CHAPTER # 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
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3.1 Introduction

The development of marketing management literature also reflects the realization of the crucial role of the consumer in most type of socioeconomic system. The present study focus on consumers, how they purchase certain white goods / consumer durables and what are the considerations / factors they take into account while purchasing the same. There are some very important aspects of consumer behaviour like customers' awareness, perception, preferences, sources of information, level of involvement, factors influencing their purchase decisions like product, price, place, promotion, brand image, and after sales service / past experience, etc, brand loyalty and finally brand switching because they influenced that consumers / households behaviour. Let's see these important aspects one by one.

3.2 Marketing Management is All About Knowledge of Consumer Behaviour

All of us are consumers, we consume things in daily use, we also consume and buy these products according to our needs, preference and buying power. What we buy, how we buy, where and when we buy, in how much quantity we buy depends on our perception, self concept, social cultural background, our age and family cycle, our attitudes, beliefs, values, motivation, personality, social class and many other factors that are both internal and external to us. While buying consumers also decide which brand should be purchased and also keep in mind various choice criteria, previous experience, word of mouth from family, friends, relatives - reference group etc.

A sound understanding of consumer behaviour is essential to the long run success of the marketing programme. The marketer therefore tries to understand the needs of different consumers and having understood his different behaviours at different stage, which requires in depth study of each and every elements of entire marketing process. The ultimate aim of marketers is to provide maximum consumers' satisfaction, which is the outcomes of comparison of expected satisfaction, and actual satisfaction. Before
discussing how consumer makes purchase decisions it is important to understand different aspect related to it under the focus of present study.

3.3 Consumer Behaviour: Crucial to be a Successful Marketer
The philosophy that marketing strategies rely on a better knowledge of the consumer is to know marketing concept, the marketing concept states that marketers must define first the benefits consumers seek in the marketplace and gear marketing strategies accordingly. Acceptance of this concept has provided the impetus for studying consumer behaviour in the marketing context.4

Consumer behaviour can be defined as “the decision-making process and physical activity involved in acquiring, evaluating, using and disposing of goods and services.”5 Schiffman and Kanuk defined consumer behaviour as “The study of consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, efforts) on consumption related items, it includes the study of what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, and how often they use it.”6

Consumer behaviour may also be defined as “the decision process and physical activity individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and service.”7

Nature of Marketing Operation: Shifting to Customer Orientation
a. Providing spur to consumer behaviour research
b. Creating a more customer-oriented framework for marketing strategies
c. Encouraging measurement of factors that influence consumers to purchase
d. Emphasizing market segmentation
e. Emphasizing product positioning to meet consumer needs
f. Creating greater selectivity in advertising and personal selling
g. Creating more selective media and distribution and retail outlets8
It can be seen from the above list of marketing operation (apart from other points not discussed here) that requires customer orientation among which point a, c, and f are involved for analysis.

3.4 Literature Review on Consumer Buying Behaviour

3.4.1 Understanding Consumer Purchase Decision

(i) Consumer Behavior Model

There has been much research concerning consumer behavior; therefore, an explanation of many different consumer behavior models is extended. The EKB model was first presented by three scholars, Engel, Kollat and Blackwell, in 1968, and also a rather clear, complete, and systematic theory model concerning consumer behavior. The EKB model assumes that a consumer’s decision processing is a consecutive processing which leads to solving problems, and which features considering decision processing as the center of combining interaction of relevant outside and inside elements.

The EKB model has three advantages (Yang, 2001)\(^9\), which includes:

(i) Thoroughness. The EKB model contains fairly complete variables, which are capable of explaining entire processing of consumer behavior.

(ii) It is process oriented. The EKB model has rather relevant variables, which are collected with signs, are easier for researchers to confirm the relationship of variables, and also benefit hypothesis development and research result interpretation.

(iii) The dynamic feature. The EKB model combines many scholars and experts’ opinions towards consumer behavior and performs many revisions; therefore, is considered as a fairly thorough consumer behavior model. The EKB model contains four major parts, which include: information involvement; information processing; decision processing; and variables of decision processing.

(ii) Consumer Purchase Decision

Kotler et al. (1999)\(^10\) point out that, when a consumer makes a purchase decision behavior, there is a primary “stimulation-response” model and the black box concept in behavior science response. Through external stimulation sources, marketing and
environment, it would further affect consumer purchase decisions through the black box (including consumer feature and decision processing).

Engel et al. (1993)\textsuperscript{11} reported that, the center concept of the EKB model means consumer purchase decision processing, and includes five stages: demand confirmation, search for information, evaluation of alternatives, purchasing, and purchasing result.

(iii) Major Variables that Influence Consumer Purchase Decision
Based on the above literature on consumer behavior and consumer purchasing behavior, this research, therefore, uses the following two elements:

(a) Information Search
Summarizing consumer behavior and purchasing behavior from Nicosia (1968)\textsuperscript{12}, Howard (1989)\textsuperscript{13}, Engel et al. (1993), and naming relevant information/news parts as a search for information. When a consumer confirms his/her demand, he/she would start seeking relevant information. That means, a consumer reads about relevant product information through this news, compares differences among different products, and furthermore spends more time on product search (McQuarrie and Muson, 1992)\textsuperscript{14}. In this processing when a consumer purchases a product, information search takes a large part. \textit{Therefore, the present study considers information search as an important element affecting a consumer purchase decision.}

(b) Purchase Decision
In evaluation of alternatives and purchase decision relation map, Kotler et al. (1999) indicate that between evaluation of alternatives and purchase decisions, they would first form of consumer buying behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975)\textsuperscript{15} verify that consumer perception and preferences could be taken as an important index to predict consumer behavior. \textit{Therefore, the paper lays emphasis on both the aspects as it influences the consumer purchase decision.}

(iv) The Relationship between Variables
\textit{The influence of perception/product knowledge on consumer purchase decision}
Research of consumer behavior and product knowledge plays a significant role. During his/her purchasing process, the amount of knowledge consumer has of about a product would not only affect his/her information search behavior (Brucks, 1985; Rao and Sieben, 1992), but also, at the same time, affect his/her information and decision-making processing. Furthermore, it influences the consumer purchasing intention. A consumer's knowledge about a product would determine consumer purchase decisions, and would indirectly affect his/her purchase intention.

Product knowledge
In adopting the reference from Brucks (1985) and Park and Lessig (1981) for their definition about consumer's subjective knowledge, this study defines product knowledge as a consumer's awareness or understanding level.

*The influence of product involvement on the consumer purchase decision*
Friedman and Smith (1993) discover in their research concerning service that when consumer selects a service and his/her involvement increases, he/she will search for further more information. Goldsmith and Emmert (1991) report that product involvement plays an important role in consumer behavior. When his/her involvement level increases, the consumer will search for further information. Petty et al. (1983) adopt the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and discover that high product involvement, brand attitude and purchase intentions have a much higher correlation than that of low product involvement. Neese and Taylor (1994) discover in their research concerning automobiles comparison advertisement that, under a different level of advertise information, high involvement of a product causes a distinctly positive purchase intention, whether in the advertising attitude, brand recognition, and brand attitude, than with a low involvement product.

Consumer purchase decision
In adopting the reference from Solomon (1997) and McQuarrie and Muson (1992) study for their definition of information search, this research defines information search as information search efforts consumer would spend on a specific product or brand. *Consumer purchase intention means the possibility and probability of a consumer's willingness to purchase a specific product (Dodds et al., 1991).*
3.4.2 General Choice Criteria for White Goods
(Based on Pilot and Secondary Study)

The criteria which a buyer employs when selecting a white goods / consumer durable have the following attributes:

- **Technology**: Consumer durables are technology driven. The latest models, innovative features and improved performance levels are a definite attraction for the customer. The consumer's choice today depends on the premium quality and technology provided.

- **Style**: As most of the consumer durables are now a part of kitchen or drawing room furniture, reflecting tastes and lifestyles, the external features play an important role in purchases. The style of durables is turning into a big purchases influencer.

- **Brand Image**: The perception of the consumer about the brand name is becoming critical on account of the huge investment made in buying a consumer durable and its durable nature. With the fast approaching disparity in both technology and prices, brand image is becoming a key purchase influencer.

- **Price**: The market has been very price-sensitive in the past. The intensity has increased as one moved down from the premium segment to the mass consumption range. However, of late consumers have started showing an inclination to buy medium price range products as opposed to low priced products. The consumer is becoming more sophisticated and beginning to recognize the value of premium quality.

- **After Sales Service**: As more and more brands of consumer durables are becoming more or less similar in terms of technology and price, the after-sales service has assumed a major influence in buying decisions. This factor is assuming a key role in the minds of the consumers, as the consumer durables are becoming more and more complex. Moreover, the latest technology requires professional help for full usage. Hence, the consumers are likely to depend more on service support.
3.5 Focus of the Present Study

The share of organized white goods market is gradually rising in India. At this stage, households' in the process of making purchase decision, face many dilemmas one of which is with selection of right brand of product.

Keeping the above background in mind, it is clear that both knowledge of consumer behaviour and its determinants like level of involvement, perception, sources of information, preferences, factors that are considered before purchase decisions are made. This research explores to study the consumer buying behaviour for selected products under white goods in selected cities of Gujarat State with the following objectives:

- To identify status symbols in order of preference of these consumers.
- To identify the proportion of income spent on basic necessities and the amount of income spent on luxuries.
- To identify consumer perception and preference towards brands operating in white goods industry.
- To analyze important factors that influence consumer behavior in the purchase of Colour Television, Home Theater, Washing Machine, Vacuum Cleaner, Refrigerator, Microwave Oven, and Food Processor / Juicer Mixer.
- To identify factors that motivates consumer brand switching.

It will delve into issues like householders' -

- Price recall and ownership pattern of consumers
- Perception about necessities and luxuries
- Spending on luxury vis-à-vis necessities
- Level of involvement (amount of time spent before purchasing such products)
- Perception of different brands operating in specific product category
- Sources of information
- Factors influencing their purchase decisions
- Brand preference for each category of products & Loyalty
- Opinions about sales promotion / exchange offers
- Opinions about factors that motivates for brand change
Therefore, the present study tries to integrate these concepts and practically attempts to study consumer buying behaviour for selected products under white goods by focusing on the above mentioned aspects of consumer behaviour. All these aspects, which have been studied in the present research, are discussed as under:

3.6 The Process of Identification of Variables through Literature Review

3.6.1 Introduction
The first part of this point describes the process of identification of the various demographic/socio-economic variables and second deals with factors that affect consumer buying behaviour which might be important in explaining the ownership of consumer durable products. The variables thus identified have been presented thereafter.

3.6.2 The Variables Identification Process
In order to accomplish the research objectives outlined in Point - 3.5 of the present chapter, the various life style and demographic/socio-economic variables which might be important in explaining the ownership of white goods products were identified. This step was considered important as the variables identified in this step constituted the total universe of variables which were used in the subsequent analysis. At the end of the study, the variables found to be actually important in explaining ownership were identified on the basis of this list of variables. In identifying the important variables, the emphasis was on identifying variables that might be important in the context of a wide range of durables in general rather than on identifying variables relevant for each individual white goods product.

There were two ways in which this list of variables was arrived at:

1. Based on direct conclusions derived from the finding of past research on durables.
2. Logical inferences and deductions made on the basis of
   a. Finding of related or similar studies in the case of non-durable products
b. Findings of isolated studies in the case of durable products themselves, and
c. The characteristics of the products under consideration.

The variables thus identified are presented below along with the following additional details:

(i) a brief description of variables, where necessary
(ii) justification for their being considered potentially relevant variables in terms of
    - the implications for product ownership
    - the implications for marketing decision making
(iii) measurement approaches used in past research for measuring the given variable or group of variables.

3.7 Demographic/Socio-economic Variables

As mentioned above, the list of demographic/socio-economic variables was arrived at mainly on the basis of direct conclusions derived from the findings of past research on durables. The list of demographic/socio-economic variables is as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SPECIFIC VARIABLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I Family Life Cycle Stage | - Age group of respondents (i.e. Head of the family). In Indian context Husband or Elderly Male member  
- Total Family Size  
- No. of Earning Member in Family |
| II Family Income / Expenses | - Family Income (Annual) and,  
- Family Expense (Monthly) |
| III Asset Ownership and Residence Related | - Ownership of Car  
- Ownership of Two-Wheeler  
- Ownership of Computer  
- Mobile Ownership  
- House Ownership Status  
- Credit Card |
| IV Loan Related | - Home Loan  
- Vehicle Loan  
- Education Loan |
| V Education & Occupation | - Education Status (of the main respondent)  
- Occupation (of husband/respondent) |
A brief description of the variables listed in Table - 3.1 are given below:

### 3.7.1 Family Life Style Stage

Family life style stage is one of the variables which has consistently been found to be important in explaining durables ownership. The logic underlying the importance of family life cycle stage as an explanatory variable is that the needs of the individuals and the family as a whole, are likely to vary at each stage of the life cycle and these differences in turn are likely to influence the acquisition and ownership of consumer durable products. Accordingly, variables related to the family life cycle stage, namely, the age, total family size, and number of children was included in the a-priori list.

### 3.7.2 Family Income / Expenses

Family income is another variable which has consistently been found to be important in explaining durables ownership. Therefore, this variable was also included in the a-priori list of important variables.

### 3.7.3 Asset Ownership and Residence Related

The variables relating to ownership of assets and residence were included based on both, the findings of past research and their special relevance in the Indian context. Asset ownership was found to be highly related to durables ownership (Anderson, 1972\(^{25}\); Lansing & Kish, 1957\(^{26}\))

Lansing & Morgan, 1955\(^{27}\); Strober & Weinberg, 1977\(^{28}\) and in particular car ownership (Anderson, 1972; Lansing and Kish, 1957), and home ownership (Lansing & Kish, 1957). Since this study was to be conducted in the Indian context in the state of Gujarat, ownership of other assets, namely, means of personal transport (namely car, two-wheeler, etc.) were included in addition to ownership of mobiles, credit card as these variables serve as indicators of socio-economic status. Ownership of telephone has not been included in the past studies in the Western context because of telephone ownership being close to 100\% in the developed countries. However, in the Indian context, ownership of higher end mobile serves as an indicator of socio-economic status. Home ownership status was considered useful variables both as indicators of the family socio-economic status and as indicators of the minimum infrastructural facilities required for ownership and installation of major durables.
Support for the importance of the ownership of residence in explaining ownership of major durables was found in past studies (Anderson, 1972; Mermet, 1986; Scott, 1976) and was further confirmed in informal discussions with product managers, retailers and homemakers. The type of residence has important implications in terms of availability of space. Lack of space in small over-crowded apartments, particularly in the metros may inhibit acquisition of large durables such as refrigerators, washing machines and televisions. In the Indian context, the availability of electricity (essential for most consumer durables) is also found important. The non-availability or irregular supply of electricity is considered as a hindrance.

Credit card market in India is estimated at 14-20 million according to a recent survey conducted by global management consultant McKinsey. ICICI Bank asserts an average of Rs. 32,000 as annual spends per card (comparable to that of more advanced markets like Taiwan and Malaysia). ICICI Bank, which has more promotions in the pipeline, now claims to add up to 100,000 new customers every month while Citibank adds 80,000 - 90,000 and State Bank of India adds 70,000-75,000 cards per month. The other forms of credit market like automotive loans, housing loans, personal loans, education loans are all expanding.

It is known fact that consumers spend/use this facility to purchase variety of goods and services - the chief among them (for selected segments of consumers) are white goods. In view of the above facts, it was found appropriate to seek information from the householders as to their ownership of credit card.

3.7.4 Loan Related

In present day era, availability of loan has become an important factor in the ownership of consumer durables, for housing and other personal materialistic pleasure. The market is witnessing more and more firms offering loan facility and in many cases the manufacturing consumer durables, white goods, home appliances etc are also involved in the same. There is no doubt that it has actually fostered the spirit of materialism in human beings.
3.7.5 Education and Occupation

Education and occupation of the housewife and husband have important implications for the ownership of white goods products in three important ways:

(i) as indicators of current and future socio-economic status

(ii) as factors influencing awareness of and the ability to handle and maintain new, technologically complex white goods products.

(iii) as factors influencing the availability of time for usage of white goods products.

Thus the above categories of variables have been found to be significant.

3.8 Review of Literature on the Focus / Research Areas

3.8.1 Introduction

It is generally believed that a complex set of parameters involving cultural, personal, socio-economic and psychological factors influence the buying behaviour of the customers (Britanics Online, 2007). Several researchers (Dash et al., 197632; Lumpkin et al., 198533; Bell et al., 199834; and Tang et al., 200135) have established the importance of perceived quality, price-consciousness, pre-purchase information, perceived utility, positioning and advertisement in influencing the buying behaviour of the consumers. In a report on the buying behaviour by Unit Marketing Inc. (2007), stress is laid on the role of demographic and psychographic parameters in influencing the consumer buying behaviour. McGoldrich and Dougles (1983)36, Nilson and Host (1987)37, and Sheth (1981)38 have done substantial work in studying the factors that influence the buying behaviour. Hansen (2000)39 found that well-know foreign brands, country-of-origin, broad product range, competitive prices, terms of payment, marketing promotion and financial support are the significant factors influencing buying behaviour. Also various studies observe that quality, shape, size, color, price and convenience are the factors that influence the customer buying behaviour.

Numerous studies have suggested various parameters which can influence the consumer buying behaviour while going for electronic items. In a study done by Foret (200640 on the consumer buying behaviour with regard to electronic items, it was found that price, product, parameters, quality, curiosity and an effort to try an innovation, package, advertisement, brand and recommendation of other people are
significant factors that affect the buying process. Engel et al. (1990)\textsuperscript{41}, Raman (2003)\textsuperscript{42} and Payne (1982)\textsuperscript{43} have also established the effect of demographic and income related factors on the buying of electronic goods. Verkasalo (2006)\textsuperscript{44} has stressed the importance of awareness, experience and feeling while studying the buying behaviour of high-tech electronic goods.

3.8.2 Price Recall / Awareness

The term price awareness has been used to refer to the ability of buyers to remember prices. Previous studies related to the price-awareness have been carried out as given in the Table - 3.1 indicating the research methods used and its qualitative findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Research Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Price Recall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gabor and Granger (1961)</td>
<td>Interview (home)</td>
<td>Housewives (428)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Progressive Grocer</em> (1974, 1977)</td>
<td>Interview (store)</td>
<td>Shoppers (560, n.a.)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen, Harrell, and Hutt (1976)</td>
<td>Interview (store)</td>
<td>Shoppers (1500)</td>
<td>Exact and relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeithaml (1981, 1982)</td>
<td>Simulated store</td>
<td>Shoppers (160)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeithaml and Fuerst (1983)</td>
<td>Simulated store</td>
<td>Shoppers (160)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinson, Mason, and Paksoy (1976)</td>
<td>Interview (store)</td>
<td>Shoppers (160)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conover (Studies 1 and 2) (1986, 1988) (store)</td>
<td>Interview/experiment</td>
<td>Shoppers (168, 66)</td>
<td>Exact and relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell (1985)</td>
<td>Interview (store)</td>
<td>Shoppers (60)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickson and Sawyer (1986)</td>
<td>Interview (store)</td>
<td>Shoppers (800)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGoldrick and Marks (1987)</td>
<td>Interview (outside store)</td>
<td>Shoppers (214)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna, Currim, and Shoemaker (1991)</td>
<td>Prices Survey</td>
<td>Primary shoppers (400)</td>
<td>Normal price estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbany and Dickson (1991)</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Primary shoppers (59)</td>
<td>Self-perceived knowledge of normal prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kujala and Johnson (1993)</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Shoppers (1608, 1726)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakefield and Inman (1993)</td>
<td>Interview (store)</td>
<td>Shoppers (289)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Boutillier, Le Boutillier, and Neslin (1994)</td>
<td>Interview (store)</td>
<td>Shoppers (235)</td>
<td>Exact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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The review of the above literature brings to fore two important issues namely awareness of the price and estimation or self-perceived knowledge of the prices of the product. As the present study was aimed at finding the existing ownership of selected white goods, it was found pertinent to include a variable to determine householders' awareness about the price (approximate amount of price of the given product) paid for their products / brands owned by them along with brand name and product type. The variable was chosen to find out the level of price recall.

3.8.3 White Goods: Luxury or Necessity

Consumer in a global world is demanding products, which can provide them better value. India's tryst with luxury brands changed gears. With economic liberalization, retail boom and mall culture, high disposable incomes, and consumer preference demand for luxury goods amongst affluent Indians is on the rise and the country is emerging as the next stopover for global luxury brands.

As a result of the spectacular growth of luxury markets over the past ten years, the marketing literature has recently seen substantial interest in the study of prestige brands. Yet, little is known about how to best market and monitor prestige brands. Research in the UK by the market research firm Applied Futures (Powderly and MacNulty 1990) predicted that people's needs for appearances and materialism were increasing and anticipated more in the next millennium. That is, they recognized an increasing demand for conspicuous and status products.

Early research on this topic mainly started last century from work of John Rae (1834), Thorstein Veblen (1899) and Keasbey (1903). Recently the marketing literature has focused its study of luxury brands, specifically in terms of brand extensions (Roux 1995), conflict management between mass-marketing and luxury principles (Bechtold 1991; Roux 1994; Roux and Floch 1996), and measures of attitudes toward the luxury concept (Dubois and Duquesne 1993b; Dubois and

1 In 2002, McKinsey & Co. estimated that the luxury goods market in the world was worth approximately $586 billion. See also, Examples of prestige brands; Louis Vuitton, Porsche, Kenzo, Cartier, Ferrari, Fred, Moet & Chandon, Chanel, Dunhill, Hermes, Christian Dior, Mercedes-Benz, Gucci, Rolex, Versace, Ralph Lauren, Tiffany, Patek Philippe, Mont-Blanc, Lalique, Gianfranco Ferragamo, etc.

2 See also, Sekora (1977), Mason (1981), Castarède (1992), and Berry (1994) for an historical and conceptual view of luxury and prestige.
Laurent 1994). Currently, the luxury market is taking a new direction with unprecedented demand coming from Asian countries, and thus research has focused on the cross-cultural comparison of attitudes toward the luxury concept (Dubois and Laurent 1996; Dubois and Paternault 1997) and the comparison of motivations between Asian and Western societies (Wong and Ahuvia 1998). However, these studies have focused on only some aspects of status-seeking consumer behavior.

There is little literature on the topic reported in scientific journals" (Andrus, Silver, and Johnson 1986). The reasons for the diverse definitions and measures of prestige are perhaps due to the different applications of the term prestige3.

Defining the Luxury Concept

The term — luxury is routinely used in our everyday life to refer to products, services or a certain lifestyle, however, often without a clear understanding of the luxury concept as it takes on many different forms for different people and is dependent on the mood and experience of the consumer: Luxury is particularly slippery to define. A strong element of human involvement, very limited supply and the recognition of value by others are key component (Cornell 2002, p. 47)46. Luxury is the appendage of the ruling classes (Kapferer 1997, p. 253)47. Whereas necessities are utilitarian objects that relieve an unpleasant state of discomfort, luxuries are characterized as objects of desire that provide pleasure (Berry 1994)48 and as — non-essential items or services that contribute to luxurious living; an indulgence or convenience beyond the indispensable minimum (Webster's Third New International Dictionary 2002). Defined as goods for which the simple use or display of a particular branded product brings esteem for the owner, luxury goods enable consumers to satisfy psychological and functional needs. Above all these psychological benefits can be regarded as the main factor distinguishing luxury from non-luxury products or counterfeits (Arghavan

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3 A review and attempt to reconcile the accounts from the literature of economics, marketing and psychology show a general lack of consensus relating to the definition of prestige. Prestige in different areas leads to different definitions, and each discipline may have its specific definition concerning the concept of prestige.

- Economists have used luxury instead of prestige in comparisons between luxuries and necessities (e.g., Besley 1989).
- Marketing textbooks suggest the concept of prestige, when an organization is planning to position a product as high quality or exclusive; "prestige pricing is setting a rather high price to suggest high quality or high status" (McCarthy and Perreault 1987, 506).
- Finally, social psychologists have long been using the concept of prestige to study the effect of group forces on the formation and change of opinions and attitude.
and Zaichkowsky 2000)\textsuperscript{49}. In the literature on luxury, a concept of exclusivity or rarity is well documented (Pantzalis 1995)\textsuperscript{50}. Luxury brands can be defined as those whose price and quality ratios are the highest of the market (McKinsey 1990)\textsuperscript{51} and even though the ratio of functionality to price might be low with regard to certain luxury goods, the ratio of intangible and situational utility to price is comparatively high (Nuño and Quelch 1998)\textsuperscript{52}. Therefore, luxury brands compete on the ability to evoke exclusivity, brand identity, brand awareness and perceived quality in the consumer's perspective (Phau and Prendergast 2000)\textsuperscript{53}. Thus, a definition of luxury should not follow a narrow but rather an integrative understanding of the luxury concept, as luxury is a subjective and multidimensional construct. For the purposes of this study, we follow the luxury brand definition of Vigneron and Johnson (1999)\textsuperscript{54} as the highest level of prestigious brands encompassing several physical and psychological values.

**Dimensions of Luxury Value Perception**

Concerning the motives for consuming luxury brands, it has to be stated that the notion of—buying to impress others, still more or less serves as a strategic principle for the marketing management of luxury brands (Berry 1994; Dittmar 1994\textsuperscript{55}; Corneo and Jeanne 1997\textsuperscript{56}; Vigneron and Johnson 1999, 2004\textsuperscript{57}; O'Cass and Frost 2002)\textsuperscript{58}. According to the theory of impression management, consumers are highly affected by the internal drive to create a favorable social image from the outcome of their purchase behavior (Eagly and Chaiken 1993\textsuperscript{59}; Mandrik 1996\textsuperscript{60}; Sallot 2002\textsuperscript{61}). Existing research demonstrates that behavior varies between different people depending on their susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Bourne 1957\textsuperscript{62}; Mason 1981\textsuperscript{63}; Bearden and Etzel 1982\textsuperscript{64}; Horiuchi 1984\textsuperscript{65}; Bushman 1993\textsuperscript{66}; Pantzalis 1995). However, following a broader perspective in exploring the customer's perception of and the motives for purchasing luxury brands, it is not sufficient to explain the whole picture of consumption in the luxury market with socially oriented consumers' motives (e.g., Hansen 1998\textsuperscript{67}; Wong and Ahuvia 1998\textsuperscript{68}; Vigneron and Johnson 1999, 2004; Wong et al. 1999; Gentry et al. 2001\textsuperscript{69}; Puntoni 2001\textsuperscript{70}; Roth 2001\textsuperscript{71}; Miquel et al. 2002\textsuperscript{72}; Coulter et al. 2003\textsuperscript{73}).

While the consumption of prestige or status products involves purchasing a higher-priced product to embellish one's ego (Eastman et al. 1997)\textsuperscript{74}, the term—luxury and
the consumption of luxury goods involves purchasing a product that represents value to both, to the individual and their reference group. To explain consumers' behavior in relation to luxury brands, apart from interpersonal aspects like snobbery and conspicuousness (Leibenstein 1950; Mason 1992), personal aspects such as hedonist and perfectionist motives (Dubois and Laurent 1994) as well as situational conditions (e.g., economic, societal, and political factors) have to be taken into consideration (Vigneron and Johnson 1999, 2004).

Table - 3.3
Research Used to Define Luxury — Necessity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORS</th>
<th>CONSPICUOUSNESS</th>
<th>QUALITY</th>
<th>EXTENDED-SELF</th>
<th>HEDONISM</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veblen (1899)</td>
<td>Conspicuous consumption</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Upper-class</td>
<td>Leisure class</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leibenstein (1950)</td>
<td>Vilen effect</td>
<td>Snob effect</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Leisure class</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bearden &amp; Etzel (1982)</td>
<td>Conspicuousness</td>
<td>Exclusivity</td>
<td>Publicly consumed</td>
<td>Privately consumed</td>
<td>Necessary to the good life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herluchy (1984)</td>
<td>Must-expensive of their category</td>
<td>Limited production</td>
<td>High-status values</td>
<td>Stout who you are</td>
<td>Provide intrinsic enjoyment and satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rossiter &amp; Percy (1987)</td>
<td>High involvement</td>
<td>Conspicuous brand</td>
<td>Social approval</td>
<td>Personal recognition</td>
<td>Sensory gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richins (1994)</td>
<td>Conspicuous</td>
<td>Expensive</td>
<td>Social status</td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>Sensual satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubois &amp; Laurent (1994 &amp; 1995)</td>
<td>Very Expensive</td>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Better quality</td>
<td>Rival who you are</td>
<td>Hedonic motives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantzalis (1995)</td>
<td>Setting high prices</td>
<td>Status symbol</td>
<td>Exclusivity</td>
<td>Aspirational goals</td>
<td>Hedonic experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubois &amp; Pantermaai (1997)</td>
<td>Expensiveness</td>
<td>Exclusive status</td>
<td>Extreme quality</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Hedonic value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As a general rule, prestige products have been used as an example of extreme-end high-involvement decision making. The assumption is that prestige products are infrequently purchased, require a higher level of interest and knowledge, and strongly relate to the person self-concept. For instance, Rossiter, Percy, and Donovan (1991) stated that the distinction between high and low involvement was dichotomous rather
than continuous, and presented a second dimension operationalized as "informational-transformational. Their framework reasonably assumes that prestige products are high-involvement products, and that transformational brand choices (i.e., sensory gratification, intellectual stimulation, and particularly social approval) are the primary factors in selecting a prestige product. Although the involvement model is useful to distinguish prestige products from normal products, it does not significantly differentiate the level of prestige among prestige brands (Horiuchi 1984).

Figure - 3.1
Prestige Brand Category

In this research, the level of involvement is operationalized by seeking information as to the sources of information referred by the households before making their choice decision. Brands can further be categorized as prestigious; up-market brands, premium brands, and luxury brands, respectively in an increasing order of prestige. The "luxury" relates to the extreme-end of the prestige-brand category. Hence, it was expected that people would have different perceptions of the level of prestige for the same brands, and that the overall prestige level of a brand would consider the prestige perceptions from different people.

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4 The reference on the transformational versus informational distinction used by Rossiter and Percy (1987) was originally proposed by Wells, and developed in a paper by Puto and Wells (1984). (a) informational or "reason why", negative motivations which reduce or remove the problem, by providing solution or information, and (b) transformational which focuses on positive motivations, i.e., may improve the sensory gratification or social approval state of the purchaser or user.

5 Horiuchi (1984) observed that it made intuitive sense to classify luxury products as high involvement rather than low involvement. However, his work contributed to demonstrate that "the consumer decision-making process in the luxury goods market does not follow the high-involvement decision-making process of consumer behavior, although the high-involvement model is generally assumed to be applicable to both luxury goods and mass-produced high-quality goods" (Horiuchi 1984, 165). "On the other hand, when a product is very good but has not quite achieved the status of a luxury good, consumers seem to consider it as one of the mass-market, high-quality brands. In such a case, the high-involvement decision-making process does seem to apply" (Horiuchi 1984, 171). However, Horiuchi (1984) identified a third model that he called "M4-P", which indicated a decision-making process almost irrational, casual, having an impulsive-purchase nature. This latter result supports the argument that luxury products are often bought for non-functional reasons and perhaps only serve the purpose of pleasing oneself and/or impressing others.
3.8.4 Level of Involvement – Information Search

Information search

This means when the consumer faces many consuming relevant questions, he/she requires relevant information to assist with his/her consuming decision. This type of search of appropriate information procedure is called information search (Solomon, 1997).77

Customer Involvement

Consumer involvement is one of the moderating factors influencing the reactions of marketing stimuli. Rothschild (1984) defined it as an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest. It is evoked by a particular stimulus or situation and has drive properties. Its consequences are types of searching, information processing and decision making. There are numerous forms of consumer involvement which have evolved over years like ego involvement, enduring involvement, felt involvement and so on. A few researchers have classified consumers as low and high, a few classified products as high and low and a few have categorized situations as low and high. Dimensions like perceived risk, personal relevance, motivation, learning and memory, personality and so on have been tagged to the concept. However, the dominant view lies with the perceived personal relevance concept. Kavita Sharma (2000) defines consumer involvement as the perceived personal relevance of the product, which, mediates and acts as an important directive factor, motivating the consumer to act with deliberation to maximize benefits and minimize risk involved in purchase and use of the product. This debate clearly shows how the concept of consumer involvement in the form of information search through different sources is evolving as a concept.

Involvement and Purchasing Involvement

Involvement, as related to this research, comprises both purchase and ego involvement. Purchase involvement is defined as "the level of concern for or interest in the purchase process that is triggered by the need to consider a particular purchase." Thus, purchase involvement consists of the time, effort, and costs invested in making a purchase, including any internal and external research that may precede the transaction.78

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Purchasing Involvement (PI) has been one of the central issues in consumer behaviour, literature as it can be important mediator of consumer behaviour, which can fundamentally influence the consumers' evaluation processes on certain objects (Mitchell, 1981)\textsuperscript{79}.

Researchers have made significant efforts to define and describe PI. Cohen (1983)\textsuperscript{80} emphasizes the plurality of views that co-exist in the relevant literature regarding its meaning. Indeed, it is a concept which is often described as a pot pourri of ideas (Laurent and Kapferer, 1985; and Mittal and Lee, 1989)\textsuperscript{81}.

Mittal and Lee (1989)\textsuperscript{82} summarize some of the useful involvement definitions, including: “Involvement is said to reflect the extent of personal relevance of the decision to the individual in terms of her basic values, goals and self-concept (Engel and Blackwell, 1982)\textsuperscript{83}. “Involvement is an internal state variable and indicates the amount of arousal, interest or drive evoked by a particular stimulus or situation (Mitchell, 1979 and 1981)”\textsuperscript{84}.

Kassarjin (1981)\textsuperscript{85} has stated that it is, “undeniable that there are differences between individuals which, regardless of the product or situation, make some people more interested, concerned or involved in the consumer decision process”.

Product Involvement

Product involvement is an important construct in consumer behavior and has received considerable theoretical and empirical examination dating back to the work of Sherif and Hoveland (1961)\textsuperscript{*1} on social judgment theory. The construct has since been adopted in the field of consumer behavior by investigating the role of involvement in consumers’ purchase behavior and decision making (Funk et al. 2004)\textsuperscript{**2}. The centrality of the involvement construct in the marketing literature is a result of its potential role in various aspects of consumers’ cognitive and behavioral responses such as information search, information processing, preference and decision making (Josiam et al. 2004)\textsuperscript{86}.*1, **2.
From the above literature, the following relevant variables have been identified:

(i) Family & Friends
(ii) Actual User
(iii) Expert's Opinions
(iv) Retailers
(v) Advertising

This will enable the researcher to find the amount of time or points of information that the consumer / householders spend or contacts before purchasing the product or brand. The present research assumes that households will generally spend more time or try to contact more points of reference before purchasing these products.

Family & Friends
Relatively little effort has gone into studying the consumer purchase decision processes in Indian families. Given that India is one of the world's largest consumer markets and is an emerging world economic champion too, this market presents a potentially vast untapped source for research and business. Who within the Indian family has influence during the various stages of the family purchase decision-making process? Does this influence vary by stage of the decision process or by type of purchase decision? or whether family is taken into consideration at all levels. Such questions are fundamental to understanding of influence of family on purchase decision.

Actual User
The relevance of understanding consumer information processing strategies has been well established (Bettman 1979\textsuperscript{87}; Wright 1975\textsuperscript{88}). One important question involving processing strategies is whether product attributes are reviewed, evaluated, and combined to yield an overall evaluation, or whether some simpler processes mediate final judgments and choices. Categorization research (Cohen 1982\textsuperscript{89}; Fiske 1982\textsuperscript{90}; Medin and Smith 1984\textsuperscript{91}; Mervis and Rosch 1981\textsuperscript{92}; Rosch 1975\textsuperscript{93}; Smith and Medin 1981\textsuperscript{94}) provides a theoretical basis for approaching this issue, suggesting that consumers' prior knowledge plays an important role in determining the types of evaluation processes mediating final judgments. It is clear that consumer will be
speaking irrespective about the type (favorable or unfavorable) of experiences and consequently try to provide the much needed inputs for the others.

**Expert Consumer / Opinion - Effect of Experts**

Experts may be of two types namely consumer and experts in the related field. Expertise is likely to have an independent effect on evaluation processes. Cognitive response studies have found that certain types of cognitive responses are accessible only to subjects who have a well developed knowledge base (Edell and Mitchell 1978\textsuperscript{95}; Wright 1975\textsuperscript{96}; Wright and Rip 1980\textsuperscript{97}). These studies indicate that attribute-oriented thoughts may be more difficult for less knowledgeable subjects. Given the extended knowledge structures upon which experts can draw who may also be consumers, it also seems likely that compared to novice consumers, knowledgeable consumers would produce more total responses to communication (Edell and Mitchell 1978).

The difference between expert and novice consumers in the number and type of thoughts does not necessarily imply a difference in response times. Since experts may have stronger associations between concepts in memory (e.g., Anderson 1982\textsuperscript{98}), it is likely that they can generate more total thoughts and more attribute-oriented thoughts compared to novices without necessarily spending more time. Evidence also suggests that experts can take longer or shorter times than novices to process information, depending on the judgment (Fiske and Taylor 1982). Therefore, *no predictions are made for response time*. Experts and novices may also differ in the number of simple evaluative statements generated to a communication.

The results provide substantial evidence that evaluation processes are contingent upon consumers' prior knowledge and the match of information to this knowledge base. The effects of expertise are rather clear. When information matches category-based knowledge, knowledgeable consumers or experts do influence purchase decisions.

**Retailers Opinion**

The marketing function depends heavily on the presence of intermediaries between the producer and the consumer. The retailer is perhaps the most important type of intermediary, who is in direct contact with customers (Seth and Sisiodia, 1997).
According to Ingene & Lusch (1981), the actual structure of any line of retail trade is founded upon the behavioural patterns of consumers as well as the marketing actions of retailers. It is assumed that the householders will consult retailers in their purchase decision process and would spend considerable time for the same.

Advertising

The importance of advertising as a transforming market force in the United States has been well established (Laird 1998; Norris 1990). Moreover, although some consumers are ambivalent about advertising, it serves as a significant source of product knowledge and brand information in consumer decision-making in mature market economies (Pollay and Mittal 1993; Shavitt, Lowrey, and Haefner 1998).

The present research identifies family as one unit of household that would have been consulted to or which could have influenced the purchase / selection of white goods products.

3.8.5 Brand Awareness and Perception

Brand Awareness

Arnold notes that “Branding is ...inextricably linked with the central principles of marketing. Marketing is about understanding two levels of demand: needs, which define the boundaries and the critical success factors of a market; and wants, the ‘extras’ which are valued by consumers and are used by them to differentiate between alternative products. Branding is concerned primarily with this second level, where customer perceptions from the basis of the relationship between customer and product.”

A brand is been defined as, “an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added values that match their needs most closely” (Freire and Caldwell, 2004).

It is more than just the sum of its component parts; it embodies additional attributes that are intangible but are very real. A brand is an intangible asset for any company; and because it is intangible, its value is more, as it is always difficult to build something intangible. A brand is a perceived image that resides in the minds of
consumers (Davis, 1995)\textsuperscript{106}. It is a set of expectations and associations evoked from experience with a company or product (Davis, 2002)\textsuperscript{107}. It is the aura that surrounds a product or service that communicates its benefits and differentiates it from its competitors for the consumer (Ellwood, 2002)\textsuperscript{108}.

Brand awareness relates to creating in consumers, the awareness about a brand. It is generally performed during the pre-launch period, i.e. before the brand is actually launched. However, it has to be continued even after the brand has been launched, in order to ensure ‘top-of-mind recall’. It is evaluated by using the techniques of brand recall (aided) and brand recognition / rating (Keller, 2003)\textsuperscript{109}.

According to Keller (1993)\textsuperscript{110}, brand awareness is a necessary condition for the creation of a brand image. When a brand is well established in memory, it is easier to attach associations to the brand and establish them firmly in memory.

Brand awareness is the consumer’s ability to identify a brand under different conditions (Keller, 2003). This can take the form of brand recognition and brand recall.

Without brand awareness there is no brand equity. Awareness is the necessary condition for brand familiarity, brand preference (or disliking), brand loyalty and also for trial, etc. (Lockshin and Spawton, 2001)\textsuperscript{111}. Brand awareness is an important component of brand equity across all conceptualizations of the construct for products (Keller, 1993) and for services (Kayaman and Arasli, 2007)\textsuperscript{112}.

Brand recognition assumes prior exposure to the brand. When given a cue, consumers are likely to correctly identify the brand as being previously seen or heard. Consumers might recognize many brands but only recall a small number; sometimes even only one brand. Brand recognition is therefore considered as the minimum level of brand awareness and is based on aided recall – providing cue in the questionnaire itself by way of asking about the brand name or persuading for rating of specific brand (Holden, 1993\textsuperscript{113}; Laurent et al., 1995\textsuperscript{114}).
Customer Perception

Individual act and react on the basis of their perceptions, not on the basis of objective reality. Thus, perceptions are much more important. Perception can be described as “How we see the world around us”. Perception is defined as the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli in to a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Customers are individuals, and each customer perceives things differently in the same situation.

Perception of the product is more important than the product itself and product perceptions manifest themselves in brands. Some brands tend to have a very strong influence in the marketplace and that is the reason they have been considered as one of the most important elements of a firm’s marketing strategy.

At a time when customers have far many choices than they can even remember and each company trying hard to create a niche for itself in the market, it is only the magic word of ‘brand’ which acts as a retreat for any company from all the other ‘me too’ competitors. That is the reason why a brand is considered as one of the most important assets for a company in the consumer market.

Brand has been around for centuries as a means to distinguish goods of one producer from those of another. Defining a brand is actually creating a certain amount of awareness, reputation, prominence etc. in the marketplace (Keller, 2003). Brand is something that resides in the minds of consumers. A brand is a perception and perhaps an idiosyncrasy of consumers.

Brand image/ Perception can be defined as the perception about a brand as reflected by the cluster of associations that consumers connect to the brand name in memory (Rio and azquez, 2001). The greater the consistency between the brand image and the consumer’s self image, the better the consumer’s evaluation of a brand and the greater his intension to buy it (Graeff, 1996; Hogg et al., 2000).

Marketing has been defined as an exchange process, in which something of “Value” is exchanged. (Kotler, 1972; Bagozzi, 1975; Hunt, 1991). Though the value concept is at the heart of marketing; the concept has been vaguely understood by
many as has been found by various researchers (Zeithaml, 1988; Holbrook, 1994; Woodruff & Gardial, 1996; Flint, 2002). For the marketer, understanding these different meanings has great importance, in his endeavor to understand and influence consumption behaviour of customers and for a marketing research this is important for the strong theoretical foundations of the disciplines.

To date, an exact definition of customer perception / value has been elusive to researchers. The ambiguity of customer value is well reflected in various definitions given by researchers. Zeithaml (1988) provides one of the most widely cited definitions of customer value as “the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (may be information through mass communication or others)” (p. 14). This definition is highly abstract and encompassing, implying that value judgments are something more than mere price-quality comparisons.

In marketing the initial ideas of customer value are drawn from the value research in behavioral sciences and economics. Different terms used interchangeably are:


**Antecedents of Customer Perception**

Consumers’ perceptions are enhanced with increasing levels of quality they perceive and lowered with increasing levels of sacrifice they feel. Although empirical investigations support this linear relationship (Dodds et al., 1991; Zeithaml, 1988), whether the influence of both determinants (i.e., quality and sacrifice) is symmetric is unclear. In the traditional value framework, perceived quality serves as a mediator of the effects of many extrinsic cues on perceived (or customer) value (see Jacoby, Olson, & Haddock, 1971; Szybilko & Jacoby, 1974; Valenzi & Andrews, 1971). Consumers’ judgments of quality, for example, are likely to be affected by the quality suggested by such extrinsic cues as brand name and price (Dodds et al., 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). Consumers tend to infer product quality from extrinsic cues,
particularly when they have limited product knowledge or limited product familiarity (Rao & Monroe, 1988). Researchers have also identified brand name, price, store name/image, and country of origin as extrinsic cues to (quality) perceptions (Curry & Riesz, 1988; Dodds et al., 1991; Rao & Monroe, 1989; Teas & Agarwal, 1997; Wheatley & Chiu, 1977; Zeithaml, 1988).

A user's perception is also influenced by personal characteristics. These include the consumer's age and stage in the life cycle, occupation, economic circumstances, lifestyle and personality and self-concept.

_Hence, the present research seeks to elicit households' brand awareness by providing a clue in terms of brand name itself and persuading them to rate each brand according their perception._

### 3.8.6 Sources of Information / Consumer Knowledge

Consumers acquire information to reduce uncertainty and risk in purchasing decisions (Cox & Rich, 1964). The influence on an individual to select a product or store depends on the communication of information from sources to the individual (Rabolt & Drake, 1985).

Researchers have used several different ways to categorize information sources. Engel et al. (1995) classified information sources as personal (e.g., friend, mother, salespeople) and impersonal (e.g., mass media, retailers' sales promotions). Cox (1967) categorized information sources as market-dominated sources (e.g., newspaper ads, television/radio commercials, salespeople), neutral sources (e.g., magazines and consumer reports), and personal sources (e.g., family and friends).

Several researchers have conducted studies to examine householders' information sources. Moore and Moschis (1978) found that householders tended to rely on personal sources for information on products involving high socioeconomic and performance risk, but they rely on media for acquiring first hand information on products.
Consumers need different types of information at each step of the buying process in order to proceed to the next step (Lihra et al., 2006). This information may be obtained through different communication channels (Van Dijk et al., 2007). The Steps in consumer decision making includes (i) Activation, (ii) Search, (iii) Evaluation, (iv) Selection, and (v) Transaction (Source: Adapted from Solomon et al. (2002)). Consumers may seek information from one or more channels at each step of the buying process.

On the basis of the above literature review it was found appropriate to include the variables that are generally referred to by the households in search of their preferred product or brand. They are as follows:

(i) Friends & Family
(ii) Neighbours
(iii) Relatives
(iv) Advertising
(v) Web Sites
(vi) Newspapers & Magazines
(vii) Displays
(viii) Sales Persons
(ix) Trade Fairs
(x) Exhibitions
(xi) Rating Organization
(xii) Word-of-Mouth

*Friends & Family, Neighbours, and Relatives*

The family has been considered as a powerful influencer in consumer behaviour. However, its effects on the brand equity formation have been scarcely analyzed. In fact, only Moore et al. (2002) have directly addressed such effects. As outlined by these authors, the family may have a considerable influence on the consumer-brand relationship. Thus, the family puts the individual in contact with brands consumed at home, providing a higher knowledge of those brands. Moreover, those brands may be linked to family a memory, which provides an emotional meaning (Olsen, 1993; Fournier, 1998).
Individuals often turn to their families for advice when buying a product, given that they consider their parents as a close and reliable reference (Shah and Mittal, 1997; Feltham, 1998).

Since the 1970s, studies consistently indicated that friends have become the most important information source. Moore and Moschis (1978) found that householders tend to rely more on friends.

**Advertising, Newspapers & Magazines and Websites**

Consumer knowledge is of central importance to examining and understanding consumer behavior. Many studies have focused on the assessment and calibration of knowledge, as well as the antecedents of knowledge (Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Ratchford 2001). Research in developed market economies consistently has established that consumers derive knowledge from multiple information sources, including advertising / newspapers & magazines (Arndt 1968), personal search (Alba and Hutchinson 1987; Beatty and Smith 1987; Srinivasan and Ratchford 1991), influential others (Dichter 1966), and product experience (Hoch and Deighton 1989; Kempf and Smith 1998). The literature review by the authors suggests that television & print advertising might drive a consumer. (Najjar et al., 2001). More recent studies have also concluded that people quite often use websites for product information.

**Sales Persons**

Sales Persons, similar to brands, are known to possess images (Chowdhury et al., 1998; Steenkamp and Wedel, 1991). An image is a set of the associations (organized in a meaningful way) in consumers’ minds (Keller, 1993, p. 109). Just as consumers develop associations between a brand and its attributes and the benefits perceived from the brand (Krishnan, 1996), so too would they have associations towards a sales persons / retailer based on the attributes of the sales persons and the benefits perceived from them.

The limited amount of visits to shops or stores which is usually noted in studies of search behavior (Udell, 1966; Alderson and Sessions, 1962; Newton and Gilmore, 1969; Bucklin, 1966; William and Dardis, 1972) may lead to the
conclusion that they are not useful sources of information. However, in the video study, shopping, specifically window shopping was the second major information source after friends and relatives (Fletcher, 1987). Respondents had a poor opinion of sales persons' knowledge or veracity and were generally not consulted until the final stages of the decision process, and even then had little influence.

The contradictory points from the outcome of the earlier studies provides the much needed platform to research upon the influence exerted by sales person's in consumer purchase decision.

Displays, Trade Fairs and Exhibitions

Despite the general belief among manufacturers and retailers that special point-of-purchase (POP) displays increase sales across a number of product and store categories (Croft 1995; Tonkin 1997), few universal rules regarding the effectiveness of POP displays appear in the literature. POP displays generally increase sales of the featured brand (Grover and Srinivasan 1992; McKinnon, Kelly, and Robison 1981), although the effect varies across product categories (Curhan 1974; Wilkinson, Mason, and Paksoy 1982) and, in some cases, fails to emerge (Kumar and Leone 1988). Furthermore, the increase in sales of the featured brand tends to boost sales for the product category (Chevalier 1975-76; Gagnon and Osterhaus 1985), although within-category brand substitution may attenuate the effect on overall category sales (Bronnenberg and Wathieu 1996; Vilecassim and Jain 1991).

Even though trade fairs, exhibitions and expositions are not new, their evolution to the present status is quite remarkable. Moreover, growth and development of revolutionary technologies such as Internet and Web brought many changes in how these events are planned and conducted. Trade fairs are market events of a specific duration, held at intervals, at which a large number of companies present and predominantly attract huge masses that are attracted by offers and incentives. It facilitates two-way communications and hence are more effective against the other traditional methods of advertisements.
Word of mouth (WOM) is commonly defined as informal communication about the characteristics of a business or a product which occurs between consumers (Westbrook, 1987). Most importantly, it allows consumers to exert both informational and normative influences on the product evaluations and purchase intentions of fellow consumers (Bone, 1995).

The popular press contains many examples of companies attempting to harness the reputed power of WOM advertising. Numerous managerial-oriented articles and books suggest ways of encouraging positive WOM, an indication of the importance of WOM to practitioners. Among the various approaches, one finds “grassroots marketing” (Deal and Abel 2001), “viral marketing”, or simply “buzz marketing” (Kelly 2000; Rosen 2000). The basic idea behind WOM is that information about products, services, stores, companies, and so on can spread from one consumer to another. In its broadest sense, WOM communication includes any information about a target object (e.g., company, brand) transferred from one individual to another either in person or via some communication medium.

Word-of-mouth communication (WOMC) is an important marketplace phenomenon by which consumers receive information relating to organizations and their offerings, Laczniak, DeCarlo and Ramaswami (2001). Because WOMC usually occurs through sources that consumers view as being credible (i.e. peers, reference groups), it is thought to have a more powerful influence on consumers’ evaluations than information received through commercial messages.

Research generally supports the claim that WOM is more influential on behavior than other marketer-controlled sources (e.g. advertising). WOM has been shown to influence awareness, expectations, perceptions, attitudes, behavioral intentions and behavior. In particular, a further determinant of brand trust is WOM communication. Many researchers (Dolinsky, 1994; Fournier, 1998; Iglesias et al., 2001; Martin, 1996; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Reichheld and Schefter, 2000; Tractinsky et al., 1999; Ward and Lee, 2000) found that WOM communication affects brand trust.
Word-of-mouth, both for positive and negative referrals, can be very powerful, often more powerful than the planned communication from marketing organizations (Kotler, Armstrong, Brown & Adam 2001, p. 535). This power is reflected in the impact word-of-mouth communications can have on the consumer purchasing process (Richins 1983; Furse, Punj & Stewart 1984; Price & Feick 1984; Brown & Reingen 1987). WOM communications have a high diffusion rate (Engel et al. 1969).

**Rating Organization**

The study of buying behaviour, brand building and brand/credit rating in transitional economies has generated great interest in marketing issues, and specifying consumer behaviours. India is not an exception. Issues like creation and maintenance of brand and strategy formulation are receiving increasing attention from both scholars and practitioners. Independent agencies based on their set criteria have started rating brands/organizations. Not many researches have been carried out in this direction and so are not generalizable. However, the present research tries to understand its relevance in the post-modern era which is marked with consumerism and concepts of assets-based view.

*Therefore, all the above variables were included to identify households’ prominent sources of information.*

**3.8.7 Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase**

A fundamental problem still confuses research in this area is that of defining influences (Kohli and Zaltman, 1988; Mangleburg, 1990). In particular, the distinction between direct and indirect influence is problematic. Direct influence represents an "active role based directly on the decision maker’s own needs, and indirect influence represents a passive role in which the decision maker takes another family member’s needs indirectly into account" (Rossiter 1978, p. 425).

Lichtenstein Donald R, (1997); Eric Berkowitz, (1980) discuss the importance of contextual influences on consumer perceptions and decision making in their respective studies. (Eric Berkowitz, 1980) in their study highlight how contextual
variables like comparison cues (product features), store / brand image, sales people’s opinion, and respondent characteristics can influence, how consumers will perceive different messages and respond to several marketing activities.

Akerlof (1970) suggested some factors that influenced consumer purchasing. These are guarantee, brand name reputation, chain management, and licensing practices. It also helped consumers to counter information asymmetry. A growing body of evidence from literature suggests various parameters such as price (Skitovskay, 1945; Jacoby and Olson, 1985; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Sjolander, 1992), market share (Phillips et al., 1983; Hellofs and Jacobson, 1999), word-of-mouth (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Reingen and Kernan, 1986; Rosen and Olshavsky, 1987) brand name (Andrews and Valenzi, 1971), reputation (Shapiro, 1982) and advertising (Kirmani, 1990, 1997; Abernethy and Butler, 1992; Moorthy and Zhao, 2000). Tellis and Fornell (1988), Tellis (1988), Tellis et al. (2005) and Iyer et al. (2005) discussed advertising as a market instrument. Consumers seem to be forming their quality perceptions through different mechanisms for durable goods and nondurable goods (Moorthy and Zhao, 2000).

In view of the above research studies conducted over last many decades and keeping in mind the context of present research, the variables that were screened and identified. The factors that influences consumer buying behaviour includes the following:

(i) Advertisement
(ii) After Sales Services
(iii) Availability of Information
(iv) Availability of the Product
(v) Brand Image
(vi) Electricity Consumption
(vii) Family Influence
(viii) Friends / Relatives Opinion
(ix) House – Space consideration
(x) Image of the Retailer
(xi) Offers – Like Discount / Exchange Schemes
As Bake (1975)\textsuperscript{210} says: "...it has been shown that advertising can influence attitudes and ... predispose people to behave in a particular way..."

The impact of advertising on consumer attitudes and brand equity and consequently purchase decision has been studied extensively. The power of advertising in building strong brands has been proposed by marketing practitioners (e.g. Martin, 1989)\textsuperscript{211} and academics (Aaker, 1991; 1996).\textsuperscript{212} By building a strong position in the market, advertising allows a firm to influence consumers' awareness, recall and preferences and hence command higher prices for its products, and thus increase profits. This rationale is borne out by studies on the effects of advertising on consumer attitudes (e.g., Alden et al., 1999\textsuperscript{213}; Wansink and Ray!, 1996\textsuperscript{214}). Aaker (1991) and Shimp (1997)\textsuperscript{215}. The impact of advertising spending on advertising can generate favorable consumer attitudes towards the advertised product.

**Availability of Information**

Availability of information or product knowledge plays an important role in the research of consumer behavior; therefore, it is an essential research subject in related fields. Brucks (1985)\textsuperscript{216} states that, "product knowledge is based on memories available or known to consumers". Lin and Zhen (2005)\textsuperscript{217} assert that product knowledge depends on consumer’s awareness or understanding about the product, or consumer’s confidence about it. Based on a definition availability of information or product knowledge, it can be divided into three major categories: (i) subject knowledge or perceived knowledge; (ii) objective knowledge; and (iii) experience-based knowledge. However, Alba and Hutchinson (1987)\textsuperscript{218} indicate it as ‘familiarity with products’.
During the purchasing process, the amount of knowledge consumer has of about a product would not only affect his/her information search behavior (Brucks, 1985; Rao and Sieben, 1992), but also, at the same time, affect his/her information and decision-making processing. Furthermore, it influences the consumer purchasing intention. Zhu (2004) indicates that when a consumer selects a product, he/she usually evaluates it based on his/her understanding of it, and his/her understanding would affect consumer information search processing, attitude, and information search quantity. A consumer’s knowledge about a product would determine consumer purchase decisions, and would indirectly affect his/her purchase intention.

*Availability of the Product*

With the availability of more variety, customers get more options to select and take the best decision. Therefore, generally customers prefer in-depth variety for a particular brand.

Stock outs or non-availability of a particular brand; obviously affect a consumer’s purchase decision. The consumer then must decide whether to buy the same brand but at another store, switch brands, delay the purchase and buy the desired brand later at the same store, or forgo the purchase altogether. In addition, the consumer’s verbal behaviours and attitudes may change.

*Brand Image*

It is defined as the biased (non-random) behavioral response (re-purchase, referral, price sensitivity) expressed over time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of brands and is a function of psychological processes (Thiele and Bennett, 2001).

Brand image is based on the association of the brand with its consumers (Martinez and Cheratonu, 2004). Brand personality is an essential component of brand image that helps create brand equity (Batra et al, 1993; Biel, 1993). Brand image consists of three essential features (Plummer, 1985):

1. Physical attributes
2. Functional characteristics and
3. Characterization or personality
Brand image can be defined as the perception about a brand as reflected by the cluster of associations that consumers connect to the brand name in memory (Rio and Vazquez, 2001). The greater the consistency between the brand image and the consumer's self image, the better the consumer's evaluation of a brand and the greater his intention to buy it (Graeff, 1996; Hogg et al., 2000).

From the above discussion it can be seen that a product's brand image is an important factor as it affects consumers' brand evaluations.

**Family and Friends Influence**

Influence involves actions by family members that make a difference during the decision process (Beatty and Talpade, 1994). Two major types of influence have been identified, first, direct influence which is "based directly on the decision maker's own needs" (Rossiter, 1978). Second, indirect influence "in which the decision maker takes another family member's needs indirectly into account" (Rossiter, 1978).

The individual frequently considers his family as a reliable reference in relation to the purchase of certain products (Childers and Rao, 1992; Moore et al., 2002), and thus, information on a brand obtained from the family may determine the consumer evaluation of a brand.

**Figure 3.2**

Effects of Family Influence

Source: Own elaboration based on Aaker (1991) and Yoo et al. (2000)
Image of the Retailer, Salesman's Opinion and Showroom Ambience

A main goal for virtually any retailer is to create and maintain the image it feels is proper for the specific type of business involved. An image represents how consumers and others perceive a given retailer. A firm may be seen as innovative or conservative, specialized or broad-based, discount-oriented or upscale. The key to a successful image is that consumer’s view the retailer in the manner the retailer intends.\textsuperscript{233}

The concept of "store personality" establishes linkages to the image of the retailer. Lindquist (1974) develops the distinction between "functional qualities" and "psychological attributes", and Oxenfeld (1974) argues that retailers' image is a concept which is "more than the sum of its parts, it represents interaction among characteristics and includes extraneous elements, it has some emotional content a combination of factual and emotional material".

A study that examined the effects of specific stores' environmental factors on quality of the same dress inferences found that consumer perceptions were more heavily influenced by ambience factors (i.e. the people within the store's environment the number type, and behaviour of other customers and sales personnel). Previous studies have also found that both store / retailer-dealer environments, perception of merchandise and service quality are actually antecedents of retailers' image, rather than components of store image.\textsuperscript{234}

It is now widely recognized that the final decision on which brand to buy is more often than not made in-store (Murphy, 2003\textsuperscript{235}; Bertagnoli, 2001\textsuperscript{236}).
Price of the Product

It is common knowledge that price influences a customer’s buying decision (Monroe, 1973; Alba et al., 1999; Thomas and Morwitz, 2004). Price is unquestionably one of the most important marketplace cues. The pervasive influence of price is due, in part, to the fact that the price cue is present in all purchase situations and, at a minimum, represents to all consumers the amount of economic outlay that must be sacrificed in order to engage in a given purchase transaction. Perceived strictly in this way, price represents the amount of money that must be given up, and therefore higher prices negatively affect purchase probabilities. However, several researchers have noted that price (if on a downward side can also provide stimulus for many consumers. For example, numerous studies have provided evidence that many consumers use the price cue as a signal to indicate product quality. To the degree price is perceived in this "positive role," higher prices positively affect purchase probabilities (Tellis and Gaeth 1990). They modeled the dual role of the price cue within a single study and found that price-level perceptions had a direct negative effect on purchase intentions and an indirect positive effect on purchase intentions via product quality perceptions.

As noted by Dickson and Sawyer (1990, p. 51) "what is clear is that shoppers are very heterogeneous in terms of their attention and reaction to price and price promotions".

Product Features

Consumers' decision about purchase of product depends on product features itself. If the products are technically complex it is sure to have high involvement among consumers. In terms of present research, certain selected products do enjoy the privilege of sophistication. The concept of product features also highlights customers' perception of quality. As seen earlier, it is always linked to price.

Consumers perceive product quality / features through their direct experiences with the product or brand and the information obtained in the environmental factors (Groénéroos, 1984; Yoo et al., 2000). There are several factors to consider in order to analyze and measure product features, such as reliability, durability, appearance, performance, serviceability, etc. (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Cronin and Taylor,
Marketeters studying the importance of warranty information to consumers considering purchasing durables have examined the extent to which warranties serve as cues to quality and have demonstrated instances in which warranties are likely to lead to an increase in evaluations (e.g. Boulding and Kirmani, 1993; Innis and Unnava, 1991; also see Grossman, 1981; Lutz, 1989; Spence, 1977). Also, given that purchases of many durables are typically sufficiently costly, both in terms of price and search costs, the concept of risk have played a prominent role in the warranty literature (Bearden and Shimp, 1982; Erevelles, 1993).

**Offers – Like Discount / Exchange Schemes**

Studies concerning promotions have tried to look at psychological variables. (Michel Laroche, 2003). They come out with a model that tries to find linkages between consumer attitudes (covering the Cognitive, Affective and Conative stages) with psychographic variables like market mavenism, variety seeking behaviour and perceived busyness. The ability of the consumer to evaluate perceived gains has also been discussed in a variety of contexts and situations. (Schindler, 1989) studies about the excitement generated in consumers by a price promotion. His paper suggests that there is an ego expressive and a utilitarian aspect to a price promotion. Paying a low price for a particular item might lead a consumer to feel proud, smart or competent.

The increased usage of consumer promotion by marketers has been accompanied by an increase in research activity to determine the impact of such promotions. The most consistent finding is that consumer promotions increase unit sales and market share of the promoted brand (Gupta, 1988). Although these findings seem somewhat obvious, since consumer promotions typically take the form of price reductions (Cotton and Babb, 1978).

Although the impact of consumer promotions on consumer attitudes has yet to be resolved, a number of plausible explanations have been offered for a potential
negative relationship (Blattberg and Neslin, 1990). These include self-perception theory (Dodson et al., 1978), dissonance theory (Doob et al., 1969), and attribution theory (Sawyer and Dickson, 1984). The common conclusion of these authors is that the use of consumer promotions too frequently over an extended period of time may lead to less favorable consumer attitudes toward the brand.

After Sales Service and Past Experience
Derived from the general utility expectation theory, the regret theory suggests that a consumer's actual decision to purchase and/or consume will be determined by the anticipated level of utility associated with purchasing a particular good or service in the face of alternatives. If the experience derived from the good or service actually purchased surpasses the presumed consequences of consuming the alternative, the individual will be satisfied with the purchase. If, on the other hand, he/she believes that the experience derived is inferior to that which they believe would have resulted from purchasing and/or consuming their rejected options, she/he will regret their decision (Bell, 1983). Oliver (1997, p. 242) further proposed that dissonance occurs at various stages of the consumption process, although he accepted that dissonance is generally recognized as a post-decision and/or a post-use phenomenon.

Income, Budget and Others
While (Lichtenstein Donald R, 1997) speak of demographic level differences (age, income, etc.) across product categories using a clustering exercise. Households' decision-making process by individual family members also varies by social class (Granbois, 1971; Komarovsky, 1961; Slama and Taschian, 1985). Granbois (1971), however, found the lower the family income and the greater the cost of the product or service being considered, the greater the tendency for two or more family members to be involved in the decision making process, of delay in decision or more role for credit providing agencies.

Based on the extensive literature review undertaken by the researcher for the present research all the variables under study were hypothesized to influence consumer decision process for white goods. And to identify their level of influence a Likert Scale has been used.
3.8.8 Brand Preference

The variable in discussion is to be viewed and read in consonance with Customer Awareness and Preference as it is closely related and precedes to it. (See also Point No.: 3.8.5 of the same chapter)

Consumer beliefs or perceptions about brands form part of what is known as brand knowledge (Keller, 2003). These beliefs are created through customer interactions with a given brand, such as when buying or using the brand, being exposed to advertising, publicity or word of mouth. This information may develop into beliefs about the brand, which may be positive, negative or neutral (Krishnan, 1996). Positive beliefs represent qualities generally considered to be desirable for a brand in that category (e.g. good value), while negative beliefs are those considered to be undesirable (e.g. poor service). It is generally accepted in consumer behaviour theories that consumers use both positive and negative perception about brands in their brand choice processes, and this general perception permeates most marketing textbooks (e.g. East, 1997; Kotler et al., 2001; Solomon, 1994). Consumers can use these perceptions to compare the benefits and deficits of different brands which act as a cue for retrieval in purchase situations, and/or as a component of an overall attitude to the brand (Bettman, 1979; Fishbein, 1967).

A number of studies have shown a relationship between associating a brand with a belief / perception and consumer brand choice (Alpert, 1971; Lynch et al., 1988; Romaniuk, 2003; Romaniuk and Sharp, 2003a; Woodside and Trappey, 1992). However, a major confounding factor in the relationship between beliefs and buyer behaviour is the effect of past consumer purchase and usage of a brand on the perceptions a consumer holds about this brand (Bird et al., 1970). In the present study, it has been captured with understanding the ownership pattern of households for the selected products of white goods.

This research introduces the confounding suggestion that the post-behavioural readjustment of perception may follow the change in behaviour (i.e. defecting from one brand to another). Although not popular for the last 30 years in marketing, such a suggestion would be complementary to cognitive dissonance literature (e.g. Cohen and Houston, 1972; Cummings and Venkatesan, 1976; Festinger, 1957). The
lack of a clear direction in the literature makes it difficult to determine whether brand perception are indicative of future brand buying behaviour, whether perception are reflective of past behaviour, or whether they are both predictive of future behaviour but also a reflection of past behaviour (for example along the lines of what was proposed by social learning theory; Bandura, 1977\textsuperscript{277}). Predictive relationships are difficult to detect in cross-sectional studies measuring consumers' brand usage and beliefs at one point in time (Ajzen, 2002\textsuperscript{278}; Albarracin and Wyer, 2000\textsuperscript{279}). While some studies use purchase intentions to overcome this, purchase intentions measures have been notoriously poor at predicting future behaviour, unless a number of adjustments are made (Jamieson and Bass, 1989\textsuperscript{280}). It is only in a longitudinal study, where the same people are tracked over time, that some of the temporal effects can be identified and better understood.

To determine how consumers evaluate brands, organizations often collect and analyze data about consumers' attitudes toward various brands (perception rating) and their brand preferences. Formulating strategy based on consumer attitudes and preferences has strong support from the marketing literature, which empirically demonstrates that consumer attitudes and preferences are associated with brand choices and with market share (Assael and Day, 1968; Lutz, 1977). The association is found for all types of products, both high and low-involvement, and for rational purchases as well as impulsive buys (Weinberg and Gottwald, 1982).\textsuperscript{281}

*Dimension of Measure*

Brand awareness and preference (Aaker, 1991)\textsuperscript{282} was carried out with 'Aided recall' and Unaided recall' in which names of the brands were provided and were rated on Likert Scale of 1-5 in the former and the latter was studied through respondents choices of brand (in case of purchase) (Yoo et al., 2000; Yoo and Donthu, 2001)\textsuperscript{283} which was ranked into 1-3 category preferences.

*However, notwithstanding its limitations, the present research tries to provide a strong support for the hypothesis that consumers are not always bothered about their choice of brand. Infact, through their preference ranking (in case of households' likelihood of purchasing the same) it may lay ample evidence of customers' brand switching behaviour or brand performance more so in case for*
those who have tendency to be influenced by sales promotion offers like discounts, exchange scheme etc.

3.8.9 Brand Equity – Loyalty

Brand loyalty has played a central role both in brand literature and customer loyalty literature (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978)\textsuperscript{284}. It is defined as the biased (non-random) behavioral response (re-purchase, referral, price sensitivity) expressed over time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of brands and is a function of psychological processes (Thiele and Bennett, 2001)\textsuperscript{285}. Brand loyalty is the consumer’s preference to buy a particular brand in a class of products. Brand loyalty is assessed with the customer’s willingness to buy the brand repeatedly irrespective of the changes in the price and to refer the brand to others.

Brand loyalty is the consumer’s conscious or unconscious decision, expressed through intention or behaviour, to repurchase a brand continually. It occurs because the consumer perceives that the brand offers the right product features, image and level of quality at the right price. Hence, from the customer’s point of view, what is loyalty? Loyalty is primarily attitude that many a times leads to a binding relationship with the brand. Many consultants and researchers argue that three must be "strong attitudinal commitment" for true brand loyalty to exist (Day, 1969\textsuperscript{286}; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978, Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994\textsuperscript{287}; Mellars et al., 1996\textsuperscript{288} and Reichheld, 1996\textsuperscript{289}). These attitudes may be measured by asking how many people say they like the brand, feel committed to it, will recommend it to others, and have positive beliefs and feelings about it – relative to competing brands (Dick and Basu, 1994)\textsuperscript{290}.

The movement from purchase loyalty to a more holistic conceptualization appears supported in the emerging literature. It is today widely assumed that loyalty is a multidimensional construct, which is better understood when adding an attitudinal dimension (Baldinger and Rubinson, 1996\textsuperscript{291}; Oliver, 1999\textsuperscript{292}; Bandyopadhyay and Martell, 2007\textsuperscript{293}). This multidimensionality is made explicit in Oliver’s (1999, p. 34) definition: [ . . . ] a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.
A brand loyal consumer may first wait for the brand (chooses his own preferred brand), give first preference to a particular dealer (with whom he has maintained good relationship or who is held in high esteem by him) or, he may give equal importance to both. Sometimes one prefers a dealer / store first, where he can get friendly and logical advice to buy the product, and prefer to buy a product/brand of second priority (for example, he opts for dealer's choice of brand) if he is assured of proper service and proper guidance, rather then buying a product of his choice on first priority and missing out on other aspects of purchase. Thus, there are three basic sequences a consumer can follow when making a purchase decisions. They are:

a. Brand first
b. Dealer / Showroom first and brand second
c. Brand and Dealer simultaneously

For the present study, brand equity - loyalty or strong commitment is operationalized as follows:

- Wait for the brand
- Go to some other showroom / dealer
- Postpone the idea
- Take some other brand as per one's own choice
- Take some other brand as per dealer's opinion
- Take some other brand which offers discounts / schemes

3.8.10 Understanding Attitudes Towards Sales Promotion

Sales promotion "involve the use of media and non-media marketing pressure applied for a pre-determined, limited period of time at the level of consumer, retailer or wholesaler in order to stimulate trial, increase consumer demand, or improve product availability." The most popular sales promotion tools in retailing are premiums, frequent buyer programs, coupons, in-store displays, contests and sweepstakes, product demonstrations, and sampling.

Price reductions and promotional deals (coupons, multiple-item discounts, exchange schemes and gifts) are generally accompanied by the use of some point-of-purchase materials. Therefore, the relative impact of each is sometimes not clear.
Nonetheless, there is ample evidence that in-store price reductions affect brand decisions. The general pattern, observed in all developed and developing countries, is a sharp increase in sales when the price is first reduced, followed by a return to near-normal sales over time or after the price reduction ends.298

Sales increases in response to price reductions come from four sources.

a. Users of competing brands may switch to the reduced price brand. These new brand buyers may or may not become repeat buyers of the brand.

b. Non-product category buyers may buy the brand because it is now a superior value to the substitute product or to “doing without.”

c. Consumers who did not initially decided on the purchase would be lured to buy the brand because of various benefits that are offered. In Indian context it is more prevalent during Festivals like Dassehra, Diwali, New Year, etc.

High-quality brands tend to benefit more than brands from lower quality tiers when prices are reduced, and they suffer less when prices are raised.299

Research evidence suggests that sales promotions positively affect short-term sales (Priya, 2004)300. Research on price promotion has consistently reported high sales effect and high price elasticity for brands which are on promotion (Blattberg, Briesch and Fox, 1995)301. However, there have also been studies that suggest that sales promotion affects brand perceptions. Researchers have found, out that promotions, especially price promotions, have a negative effect on brand equity (Mela et al, 1997)302. In another study, Schultz (2004) argues that over-dependence on promotions can erode consumers' price-value equation and consequently their perception about quality too.

Similarly, Yoo et al (2000), based on structural equation model, suggest that frequent price promotions, such as price deals are related to low brand equity, where as high advertising spending, high price, good store image and high distribution intensity are related to high brand equity. On the other hand, there have also been studies that indicate brands benefit from promotions. Amongst the elements of marketing mix, sales promotions have a long-term influence on brand equity (Yoo et. al, 2000). Mariola & Elina, (2005), based on a sample of 167 buyers suggest that monetary and non-
monetary promotions are useful to create brand equity because of their positive effect on brand knowledge structures.\textsuperscript{303}

John et al. (1994) suggest that promotional ads are able to induce brand switching but cannot affect repeat purchase. The study conducted by Carl et al. (1998) revealed that frequent exposure of households to promotional ads / offers reduces customer choice. Kim and Hyeong (2006)\textsuperscript{304} found that sometimes discounts tend to lower purchase intentions because of negative perception of the word discount in the eyes of the customers. Moreover, purchase decisions are taken on emotional grounds with rational evaluation. Lakshman and Raj (1985)\textsuperscript{305} revealed that higher level of advertising reduces price sensitivity of consumers. As per Chang (2008)\textsuperscript{306}, believability in ad, liking towards the ad and brand attitudes can be built through positivity in the ad messages.

Based on the available literature and researchers' own experience as a consumer over the years, the following items were designed and opinions of households sought on a 1-5 Likert Scale where 1 indicated full disagreement and 5 full agreement:

- Branded products are usually expensive
- Products offered during Festival Seasons are generally beneficial
- Products with discounts / offers are superficial
- Products without discounts are always of good quality
- Products are not purchased due to advertisement

3.8.11 Post-Purchase Behaviour: Factors that Motivate Brand Change

Presently we are living in a state of flux where the only constant thing is change. This phenomenon of constant change poses both opportunities and challenges for marketers. With the advent of new technology, certain products (electronic and computer products) become obsolete within a very short time span. The rate at which the change occurs is so fast that it affects all the P's of marketing. On one hand, this may be an opportunity for marketers but on the other hand, it may also create certain challenges.
Cognitive dissonance is one of the major challenges for a market as it sometimes leads the customer to postpone or delay the buying decision. Every week new products with new features, promotional schemes, and attractive prices are launched that confuse the consumer. Consumer faces anxiety under such circumstances.

Oliver (1997, p. 242) proposed that dissonance occurs at various stages of the consumption process, although he accepted that dissonance is generally recognized as a post-decision and/or a post-use phenomenon.

There are three well-known conditions for dissonance to arise. The decision needs to be important, irrevocable and voluntary (Cummings & Venkatesan 1976; Oliver, 1997). These conditions are a matter of degree and are most apparent in extended problem-solving decisions, such as when purchasing major durables or appliances, which vary in terms of features and price across different brands (Oliver, 1997).

The rapid pace of technology has made it possible for firms to offer an ever increasing variety of consumer durables at an ever increasing pace. Consumers have adopted many such technology-driven durable products. Products such as CTVs, Home Theatres, Refrigerator, Washing Machines, etc. have become common household items. Consumers have learned to anticipate improvements in technology and reduction in prices for such products.

Understanding consumer response to such evolving products or typical situations becomes essential. In order to examine this issue, this research addresses the following key question:

- Reduction in price
- Improvement in quality lures me towards the change
- Opportunity to avail better promotion scheme
- New models of the product with other brand motivates for brand change
- I have been given wrong / misleading information
- The performance of the brand is not as expected
- After sales services is not satisfactory
Reduction in price

Anil and Dick (1995)\textsuperscript{307} observed that price promotional strategies lead to price sensitivity thereby reducing prices. John (2004)\textsuperscript{308} found that promotion did not have any long-term effect on the brand. It expanded the category and dropped sales of the competitors. It was observed that consumers accelerated their purchase decision. Manohar and Chi (1992)\textsuperscript{309} observed that frequency of promotion and price discounts have a significant impact on consumers’ expectation of price and brand choice.

Albert and Dominique (1991)\textsuperscript{310} observed that price elasticities increased up to 180% due to the influence of promotional ads. Praveen et al. (1999)\textsuperscript{311} indicated that promotional offers had short-term positive effect on sales as well as long-term negative effect on baseline sales.

Improvement in quality lures me towards the change and - The performance of the brand is not as expected

In the layman’s language, durability is the ability of a product to function when subjected to hard and frequent use. However, according to Garvin (1987)\textsuperscript{312}, durability is a measure of product life; it has both economic and technical dimensions. Durability can also involve the length of time the product works properly (i.e. whether it needs frequent servicing); and how well the product holds up under adverse conditions, such as weather, heavy use, or misuse (Brucks, 2000).\textsuperscript{313}

Durability is an inspiring, product-based, user-based, manufacturing-based and value-based concept. Research studies have pointed out that one of the specific dimensions of quality that consistently appears in literature is product durability (Russell and Taylor, 2003)\textsuperscript{314}. Consistent with previous studies, Wheatly et al. (1981)\textsuperscript{315} revealed that product durability or a product’s life is a crucial determinant in influencing the repeat purchase. They further indicated that there is a close relationship between product durability and consumers’ metrics to the price or cost purchase criteria.

Opportunity to avail better promotion scheme

Sales promotions only displace demand from one brand to another or from one week to another (Blattberg et al. 1995\textsuperscript{316}; Dekimpe and Dominique, 1995\textsuperscript{317}; and Papatia and Lakshman, 1996\textsuperscript{318}). Allenby and Rossi (1991)\textsuperscript{319} found that income had negative
influence on promotion, response. Webster (1965)\textsuperscript{320}, mentioning Narasimhan (1984)\textsuperscript{321}, added that it had no effects or nonlinear effects.

Dodson et al. (1978)\textsuperscript{322} found that brand switching increased as the magnitude of the incentive associated with the deal increased. According to Neslin and Shoemaker (1989)\textsuperscript{323}, promotion temporarily attracts a disproportionate number of households with low purchase probabilities.

The multiple effects of promotions on brand-loyal and brand-switching segments of consumers have also been studied. The findings indicate that (1) the market can be characterized by brand-loyal segments (each of which buys mostly their favorite brand) and switching segments (each of which switches mainly among competing brands of the same type), (2) promotional variables have significant effects on within-segment market shares, (Grover and Srinivasan 1992)\textsuperscript{324}. Also in this literature stream, price promotions have received attention. First, research has shown that there is heterogeneity in consumer knowledge of prices and deals.

In addition, it has been found that buyers' purchase behavior can be influenced not only by the current price of a product but also by what prices they expect in the future. Both the promotion frequency and the depth of price discounts have a significant impact on price expectations (Kalwani and Yim 1992)\textsuperscript{325}. There is a region of relative price insensitivity around the expected price, such that only price changes outside that region have a significant impact on consumer brand choice. As in the case of price expectations, consumer response to promotion expectations has been found to be asymmetric. Furthermore, consumer expectations of both price and promotional activities influence brand choice behavior. The effects of a retraction of a price promotion are contingent on both the choice patterns of individuals, that is, whether or not they switch among brands, and the ubiquity of promotion in a product category (Kahn and Louie 1990)\textsuperscript{326}. In addition, the consumers' response to the deal varies for preferred and less-preferred brands. Compared with consumers without knowledge of future deals, consumers with knowledge of future deals could be more likely to purchase on (1) low value deals and (2) deals for less-preferred brands.
New models of the product with other brand motivates for brand change
It is argued that the introduction of a new attribute for differentiating products is one of the most common methods that affect the formation of consumer preferences and thereby gain competitive advantage.

Furthermore, research suggests that while in the past, firms could differentiate products as a result of outstanding quality by introducing important attribute(s), now, attribute quality is increasingly becoming a basic expectation of consumers. As a result, consumers are more indifferent about the choice options as long as the important attributes are considered, and their preferences are converging.

One of the purposes of this framework is to show that when important attributes are similar among alternatives, a new feature would lead to a divergence of brand choice and would be likely to strengthen consumers' preferences for the option with the additional feature. In marketing parlance, it is considered as a new product or model (Any change in colour, size, design, weight, etc. is considered as new product).

Research on brand choice and switching behavior at the time of choice has focused on substantive issues such as variety seeking and on methodological issues of capturing consumer differences. Several authors have advanced variety-seeking explanations for brand switching. There is a need to distinguish between true variety-seeking behavior (i.e., intrinsically motivated) and derived varied behavior (i.e., extrinsically motivated). Variety-seeking behavior appears to be a function of the individual-difference characteristic of need for variety and product category level characteristics.

I have been given wrong / misleading information and -
After sales services is not satisfactory

Derived from the general utility expectation theory, the regret theory suggests that a consumer's actual decision to purchase and/or consume will be determined by the anticipated level of utility associated with purchasing a particular good or service in the face of alternatives. If the experience derived from the good or service actually purchased surpasses the presumed consequences of consuming the alternative, the individual will be satisfied with the purchase. If, on the other hand, he/she believes that the experience derived is inferior to that which they believe would have resulted from purchasing and/or consuming their rejected options, s/he will regret their
More so when one feels that he has been given wrong information about the quality or after sales service factors.

Answers to of the above statements would be useful for firms planning introduction of such innovations, as well as for researchers, as it helps in understanding consumer response to products that are expected to change over time and may sometimes predict factors that motivate brand switching.

3.9 Review of Literature in White Goods – Consumer Durables

Consumer Awareness

In one of the studies Keller (1993) researched on consumer’s ability to identify the brand under different circumstances and found that brand awareness is considered to be of particular importance in low involvement product categories. However, the Ritson (2003) research on the same subject found that when it comes to high involvement products, like cars or other durable goods, consumers spend more time on the decision process and also get familiar with unknown brands.

Sources of Information

The study conducted by Newman and Staelin (1972) in the context of consumer durables (and other infrequently purchased high-ticket items), found that consumers can acquire information about the attributes of the different brands through explicit search, for example, through Consumer Reports, consulting, experts, etc. He later also found that the product category in question should be a “search good”.

According to Blackwell et al. (2006), need recognition occurs when consumers sense the difference between what they perceive to be the ideal and the actual state of their white goods. Need recognition may result from changes in lifestyle (purchase of a new home, birth of children, job change, etc.), information on white goods that consumers receive primarily through advertising. Word-of-mouth and other communication channels should also be considered.
Consumer Perception and Preference

In very far reaching studies Howard & Sheth (1969)\textsuperscript{331}, Bettman, (1979)\textsuperscript{332} and others points out that understanding the drives of a consumer's intent to purchase a particular brand is at the heart of consumer marketing research. Consumers are often faced with a large number of alternatives and deluged with information from many sources, as well as the important value tradeoffs that a purchase decision requires, such as price versus safety in the purchase of an automobile, like many consumer choice models (e.g.; Howard, 1989; 1969), this discussion begins with the assumption that the consumer has already decided on a product category—for example a CTV and details how various factors influence the formation of intentions to acquire a particular brand of CTV.

Further, they clearly show that the more positive the consumer's perception, the greater the preference will be that the consumer will form an intention to purchase the brand.

Sweeny and Souter (2001) developed a 19-item scale PERVAL to be used to assess a customer's perceptions of the benefits and sacrifice dimensions of consumer durable goods at brand level. Sheth et al (1991) suggested that the value dimensions can be used to explicate why consumers choose between products; at different levels, at a generic product level and at brand level.\textsuperscript{333}

Grete Birtwistle and Linda (2000)\textsuperscript{334} Shearer studied Consumer perception about white goods / consumer durables in UK and they found that developing a strong, positive brand image has become essential to the maintenance of sustained competitive advantage. Research into brand image has allowed marketers to create positioning strategies and enabled them to differentiate their brands on the basis of products features, prices or services and on sales promotion offers.

Outi Uusitalo researched on Consumer perceptions of brands. The study examined how consumers perceive brands in Finland. Data from personal interviews were used in highlighting the consumer perspective. Consumers perceive meaningful differences in various brands. However, some brands are seen as quite similar. Consumers rely on
functional attributes of brands/products. However, it seems that consumers are unable to recognize the imaginary differences at the brand level. The informant's own, creative symbolic work results in interpretation of all brands.335

G. S. Sureshchandar, Chandrasekharan Rajendran and R. N. Anantharaman, worked on Determinants of customer-perceived service quality: a confirmatory factor analysis approach. They strives to bring to light some of the critical determinants of service quality that have been overlooked in the literature and proposes a comprehensive model and an instrument framework for measuring customer perceived service quality. The study offers a systematic procedure that could form the cornerstone for providing further insights on the conceptual and empirical comprehension of customer perceived service quality and its constituents.336

Martin O’Neill and Adrian Palmer carried out an exploratory study on effects of experience on consumer perceptions. They explored the role of experience. An exploratory survey is reported in which a sample of householders was studied based on their level of experience. A factor analysis of the data indicated a more complex factor structure for the group with prior experience about consumption.337

Byoungho Jin and Brenda Sternquist presented study on “The influence of retail environment on price perception” as consumers use a variety of information cues to select products; price, however, is the most important. It is possible that the market environment can influence how consumers view price. The purpose of their study is to: establish validity and reliability for multidimensional aspects of the price construct; to explore how US and Korean students are different or similar in their perception of price cues. Findings of this study show that US subjects have higher levels of prestige sensitivity, price mavenism and value consciousness, than did Korean students. However, Koreans exhibited higher levels of sale proneness and price consciousness. Theoretical and managerial implications were suggested based on these findings.338
Consumer Attitudes

Many studies have been carried out on the predictive value of consumer attitudes and intentions in the United States with often conflicting results as to whether it is attitudes or intentions that have predictive value.

E. Mueller while studying "The Effects of Consumer Attitudes on Purchases" re-interviewed some 800 families, Miss Mueller found that both attitudes and buying plans were related to subsequent purchases of durable goods during the period June-December 1954; attitudes alone had no significant effect on purchases in the second half of 1955 although the index of buying intentions proved to be a very significant predictor of consumer purchase and spending.339

In one more study E. Mueller investigated consumer spending versus consumer optimism and confidence through his paper titled "Ten Years of Consumer Attitude Surveys. Their Forecasting Record" Journal of the American Statistical Association, December 1963 and found that discretionary spending by consumers was largely determined by income level and the state of consumer optimism and confidence – an attitudinal, personality based properties.340

A study on Consumer Attitudes, Buying Plans, and Purchases of Durable Goods: A Principal Components Time Series Approach proved that regression analysis of the attitudes and of buying plans as predictors of consumer durable expenditures. Buying plans do not improve the correlation once the income and attitudes are present.341

Consumer Involvement

Further, literature review was carried out to explore how consumer integrates information into the decision process. To facilitate a detailed analysis of consumer decision process, Howard & Sheth (1967) analysis was limited to goods and services that require an effortful, non-routine decision. Marketers typically call these types of goods and services "high involvement" – often characterized by a relatively high cost and infrequent purchase (Marks, Tidwell & Spence, 1991; Sengupta, Goodstein & Boninger, 1997; Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1986). The behavioural model for consumers is therefore applicable to consumers of automobiles, household appliances, electronic
Although each individual can exhibit any level of product involvement with any product category, certain product categories generally tend to elicit higher levels of involvement than other product categories in a majority of consumers. One category that elicits a high level of product involvement is white goods.

In interviews with 800 females in France, Kapferer and Laurent (1985/1986) demonstrated that female consumers exhibit a high level of involvement with white goods products. Kapferer and Laurent attributed participants’ high level of involvement with white goods products to the high ratings that the product category received on measurements of three specific value dimensions of product involvement. These dimensions were sign, pleasure, and interest. According to Kapferer and Laurent, a product’s sign value is the consumer’s perception of the product’s ability “to express one’s status, one’s personality, or identity” (p. 49).

In their study of 387 (159 female, 205 male) undergraduates, Browne and Kaldenberg (1997) found that individuals who were materialistic also exhibited a high level of white goods-product involvement. If materialistic individuals exhibit high levels of white goods-product involvement, then it is expected that householders, who tend to be materialistic, would also be highly involved with white goods products. If householders were motivated to purchase white goods products in an effort to demonstrate that they possessed certain self-definitions, it would follow that householders would believe that white goods products could be used as symbols.

Furthermore, Dittmar et al., 1996; Dittmar& Drury, 2000 found that purchasing white goods products provided householders with some degree of pleasure. It was emphasized that if householders rated the pleasure, interest, and sign values of white goods products as high, then it follows that householders would likely exhibit a high level of white goods-product involvement.
Brand Equity / Loyalty and Customer Satisfaction

The central part of study is customer satisfaction in which number of research studies carried out in various part of developed and developing countries.

Researcher Amy Wong researched on “The role of emotional satisfaction in service / sales encounters”. He empirically examined the role of emotional satisfaction in service / sales encounters. Specifically, this study seeks to: investigate the relationship between emotional satisfaction and key concepts, such as, customer loyalty, and relationship quality, and clarify the role of emotional satisfaction in predicting customer loyalty and relationship quality. In doing so, this study used the relationship between emotional satisfaction, customer loyalty, and relationship quality as a context, as well as data from a sample survey of 1,261 Australian customers concerning their evaluation of their experiences to address this issue. The results show that there is positive association with both customer loyalty and relationship quality. Further investigations showed that customer feelings as the best predictor of customer loyalty. The findings imply the need to strategically leverage on the key antecedents of customer loyalty in its pursuit of customer retention and long-term profitability.347

Lai K. Chan, Yer V. Hui, Hing P. Lo, Siu K. Tse, Geoffrey K.F. Tso and Ming L. Wu studied Consumer satisfaction index: new practice and findings. It reports the development of the Hong Kong consumer satisfaction index (HKCSI) ± a new type of consumer-oriented economic performance indicator representing the quality of products (commodities and services) sold in Hong Kong as evaluated by Hong Kong consumers ± as well as the findings of HKCSI from 1998 to 2000, each year with more than 10,000 successful telephone interviews on about 60 products. According to Hong Kong’s special economic structure, the HKCSI is constructed from a consumption point of view concentrating on products and the products’ consumers, rather than from the popular production point of view focusing on firms and the firms’ customers. Key features of HKCSI include: the direct introduction of consumer characteristics (such as age, education, and income) in model construction; and the adoption of a product weighting system based on consumer price index (CPI), not on gross domestic product (GDP). In this paper, a theoretical framework of consumer satisfaction is first presented after investigating the relevant literature, and then the large-scale consumer survey scheme adopted to collect the data and the structural
equation modeling technique employed to estimate the indexes are discussed. New considerations in the HKCSI in such areas as model structure, indicator and questionnaire design, and product classification are elaborated upon. Next, the estimated results are analyzed focusing on the reliability and validity of the model, on the relationships among consumer satisfaction and its antecedents and consequences, and especially on the effects of consumer characteristics on consumer satisfaction and the implications of such effects for marketing practice. The results are generally consistent across different products, broadly acceptable and in agreement with previous findings, and are also relevant to Hong Kong’s special situation. The paper concludes with a summary and some remarks on problems in the present study and future research directions.\textsuperscript{348}

\textit{Sales Promotion}

Dong-Mo Koo carried out research work on Inter-relationships among Brand Images, Brand Satisfaction, and Brand Loyalty among Korea Discount offers. This study examines how various characteristics of the discount and the overall attitude towards a discount, considered to be an abstract and global image component, influence consumers’ satisfaction and how consumers’ satisfaction, in turn, affects brand loyalty. The data, collected from a sample indicated that: (1) forming the overall attitude is more closely related sales persons demonstration, after sales service and product attributes (value of money), (2) Householders’ satisfaction is formed through perceived value, (3) the overall attitude has strong influence on satisfaction and loyalty and its impact is much stronger on loyalty than on satisfaction, (4) brand loyalty is directly affected by most significantly product feature and after sale service. The applications in management and implications for future research are discussed.\textsuperscript{349}

R. Stephen Parker, Linda S. Pettijohn, Charles E. Pettijohn contributed vary essential study titled “Using Trade Incentives to Promote Customer Relationships” Marketers use a variety of techniques designed to motivate salespeople to engage in specific selling behaviors that will provide results that will assist in achieving the goals. One method that is commonly applied is the sales incentive. This research examines popular forms of incentives to assess the relationships that exist between the incentives offered and salesperson behaviors. The study also examines the types of incentives commonly used by both suppliers and retailers and salesperson perceptions

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of these incentives. To accomplish this, 95 salespeople responded to questions
designed to assess their attitudes and behaviors toward incentives. The results provide
information, which may be valuable to manufacturers, marketers, and
academicians.350

Another valuable study carried out by Daniel Hosken and David Reisen on How
Marketers Determine Which Products Should Go on Sale. Recent theoretical research
on pricing dynamics provides an explanation of why items are periodically put on
sale, even when their costs are unchanged. The authors extend this research to show
that more popular and low-price items (i.e., those that appeal to a wide range of
consumers) are more likely to go on sale. One implication of the proposed model is
that a good is more likely to be on sale when demand for the good is at its season peak
(e.g., New Year). This implication was and the prediction is borne out for the
categories of goods that are examined. Additional tests also support the premise that
popularity and frequency of sales are positively related.351

*Income and Buying Intentions*

In a study of audio equipment shoppers, Dash et al. (1976) found that the level of pre-
purchase information regarding the brand determined the type of consumer purchase
decision of store as well as brand / product category who had higher levels of pre-
purchase information generally purchased the pre-decided brand, whereas
householders with low pre-purchase information bought after much delay and decided
more through their emotional criteria. This is mainly attributing to customers adopting
a risk reduction policy with regard to their impending purchase. Consumer chooses
brand based on the self-confidence that they have regarding the brand; about the
nature and quality of product and service, he will receive. The importance placed on
the customer’s familiarity with the brand will depend upon the perceived risk in
making an erroneous purchase and the importance of the product category to the
householder.

Another dimension that has been found to influence the white goods purchase
decision is based on households’ needs and wants. A need or want is defined as the
goals set by the householder to resolve the same. Kenhove et al. (1999) found that
decision on white goods is dependent on individual’s needs or wants.
In one study R. Ferber investigated on "Factors Influencing Durable Goods Purchases: The Life Cycle and Consumer Behavior" the respondents were asked about the length of planning period before a purchase was actually made. For major electrical appliances, no plans were made for 24.7% of purchases, 34.3% of purchases were planned for less than six months and 39.8% for periods longer than six months.

In the same study, Ferber also investigated the incidence of purchases which were unplanned (defined as those purchases which were unplanned and which could have been postponed). For the durable purchases investigated, he found that a little less than 20% were bought on impulse; for major car purchases, the percentage was 13.7 and for major electrical appliances it was 15.4.352

In a milestone study E. Mueller researched on "A Study of Purchase Decisions: The Dynamics of Consumer Reaction" she found that 45% of buyers had planned their purchases over periods ranging from one day or less to one or two months, and 51% of buyers for periods of several months to several years.353

Objections can be made to the analysis of buying intentions on the grounds that consumers do not plan ahead accurately, that they change their minds and that they are not always clear about the plans they do have. This is true but irrelevant.

There is some disagreement about the way in which intentions, purchases and other expectational or attitudinal variables relate to each other. Two alternative hypotheses have been advanced. Juster's exposition of the two is as follows: The first argues that both intentions and expectations are essentially attitudes with a time dimension attached. The more intentions reported, the more optimistic are expectations, or the more favourable are attitudes, the greater the overall degree of optimism. This Juster calls the 'additivity hypothesis' and this view is held by Katona and Mueller.

The second hypothesis argues that forward looking variables like intentions and expectations are fundamentally different from attitudes, in that they express subjective judgments held with more or less certainty about future events. Intentions express
judgements about what the household expects to do provide its expectations (judgements about what others will do to it) turn out to be correct. Attitudes or opinions are a different kind of variable and have their major role in determining the way in which households formulate intentions and expectations. This Juster calls the 'contingent action hypothesis'.

**Consumer Decision Making**

H. Jessie Chen-Yu, Doris H. Kincade studied Effects of product image at three stages of the consumer decision process for white goods products: Alternative evaluation, purchase and post-purchase. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of product image at three stages of the consumer decision process for white goods products: alternative evaluation, purchase and post-purchase stages. The three specific objectives of the study were to examine at the alternative evaluation stage the effect of product image on perceived quality and performance expectation, at the purchase stage the effect of product image on purchase intention and the price the consumer was willing to pay, and at the post-purchase stage the effect of product image on consumer satisfaction and the effect of product image with product consumption performance on consumer satisfaction. The experimental design was used to determine the cause-and-effect relationships between the treatment variables (independent variables) and the dependent variables. In a sample product category results showed that at the alternative evaluation stage, product image significantly and positively influenced perceived quality and performance expectation. At the purchase stage, product image was not a determinant of purchase intention, but significantly and positively influenced the price participants were willing to pay for the product. At the post-purchase stage, product image did not directly influence participants' satisfaction, but product image with product consumption performance significantly affected satisfaction. When consumption performance was good, product image significantly and positively influenced satisfaction. When consumption performance was poor, product image significantly and negatively influenced satisfaction.

**Comments**

'It is now generally agreed among economists that expenditures by consumers are subject to wide fluctuations essentially unrelated to current disposable income. There
is also considerable evidence that an important part of the variation in the consumption-income ratio is due to variation in purchases of white goods / consumer durables. *Hence the interest that attaches to predictions of durable goods purchases by consumers and the attention given to consumer buying intentions, expectations and attitudes*—F. Thomas (Cited in by Mrs. J. Hoque, *Consumer Attitudes and Buying Intentions*)

**Researcher's Views**

The level of purchases of durable goods is determined by the interaction of consumer, government and business decisions. It is, therefore, not realistic to expect a series of buying intentions figures to parallel a series of sales figures. The real test of consumer attitudes and intentions is whether, when combined with other relevant economic data, they help towards a better prediction of durable goods sales than could be achieved without their use.

The belief that buying intentions can help in the prediction of durable goods purchases depends on the further belief that consumers plan purchases of durable goods well in advance and that these plans are capable of being ascertained and measured.

*From the above literature review, it is evident that majority of studies for consumer durables have been centered on consumer attitude and intention. The studies have generally focused on demographic and socio-economic variables like age, income, education, occupation, family size.*

*Hence, it was necessary to incorporate some more related variables that can depict the market behaviour more precisely. For this, variables like consumers ownership patterns vis-à-vis white goods / consumer durables and others of assets, perception & preferences, status symbols, involvement (high / low), sources of information, brand loyalty, purchase intention with / without sales promotion offers, etc were included in the study.*
3.10 Research Gaps

3.10.1 Motivations for the Present Study

The following three factors provided the major motivations for the present study:

1. Absence of previous research examining the consumer buying behaviour for white goods in three product categories namely (i) Entertainment (CTV and Home Theatres), (ii) Cleaning (Washing Machines and Vacuum Cleaners) and (iii) Preservatives (Refrigerator and Food Processor and Juicer Mixer) in the selected cities of the Gujarat State.

2. Absence of research on consumer buying behaviour in the Indian context especially in the State of Gujarat.

3. Unprecedented growth in the market for consumer durable / white goods products during the last decade with special thrust on sales promotion.

Thus two of the motivating factors pertained to gaps in the existing literature and the third pertained to the perceived requirement of practice. Each of the above three factors are discussed below:

Factor # 1

The motivations for studying consumer durable / white goods products arose from the following two points:

- Firstly, consumer purchases of white goods are often outlays of choice that are not inevitably necessary, not habitual and not made on the spur of moment compared to expenditure on most fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) that are habitual and almost contractual on nature (Bhatty, 1987\textsuperscript{356}, Bloom, 1987\textsuperscript{357}, Katona, 1975\textsuperscript{358}). Thus, a study of white goods would provide an understanding of discretionary consumption behaviour.

- Secondly, white goods have grown in importance as an item of consumer expenditure world-wide (Bhatty, 1987, Churchill, 1987 p. 851\textsuperscript{359}, Freedman, 1976\textsuperscript{360}, Katona, 1975, Mermet, 1986\textsuperscript{361}, Myers, et al. 1980\textsuperscript{362}, Schipander, 1986\textsuperscript{363}, Scott, 1976\textsuperscript{364}).

Thus, white goods constitute an important product category. However, there is very limited amount of consumer buying behaviour research in the context of durables. As
Myers et al. (1980) observed, "we know the least about the most important products that the consumers buy".

Further, existing research in the context of white goods has mainly focused on demographic/socio economic variables. Consumer buying behaviour especially with respect to the researched products has not been included in the past research on durables or white goods.

The research was carried out for two important reasons as mentioned below:

(i) To provide more complete explanations of ownership of white good products.

Demographic / socio-economic variables have been found to be useful in explaining durables ownership in the past. However, some researchers have indicated the inadequacy of these variables as explanatory variables. Freedman (1970) observed that variables such as income, age and education accounted for only 42% of the differences in ownership of household durables in Taiwan. Anderson (1972) examined the ownership of 50 household durables and found that family income was significant but not sufficient for explaining durables ownership. Katona (1975) cites empirical evidence suggesting that purchase of durables is a function not only of the ability to buy as indicated by disposable household income, but also the willingness to buy and that this willingness to buy depends on a number of psychological / attitudinal factors such as future expectation (perception of economic well-being) and consumer attitudes towards buying on credit.

Findings of studies profiling innovators in the context of white goods suggest the importance of various communications, social interaction and attitudinal variables in explaining durables ownership. However, as indicated earlier, none of the past studies have included all the above categories of variables together in a single study. It would therefore be useful to consider perception, preferences, necessities, status, factors, and effect of sales promotion offers or exchange schemes.
(ii) To provide information relevant to marketing decision making.

Consumer buying behavioural research has its greatest appeal and potential value to advertising agencies and communications specialists for the creative product and media-planning. Advertising constitutes an important element of the marketing mix in the context of consumer durables (In France, the advertising to sales ratio in the case of household durables was 5%, which was comparable to beverages while the ratio in all other sectors was below 1%) (IREP Annual Estimates 2008).

Other important areas of applications of consumer buying behaviour include new product planning and development, future projections and marketing strategy planning. In view of the growth in volume of production and the constant proliferation of a variety of new consumer durables / white goods products world-wide (Berry, 1979, Frredman, 1970, Mernet, 1986, Schipandler, 1987, Scott, 1976, Strober & Weinberg, 1980366) and also in India, consumer buying behaviour research in the context of durables / white goods would help provide useful inputs into marketing decisions pertaining to the new product development, future predictions and overall marketing planning. The practical relevance of consumer behaviour is underscored by the continued investments in such research at General Electric Company (GEC). Commenting on its usefulness, Foote (1966)367 and Pratt (1972)368 both eminent sociologists and senior researchers at GEC observed that demographic and other descriptive variables had become less and less efficient in explaining variance and hence there was a need for regular measurement of psychological and sociological variables such as perception, preference, factors influencing purchase decision, opinion as to brand change and effect of sales promotion offers and exchange schemes for more complete and operationally useful explanatory research.

Thus, it was considered important to extend consumer durables / white goods buying behavioural research to the aforementioned factors in order to provide more complete and operationally meaningful explanations of durables ownership and thus fill an important gap in existing consumer buying behaviour literature.
Role of Brand Image

As a central construct of marketing, brand attitudes have received wide attention in the literature. Both the short and long term health of a business are dependent upon the brand image of a firm’s products, as brand equity can lead to higher market share, increasing brand loyalty, and being able to charge premium prices (Aaker, 1996; Apelbaum and Gerstner, 2003; Chaudhuri and Hilbroook, 2001; Shimp, 2003). However, while the importance of brand image is well accepted, the necessary research in international brand image is sparse (Roth, 1995), particularly in emerging and traditional economies.

For established products like appliances, brand choice is risky but products themselves are not perceived to be risky. However, there are no visible research papers relating to this on the topic, in spite of its wide relevance to marketers and academicians.

Level of Involvement – Information Search

The other question that has been under debate in the field of consumer behaviour especially in the area of consumer involvement literature is whether product and brand choice are the same. If not, then what are the key differences? Product involvement is the degree of interest of a consumer in a product category on an on-going basis. Brand-choice involvement is the motivation of a consumer to make the right choice. As Blouch and Richins (1983) point out the two are not identical. For example, a consumer is seldom involved in the washing machine on an enduring basis, but he/she is likely to be very involved in making the brand selection.

Two contributions to the literature of consumer involvement and its measurement are worth mentioning, viz, Zaichkowsky (1986) and Laurent and Kapferer (1985). They measured the state of involvement as compared to the antecedents or consequences of the involvement and came out with sound measurement instruments. Zaichkowsky developed the Personal Involvement Inventory which treats involvement as a unidimensional construct, with 20 items in the inventory producing a single score. On the
other hand Laurent and Kepferer have brought out the Involvement Profile which is a multi dimensional (four dimensions were identified; perceived importance, decision risk, sign value and pleasure) and built up a 20 item scale. Though the usage of Laurent and Kepferer is widely acknowledged, the problem of full scale availability and its relevance in countries other than France have been hindrances for the researchers to adopt it. Macquarrie and Munson (1986) have tried to merge these two divergent views on involvement and brought out an inventory which has a single score but is multidimensional (has dimensions of importance, pleasure and risk). The conceptual view of the authors was similar to Zaichkowsky but tries to incorporate risk and sign components into the involvement construct. Banwari Mittal and Lee (1988) have tried to fill the gap of product and brand involvement using the scales of Laurent and Kepferer. In their study, they found that some consumer behaviours were roughly equally related to a given facet at either level of involvement, while some other facets were differentially related. For examples, perceived brand differences and brand commitment were related more with brand level than with product level involvement. Interest in reading about the product was related more with the product level than with the brand level involvement. In their research in three of the four facets (importance, risk and sign value), there was an apparent distinction between product and brand levels.

The present study makes no distinction between products or brand involvement as it assumes that the households generally pre-decides the product category and follows it up with specific brand. Hence, from the point of view of interpretation both aspects holds true.

Herbert Krugman (1965) proposed the concept of involvement to characterize differences in the intensity of interest with which consumers approach their deals with the marketplace. Rothschild (1984) reviewed research done on consumer involvement and commented as follows:
1. Involvement is important to consumer theory,
2. There is no commonly accepted definition but visible theories abound
3. There was no single direction in which involvement research was going.
Laurent and Kapferer (1985) and Zaicjkowsky (1986) were some of the researchers who concentrated on the conceptual development and scale development. While Laurent and Kapferer (1985) concentrated on a multidimensional approach, Zaickkowsky (1986) relied on a single dimension. Zaickkowsky developed a 2-item inventory for the measurement of product involvement called Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) and Laurent and Kapferer developed a 16-item scale. Zaickkowsky (1986), Laurent and Kapferer (1985), Celsi and Olson (1988) developed conceptual frameworks and scales for measuring involvement in different forms dealing with different dimensions. Research on consumer involvement impact on the decisions of marketers and consumers has been another criterion with wide interest.

Herbert Krugman (1965) and Rithschild (1984) have concentrated on the intensity of the involvement and the involvement effect on information search and processing. The development of such attitudes to products and also decision making information would form either central of peripheral. Researchers have linked involvement to extent of information search also (Betty and Smith, 1987).

In the Indian context, very few research studies have been carried out on consumer involvement. Kavita Sharma and Sanjay K. Jain (2000) worked on the various antecedents and their influence on involvement. Avinandan Mukherjee and Anirban Ghosh (1996) worked on the influence of consumer involvement on the evoked set of the consumers. Most of the research on consumer involvement is concentrated on the antecedents and the properties. Very little research evidence in the Indian conditions have been found on the topic with respect to WG. Keeping the above discussion and literature review in consideration, this question was propounded to understand the number of points through which information is collected before purchasing the product/brand.
Sales Promotion

As seen earlier through range of literature, it is now clear that Sales promotions forms an integral part of a firm's marketing mix and there are factors that have led to the increase in the importance of sales promotion and a shift in marketing rupees from media advertising to consumer promotions. Some of these factors include (i) Growing power of retailers, (ii) Declining brand loyalty, (iii) Increased promotional sensitivity, (iv) Brand proliferation, (v) Fragmentation of consumer market, (vi) Short term focus of many markets, (vii) Increased accountability, (viii) Competition, and (ix) Clutter.

This study focuses on the white goods / consumer durable market and tries to shed some insights on consumers purchasing patterns (their demographic and psychographic orientations), and their perceptions regarding promotions.

The study is an attempt to understand the impact of sales promotion on consumers. It is necessitated by several factors but chief among them are lack of any research in the area of sales promotions in India. Coupled with this there is little research on consumers in the white goods / consumer durable market.

The seven product identified under WG sector for the study also happen to be a fair representation of different categories in terms of the volumes sold in the market.

Advertising and Brand Awareness

Television is getting transformed rapidly into a primary source of information and entertainment for millions of Indian families. It is as influential as a parent or a teacher. Marketers understand this fact very well. With the growing influence of media, an increasingly large number of advertisements are today created and aired considering target market for respective products, goods or services. The aim is to persuade householders' to make a purchase decision in favour of the advertised brand or to influence a decision made by them.
In the past, marketing researchers have attempted to identify ways in which marketers can manage these effects by exploiting the relationships between a consumers' personality and their purchasing behaviour. This research is focused on linking advertising as an important source in creating brand awareness.

Essentially, branding is a marketing decision by which a business endeavors to identify its products (and services) and differentiates them from those of competitors through the use of a name, phrase, design, symbols, or combination of these. Thus, consumers should be able to recognize and purchase products which they prefer, and in doing so become loyal to that particular brand, while avoiding products with which they are dissatisfied. As such, powerful brands have higher brand name recognition, perceived quality, brand loyalty, strong brand associations, and other intangible assets. Therefore, it is the desire of most marketers to create a brand image that would lead to brand preference and consumer satisfaction.

It is important to note that the personality characteristics associated with the product are differentiated from functional characteristics of the product (e.g. quality or price). They are not just governed by the physical attributes of the product but also by a variety of factors (e.g. advertising and stereotyping) and other marketing and psychological associations (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967; Sirgy, 1985).

Hence, lack of research in this area especially in this part of the world has paved for this empirical research. It is of more relevance since off-late most of the marketers have started adopting innovative ways to communicate to customers. However, customers do have their own way of gathering information about the specific product or brand. The present research is based on the same notion that generally mass communication media (advertising) is one of the most important sources of information for the customers and quite often than not, creates brand awareness.
Factor # 2

In a position paper on research in marketing in India, Bhandari (1987) observed that there is very few studies that deal with the social environment from a marketing perspective and that publications dealing with consumer behaviour and psycho-social characteristics are few in number and mainly descriptive or exploratory in nature. According to him there is also very little published research that provides a linkage between the economic environment and its marketing implications from a micro-organization perspective, although there is no dearth of high quality research studies on economic development from which macro-marketing implications may be drawn. In view of the status of research in marketing in India, Bhandari (1987) pointed out the urgent need for research in the area of consumer buying behaviour and its relationship with demographic, economic and psycho-social factors influencing consumer behaviour especially to understand the effect of sales promotion on brand change or factors that motivate brand switching, to enable the development of sound approaches for marketers and facilitate a better understanding of consumer behaviour.

Factor # 3

In the last decade, and particularly in the last five years, there has been a significant spurt in the consumer durables / white goods industry in India in terms of both, volume and variety of products sold. A note of white goods / consumer durable industry is given below:

Table - 3.4 - The Indian Scenario: Demographics & White Goods Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Behaviour</th>
<th>Patterns</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earning</td>
<td>75% of urban income springs from wages and salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single-Income Families dominate with 55-61% followed by 28-32%, 9-10%, and 2-3% for double, triple and quadruple earners for Socio-Economic Classes (SECs-ABCD/E).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td>43% spends on stores purchases for groceries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving</td>
<td>50% urban homes take to the savings route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertains</td>
<td>Small Screen (Television) rules the roost with a 93% penetration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>10% unprecedented growth in monthly income during 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Appliances</td>
<td>Television, Washing Machine and Mixers and Grinders penetrating with 93%, 23% and 74% respectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pitch, March 2009 pp. 18-46
Pitch-IMRB analysis of the changing consumer scope details of the urban consumers, especially their market-specific behaviour. Drawing on the exhaustive data IMRB International’s second edition of UrbanScape 2009, the study brings to fore patterns of urban India lives, earning and spending which essentially throws light on the rising aspirations of the great Indian middle class. One of the most prominent trends that have been visible is 10% rise in average household income at Rs. 8682/- during 2007. The loan uptake rose by 4% to 18%.

The study rings forth some important facets of Indian middle class segment. The essence of resurgent India lies in the great Indian middle class. A peep in to the product ownership and product usage brings to fore consumption patterns of Indian middle class segment.

In terms of product ownership, 74% use and own mixers / grinders while in Southern market the usage touches a 90% mark. Usage of refrigerator although makes much sense a good 59% percent of theses white goods are used and owned by consumers with North leading the list with 79% product penetration. Air-conditioners (not part of the present research undertaken) were found to be preferred by upper-class which accounts for 4%. The study found that TV has highest penetration with 93%.

However, the study by IMRB was conducted throughout India (East-West-North-South) it was restricted to understanding of only ownership pattern for selected products, more so for basic articles that formed part of groceries, etc. Nonetheless, it has provided the required glimpse in the monthly spending pattern of consumers / householders that forms part of their general expenses.

The present research tries to overcome the untouched areas with specific focus on selected products in white goods industry through a structured survey in ten cities of Gujarat State.

3.10.2 The Knowledge Gap

The literature scan and the researcher’s personal experience brought out in sharp focus the knowledge gap which can be summarized as under:
1. The study of consumer buying behaviour for white goods has always remained an enigma to marketers or researchers.

2. So far no study exploring this vital subject has been undertaken in the Indian context in the selected cities of Gujarat State.

3. No guidelines are available for as to the amount of income spend on luxuries vis-à-vis necessities.

4. Researchers have diagonally diverse opinions on consumer buying behaviour for white goods as to their perception, preference and factors that influence their purchase decisions as it has been noted that consumer preferences keeps on changing over a period of time.

3.11 Need for the Study

Review of literature conducted as a prelude to the present study revealed that the majority of available studies on consumer buying behaviour are confined to US and Europe. Studies, particularly in the context in the State of Gujarat, India on Consumer Buying Behaviour for white goods industry, are few and far between.

3.12 Significance of the Present Study

Marketing is the word that buzzes most in the ears of every businessman. It is the function of management that serves not only to bring the reward for which all efforts were undertaken, but also directly relates the customer to the businessmen. It is only visible form of all efforts undertaken by any business entity that the public observes and interprets into something meaningful, which determines the fate of businesses to a great extent. Marketing has often been seen as a gimmick that lures customers and creates sales but the history of most successful organizations it is clear revelation that marketing is never ending process that builds everlasting ties with people who are looking for solutions to their unmet needs that emerge in the form of various visible and invisible problems. The basic paradigm, i.e. to reach a customer with a solution to their problem has remained the same, but the way it is achieved is ever evolving with the aim to maximize the effectiveness and to minimize the efforts and time involved with maximum possible accuracy to understand the consumer right.
Marketing has come a long way since its evolution. More so when production exceeded demand and forced businessmen to look for newer ways to sell products. Advertising campaigns, sales promotions, price cuts, newer variety became order of the day, which further intensified the competition. And, in this scenario of intensive competition the world could see a new concept, that was the emergence of real "Marketing".

The consumer became the king and knowing and meeting his needs and desires was a sure way to success. But understanding the consumer was not all that easy. How a consumer acts and reacts usually is beyond the comprehension of even the consumer himself. *A marketer can assume that whatever a consumer is telling may be perceived as correct but actually in the market place he may act entirely different. A consumer may respond to the marketer's message but may get influenced at the last moment by his friends, family and references group or even by a salesperson.* It may happen that a consumer wishes to use one product but his cultural setting may not allow him. A consumer is often not aware of his/her deeper motives and may not exactly know what he really wants. A marketer may try to make a product available to a consumer at its doorstep whereas he/she is willing to go and enjoy shopping. Marketers ultimately have to match a product's image with self-concept of the targeted consumer and so on.

So studying consumers and knowing them well becomes another paradigm in the field of marketing. *The study of consumer buying behaviour facilitated designing of more effective solution to the marketing problems.*

An organization may think that it has developed the perfect product, one that customers will be queuing up to buy. But despite putting possibly years into new product development, it could find its efforts wasted as buyers reject its product in the few minutes, or sometimes even seconds, that it might take them to choose between competing products. *The organizations may have failed to understand the complex processes by which buyers make purchase decisions. It may, for example have underestimated the role played by key influencers in the decision process and aimed its marketing effort at those individuals who really don't count for a lot in the final*
decision. It may have spent the bulk of its promotional effort at a time when buyers were not at a receptive stage in the buying process.

Unless consumer behaviour is thoroughly understood from time to time, it is not possible for the marketers to design an appropriate marketing mix to appeal to and influence the varied segmented consumers. Thus, the study of consumer behaviour becomes essential for marketers to withstand the onslaughts from competitors and survive in the market. The cumulative result of all these elements is that the study of consumer behaviour emerges as one of the major challenges to the present day marketers.

It is interesting to study the various aspects related to this classification and its role in marketing which have not explored by any of the above studies in Indian context therefore present study mainly focus on the same. It tries to study consumer buying behavior for selected products under white goods industry in the state of Gujarat, India.

3.13 Contribution of the Study

Not many studies on consumer buying behaviour with respect to white goods industry have been carried out in India especially in the state of Gujarat. The study would therefore help in expanding the existing body of knowledge in the field of consumer behaviour in general and for managerial inputs at the industry level in particular. It is also likely to pose some new questions for further research in this field.

Further, the present study will bring to fore the following points which will provide impetus for managerial decision making.

1. Effect of impact of demographic factors on consumer attitudes and perceptions towards sales promotions.
2. Customer profiling (group) based on their attitudes and preferences and draw reasonable inferences based on demographic and psychographic characteristics.
3. To analyze consumer preferences for discounts, offers, etc.
4. To analyze the role of contextual variables in influencing consumers while purchasing selected white goods.
3.14 Summary

Research scholars in many countries of the world have done number of interesting studies in the area of consumer buying behaviour. Even in India also, some remarkable studies are found that focuses on various aspects of consumer buying behaviour for selected products under white goods industry in the state of Gujarat in India. Existing consumer buying behaviour research in the context of consumer durables has mainly focused on their ownership pattern along with demographic / socio-economic variables. There is hardly any research examining the relevance of perception & preferences, factors considered on purchase of these product / brand categories in the white goods industry. Following from the above research gap on the one hand and the perceived requirement of practice arising out of the unprecedented growth in the market for consumer durable products on the other, the objectives of the present study were defined.
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