children.

**Chapter 4: Literature Review**

Literature review mainly encompasses three broad dimensions – Influence of children in Family decision making, Child request strategies and parents’ responses and Child socialization. Various research studies of the past are reviewed here to find the gap in literature.

**Chapter 5: Conceptual Development**

This chapter presents a conceptual model to link various dynamics related to pester power which were hitherto studied isolated. It clarifies that children’s influence in decision making is affected by the demographics and psychographics and is a function of child’s influence strategy and parents’ response strategy. Conceptually, this model attempts to establish relationships between various factors affecting influence of children in decision making. Theoretically, it helps to frame research questions relevant for the study. The chapter also highlights the major beneficiaries like parents, children, marketers, advertisers, academic community and future researchers.

**Chapter 6: Research Methodology**

This chapter describes various methodological steps involved in the research process. An overview about the research objectives, research design, data collection sources and methods, sampling procedure and data analysis plan helps to understand the research approach used. Major issues while designing the questionnaires are duly discussed wherever necessary and important constructs are operationally defined.
Chapter 7: Data Analysis

This chapter presents data analysis in two parts – Descriptive Statistics and Inferential Statistics. It exhibits various results using statistical tools and techniques based on SPSS to draw insightful inferences. For gender based comparisons, two independent samples t-test is used and age based comparisons, ANOVA is used. For the behavioural and attitudinal affecting pester power, Factor Analysis is conducted. Various other nonparametric tests like Mann-Whitney U test, and Wilcoxon Rank Sum test are used for non-metric variables.

Chapter 8: Findings and Discussion

Chapter eight presents a detailed note on the findings and discussions relevant to this study.

Chapter 9: Suggestions, Limitations and Scope for Future Research

This study produces many insights which are useful for various parties directly or indirectly like parents, school authorities, advertisers, marketers, academicians and researchers. Various suggestions and implications of the study have been drafted based on the inferences drawn from the study and also by amalgamating the observations made by various past studies. However, this study is subject to many of the caveats and problems associated with the studies conducted with young children. The thesis also provides directions for future research areas to fill in various gaps in the study and test the results empirically in different set ups and cultures.