Preface

With the liberalization of the Indian Economy post 1990s, companies began to realize the enormous potential of rural markets. After 2000, rural market became more attractive due to the rural friendly initiatives of the government, Indian corporations and the arrival of MNCs with customized offerings. Several FMCG, durables, automobiles, telecom, insurance and service sector companies adopted a rural thrust (Kashyap, 2012). Over the years demographics in rural areas have shown an overall increase in terms of population, literacy level, purchasing level, size of rural settlement and physical environment. Total rural India today accounts for 70 per cent of India’s population, 56 per cent of national income, 64 per cent of total expenditure and 33 per cent of total savings. Consequently rural India today has turned out to be an emerging area for marketers. In the North Eastern part of the country, very little is known about rural consumers, particularly of Assam which according to Economic Survey of Assam (2011-2012) shares 2.57 percent of India’s rural population.

Till recently, business firms have not devoted much resource in studying the rural consumers especially on the aspects related to buying behaviour, demographic profile, rural market segmentation and product penetration. With the identified gaps in mind, a need was felt to undertake a study on rural markets on two product categories namely FMCG and Durables. Consequently the research has been undertaken with six Objectives, four research Hypotheses and two research Questions. The Thesis has been divided into five parts, namely Opening Perspectives (which contains a brief introduction on the identified area of research), Literature Review (which gives an
outline of the reviewed papers), *Conceptual framework* (which deals with the research methodologies used), *Research Findings* (which delves on the analysis and discussion part) and *Closing Perspectives* (contains the summary of the findings and the scope for further research).

It is surmised that the current study will add to the existing stock of literature on rural markets, especially on the identified areas and further help marketers in framing marketing policies.

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