CHAPTER – 3
LITERATURE REVIEW: INDIAN CULTURE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

3.1 Introduction

India is a multicultural country with multitudinous groups and subgroups. The total geographic area is 329 million acres (Datt and Sundharam 2003 p.92), which is roughly the size of Western Europe and is inhabited by one million people (Rangarajan 2000 p.294). India is a vast country with diverse regional and sub regional variations (Kumar 2004). The country abounds with economic, caste, ethnic, religion and linguistic diversities (Stern 2003). The size and heterogeneity makes it difficult to generalize its ecological record (Rangarajan 2000 p.294). This further makes it an arduous task to understand the consumption pattern and consumer behavior in India.

Indian society though is complex but not necessarily beyond understanding (Mandelbaum 1996 p.4). To gain insights into India the field work should be accompanied by cultural understanding which can be obtained only by the knowledge of the secondary sources (Venkatesh 1995). In this chapter an attempt is made to unfold the various elements of this complex culture taking into account the historical and contemporary perspectives. The chapter explores the issues relevant to Indian culture like racial elements, social structures, religions, languages, family and kinship types, psyche, social change, consumption patterns, markets and marketing. The various changes taking place in light of globalization are also looked into in this chapter.

3.2 Historical background of Indian Culture

India is a vast country with diverse regional and sub regional variations (Kumar 2004 p.41) and highly complex culture (Sinha and Kumar 2004 p.90). India as a political entity came into existence only about fifty years ago but the Indian culture, society and civilization as they exist today have been evolving for more
than 5000 years with motley of influences (Chhokar 2007). The Indian society has strong cultural and historical roots which are difficult but essential to unfold (Venkatesh 1995). The present Indian "society is a resultant of forces that shaped it through certain historical periods (Panchanadikar 1965 p.156). The present Indian culture is a mélange of different cultures. Chhokar (2007) traces the major invasions which modified the ancient Indian culture. The Aryan invasion began around 2000 B.C. and continued for centuries by different Aryan tribes. These tribes mixed with native agriculturist Indians and got absorbed within the original inhabitants. The Greeks under Alexander invaded India in 326 B.C. The Greeks left north-west India 317 B.C. The first major Muslim invasion was under Mahmud of Gazni, who conducted seventeen raids on north-western India between 1001 and 1027 A.D. Shahab-ud-din Ghuri an Aghan conquered Delhi in 1192 A.D. There were periodic incursions till Babar established the Mughal Empire in 1526. The Mughal ruled India for about 200 years and the British Empire began in 1757 after the battle of Plassey. There were other small incursions of French and Portuguese in between and had their influence in small regions. The British rule ended in 1947 and thus the present Republic of India came into being. Most of invaders stayed in India and got absorbed and assimilated within the native social and culture environment. There were inter-marriages and the foreigners influenced the language, religion, traditions and other aspects of culture (Chhokar 2007). The "deviations of any kind, instead of being totally assimilated or rejected, were allowed to retain their distinctiveness, and were treated somewhat differently, but were still considered to be part of the Indian culture totality" (Sinha 2004 p.99). The present Indian cultural profile includes many communities which are based on caste, tribe, religions, languages and localities (Singh 2000 p.44).

3.3 Types of Races

Rispley the census commissioner for 1901 census of India presented in his report and then in his later work "The peoples of India" (1915) has classified the Indian population into seven racial types as follows (Hasnain 2003 p.150):
1. Turko-Iranian type: This included people of Baluchistan and the frontier provinces (now in Pakistan).
2. Indo-Aryan type: Includes Punjabis, Rajputs, Jats and Kashmiri khatris.
3. Scytho-Dravidian type: This group comprised the Maratha Brahmins and Coorgs.
4. Aryo-Dravidian type: Mainly includes people of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar.
5. Mongolo-Dravidian type: Includes Bengali Brahmins and Kayasthas.
6. Mongoloid type: This comprises the people of Assam, Nepal, and Burma.
7. Dravidian type: This group includes the majority population of the present in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, southern Madhya Pradesh and Chotanagpur.

Hasnain (2003) feels that this classification is “based on preconceived notions” and credits B.S. Guha for giving the most recognized and acceptable classification of the racial elements in India. This classification is based on the anthropometric studies conducted during the 1931 census and the classification is as follows (Hasnain 2003 p.151):

1. Negrito
2. Proto-Australoid
3. Mongoloid
4. Mediterranean
5. Western Brachycephals (broad headed people)
6. Nordic

There are three most important types of racial elements in India: Negrito; Proto-Australoid and Mongloid (Hasnain 2003 p.153). The South India is dominated by
the Negrito race; the North India by the Proto-Australoid; the East by the Mongloid (ibid.).

3.4 Indian Cultural Ethos: Elements of Indian Culture

There is no single culture which can be called ‘Indian culture’ as “each regional, linguistic, religious and caste group has its own culture” (Kakar et al. 2002 p.241). The social and cultural patterns of India exhibits pluralism in terms of language, geography, ethnicity, religion and culture (Singh 2000 p.44). The discussion of values of any society is a difficult task, and the difficulty increases manifold when it involves India, where values vary on the basis of religion, language, religion, sect, caste, class, and ethnicity (Srinivas 2003 p.172). The social structure, religion, family and kinship of the Indian society help in conceptualizing and comprehending its cultural profile to some extent.

3.4.1 Social Structure

The Indian social structure is marked by caste system and extended family system. The caste is “a purely social and possibly occupational association” (Weber 1974 p.28). Caste system is one of the most commented upon features of the Indian society (Chhokar 2007). It is an ancient historical legacy linked closely with Hinduism and still dominant (Raina 2004). The caste system is believed “to have been first enunciated by ancient law-giver Manu some time in Vedic period (1500-1000 B.C.)” (Chhokar 2007). This system consists of four varnas or social groups namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and the Shudra. The hierarchy was clearly established with Brahmin at the top and in the descending order with shudra at the lowest place in the social order (Rangarajan 1992 p.45). This was known as varna model of caste system, in which the first three groups were regarded as “twice-born” or dwija (Srinivas 2003 p.4). The structural distance between the various castes is defined in terms of pollution and purity as higher caste is regarded as “pure” compared to the lower caste (ibid.). The Brahmins constituted of the elite, learned and the landed, the Kshatriyas were the warriors, the Vaishyas were the traders and the Shudras...
included the menials and the lowest (Raina 2004). There are hundreds of jatis or endogamous groups which can be grouped into these four varnas (Srinivas 2003 p.3). The doctrine of karma and caste system is deeply ingrained in the psyche of Indians thus posing resistance to social restructuring (Sharma 2000 p.165). In the popular epic Mahabharata, Krishna has eulogized and put forward two main doctrines that have become the foundations of Indian Culture (Sharma 2000 p.170).

1. Deterministic principle of Karma: the caste system is a paramount social order based on one's performance in a previous life (Karmic principle).

2. The fatalistic belief that, since all in the universe and cosmic creation is predestined by him, individuals have only to perform their caste duties 'without expecting any rewards' (Karmanya eva-adhikaras te ma phaleshu kadachana) (ibid.).

The Hindu society and polity were governed by shastras or texts especially Manusmriti by Manu and Arthashastra by Kautilya. They provided authenticity to caste system and patriarchy (Nadkarni 2007). Even in the banking the rates of interest varied according to the caste to which the borrower belonged and not on the nature of transaction, reflecting the social structure of the times (SBI 2006). The Brahmins were charged 26%, the Kshatriyas 36%, the Vaishyas 48% and the Sudras were charged 60% (ibid.). The alien groups were absorbed in the society who then became contestants for rank and thus became supporters of the caste system (Mandelbaum 1996). The Britishers fostered casteism and recruited laborers on the basis of caste (Alley 2006) and the societal divergence aggravated further under the colonizers (Nadkarni 2007). Despite the persistent efforts of social reformers like Rammohun Roy and declaring casteism as illegal under the new Constitution of free India the centuries old practice manifests in the daily lives of Indians. Despite constitutional restrictions caste system remains evident among Hindus (Mehta and Belk 1991). Caste still remains a salient feature of Indian social morphology and "is still manifestly correlated with every form of social stratification whether based on wealth, occupation, income,
education, or some other criterion” (Beteille 1993 p.446). The lineage is an important consideration of purity and pollution at birth, initiation, marriage, death and many other important occasions in life (Shah 1993 p.145). The caste is a major determinant of marriage as evident in the matrimonial columns of the major newspapers, wherein the columns are classified under headings of caste and sub caste and the first word in most advertisements indicate caste or sub caste (Sharma 2000 p.174). Singh (1992) posits that caste system as regarding the strict adherence to hereditary occupation has weakened to some extent but it has gained new strength in the form of constituency and vote bank based on castes in the polity (Chhokar 2007). There is a gradual political polarization based on religion, caste, ethnicity (Raina 2004; Mukherji 2005) and region (Gillan 2003). Caste is a powerful instrument of great force in mobilizing political support in the whole of country (Beteille 1993 p.450). A curious feature of the caste system is that despite its origins in the Hindu theory of fate and reincarnation, caste organization is found among Indian Muslims, Jews, and Christians in modern times. Caste system has collapsed while class system has resurfaced at every level (Gupta 2005). The existence of caste system is one of the major factors responsible for high Power Distance index for India (Chhokar 2007). Hofstede (2001, p.120) exemplifies the caste system of India regarding the prevalent inequalities in society since pre colonial period and which are responsible for high power distance index.

3.4.2 Religion

Religion and culture are inextricably woven and religion has a potent influence on the peoples’ lives across diverse cultures (Tarakeshwar, Stanton and Pargament 2003). Not only is the Indian society marked by castes and tribes, it is also abound with religious pluralism as the major religions have many subgroups (Deol 1995 p.25). Every major religion of the world except Confucianism is represented in India (Srinivas 2003). There are eight major religious groups within India: Hinduism is the main religion which is followed by 82.7 percent of the population, Muslims constitute 11.8 percent, Christians (2.6
percent), Sikhs (2 percent), Buddhists (0.7 percent), Jains (0.4 percent),
Zoroastrians (0.3 percent), and Jews constitute 0.1 percent of the Indian
population (Bhatnagar 1995 p.39). Religion and spirituality have great effect on
the Indian psyche (Das 2002). In earlier centuries religion was part of every
aspect of lives of Indians (Mandelbaum 1996). Indian culture has strong religious
roots and is a way of Indian life, which has evolved over many centuries
(Venkatesh 1995). Every part of Indian culture has deep religious roots
(Venkatesh 1995). Hinduism the main religion is difficult to define and is
interpreted in number of ways (Chhokar 2007). It “represents a complex system
of daily practices, rituals, beliefs, and symbolic patterns that overlap various
aspects of social life” (ibid). Some scholars have related caste system to Hindu
religious beliefs and practices (Alley 2006 p.127) and have agreed that caste in
the past was an integral part of Hinduism (Beteille 1993 p.445).

The other prominent religions groups are Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists,
and Zoroastrianism are the religions that have been introduced into India by the
foreigners while Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism are indigenous religions which
“rose out of Hinduism, bearing a social message and “modified the Hinduism of
time”. The religions that rose against the caste system, sooner or later were
reabsorbed into the caste system as these movements grow, develop through a
cycle and then devolve back in to the system (Mandelbaum 1996 p.525). This is
true for most of the religions as is evident in Sikhism which is comparatively a
modern religion but has failed to eschew the caste system.

In Indian culture time is viewed as cyclical rather than historical or chronological
(Venkatesh 1995). The basic religious beliefs have play an important role
supporting such a cyclical view as in Hinduism and Buddhism, it is assumed that
on death of the body the soul is born again in the another body (Usunier 2000
p.30). Thus the time before birth and after death have concrete meanings for
Indians (Venkatesh 1995). The belief in regular incarnation until the soul is
purified and reaches nirvana changes the way the time is viewed in one’s life, as
people believing in reincarnation are patient (Usunier 2000 p.30). Frawley (2000 p.9) explains that how in the Indian subcontinent every spiritual and healing tradition like Yoga and Ayurveda is based upon the concept of dharma which is referred to as the natural law of truth that govern the universe. “The most important dharmic law is the law of karma: as we act, so must we experience the fruit of our actions, not only in this life but in future lives as well. There is an absolute justice in the universe, but this occurs through many incarnations and cannot be seen by a momentary look at human affairs” (Frawley 2000 p.10) Because of this belief in life after death people usually associate with dead people and the individual experiences take on different meanings (Venkatesh 1995). In Hinduism spirituality is interwoven into morality and ethical decision making (Tarakeshwar, Stanton and Pargament 2003). The paramount aim of life is moksha or liberation, which is a state if pure being (sat), pure consciousness (hit) and pure bliss (ananda) (Nagendra 1965 p.268).

Rituals and ceremonies are common practices in almost all walks of Indian life. There is wide spread belief in astrology and major activities like initiating a new business, date of marriage and swearing in of the new government are scheduled according to dates and times which are considered auspicious (Chhokar 2007).

3.4.3 Language

Language is the vehicle of culture (Herskovits 1968). It is the most recognizable part of culture (Hofstede 2001 p.21).India has amazing linguistic heterogeneity as more than 200 languages are spoken by different groups (Hasnain 2003 p.155). In India there are 1,652 languages out of which 350 are recognized as 'major languages' and 18 are the official languages (Chaudhary 2004 p.8) A single ethnic area may have many languages, as in Nagaland which has 19 languages and dialects (Deol 1995 p.25). The first language of most people is scheduled language attributed to them but about 38 million people speak “mother-tongues” which that are not included in the Indian constitution’s scheduled language groups (Stern 2003 p.20). This multilingualism “developed
historically by means of a series of conquest and amalgamations of a wide variety of linguistic groups, topped by the British conquest, and the imposition of English for those who wished to fill the important military, educational, business, and governmental positions" (Ross 1965 p.214). Hindi is spoken by about 400 million people, English by only the elites and Sanskrit which has great cultural, religious and sentimental significance is hardly spoken by anyone (Stern 2003 p.19). The languages spoken by Indian population can be divided into four language families (Hasnain 2003 p.156):

1. Austric family (*Nishad*)
2. Dravidian family (*Dravid*)
3. Sino-Tibetan family (*Kirat*)
4. Indo-European family (*Aryan*)

There is a great diversity in the languages included in these four language families. Around seventy three percent people speak Aryan languages, twenty percent speak Dravidian languages, 1.38 percent speaks Austric languages and 0.85 percent speak Sino-Tibetan languages (ibid.). The Austric family mainly includes languages spoken by the central Indian tribal belt: Santhals, Munda, Ho, Koraku etc.

The Sino-Tibetan family languages are spoken mainly by the tribal belts of the North-East. The Dravidian family comprises of languages like Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Gondi etc. which are spoken by the people in Southern India. The languages in the Indo-Aryan language family are spoken by the majority of the population. This language family includes languages like Marathi, Konkani, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marwari, Mewati, Hindi-Urdu, Chattisgarhi, Bengali, Maithili, Punjabi, Kumayuni and Garwahli etc (ibid).

English language was introduced by the British in the country. It is spoken by minority of people who are elites and who lead India towards modernization (Stern 2003 p.19). The English language is "sine qua non for entrance into the elite bureaucratic services, the officers’ mess, the executive suite, the upper
reaches of the professions, the circles of artists and intellectuals who are invited to international conferences, editorial rooms of influential newspapers and journals, the professorates of leading universities, the student bodies and old boys’ associations of “great public schools” and fashionable colleges, the company of the distinguished, the beau mode of the best people, the celebrations of the rich, the right clubs and, now crucially for India, the world of the Internet and of India’s burgeoning information technology industries” (ibid).

Though there are diverse languages but the “basic thought, ideal and focus, has been the mythology of India, the ancient lore of India, the ancient songs of India and they extend from the banks of Brahmaputra to Cape Comorin” (Prasad 1965 p.358). The above thought elucidates the unity in diversity within India. Kumar (2000 p.12) feels that new information and communication technologies can be expected consolidate linguistic identities along with sub-regional identities.

3.4.4 Family and Kinship

Family is the fundamental organization that has important bearing on the individual and the society. The society and kinship begins with the family, as the society is continuously replenished by the family (Mandelbaum 1996, p.33). The ideal Indian joint family consists of grandfather who is the patriarch and grandmother his deputy for the management of the family, the couple’s married sons and their wives, unmarried sons and daughters, married grandsons and their wives and unmarried grandsons and granddaughters, who live under the same roof (Stern 2003 p.35). In the typical Indian family a woman occupies a marginal status, where major decisions are male dominated (Webster 2000). The “Hindu family generally operates at four different levels (Madan 1993 p.420): (1) as a household; traditional Indian extended family society ‘joint family’ has been a social reality. The Indian family can be identified as the extended family, which is not a family as in sociological literature but as the household; (2) as grouping of households constituting a property-group; (3) as a still wider grouping of households incorporating the coparcenary which defines the outer limits for alodial and obligatory ritual purposes; (4) as an all encompassing
dispersed grouping defined genealogically rather in terms of active interaction." Family must be given more central place in India, to examine its relationship with education, occupation and social mobility as it one of main institution that reproduces inequality in contemporary times (Beteille 1993 p.451). The attack by egalitarians on the caste system is misdirected as caste "should be attacked for its divisive role in electoral politics rather than reproducing inequality as institutions like family are the real obstacles in the path of egalitarianism (ibid.).

In the Indian family hierarchy, age and sex are the main ordering principles as men have more decisive authority, property rights and dominant status. The elders and both parents enjoy more respect and woman as a mother is more respected (Mandelbaum 1996 p.39). India is a male-dominated society in which the birth of female child is not welcomed, while "begetting a son is a cultural necessity for the salvation of forefathers and the continuation of their lineage" (Sharma 2000 P.176). The bias towards female child is deeply entrenched in Indian society and the biases in the nutrition, health and literacy deserve serious attention (Sen 1993). These biases are evinced even in contemporary period where prenatal scanning and other sex determination tests are employed for determining and choosing the sex of the progeny (Sharma 2000 P.176).

Indian kinship systems are extremely heterogeneous and diverse. They are "regionally diverse (north/south/east/west), communally differentiated (Hindu/Muslim/Sikh/Christian/Buddhist, etc.), socially stratified (in terms of caste or class) and culturally discrete (ethnolinguistic criteria)” ( Uberoi 1993 p.45). Karve(1993) has divided the Indian kinship organizations on the basis of four geographical regions: Northern, Central, Southern and Eastern.

1) Northern Zone: This comprises of region between Himalayas in north and the Vindhya ranges in south. This region includes states like Sind (now part of West Pakistan), Punjab (including western Punjab now in Pakistan), Kashmir, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, part of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Assam and the independent kingdom of Nepal. In this area the languages derived from Sanskrit are spoken by the majority of the
population and the languages are Sindhi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Hindi, Bihari, Bengali, Assami and Nepali.

“The present northern family is a continuation of the family of the ancient times with slight modifications. It is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal. Marriage is generally outside of the kin-group and the local group. It is a joint family in which the brides are all brought from outside and the girls are all given away. The behavior is strictly regulated according to generation, according to whether one is born in the family or married into the family and finally according to whether one is a man or a woman. Customs like levirate and sororate, by which a widow lives with the younger brother of her husband and a man marries the younger sister of his wife, show that marriage is very much a relationship between families rather than between individuals. The giving and receiving of gifts also reflects the familial aspect rather than the individual aspect of the transaction.”

2) **Central Zone:** This zone comprises of regions between the northern and southern zones and includes states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Kathiawad, Maharashtra and Orissa. The main languages spoken here are Rajasthani, Hindi, Gujarati, Kathiawadi, Marathi and Uriya are spoken which are of Sanskrit origin, so there is close affinity to northern zone. But within this region there are large segments of people who speak Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages. As this Zone lies between northern, southern and eastern zones it is influenced by all these regions though not uniformly. In Rajasthan, Kathiawad and Gujarat only Sanskritic languages are spoken and so the kinship pattern followed is predominately northern, though few customs are similar to southern zone. Some groups practice one type of cross-cousin marriage (marriage of man to his mother's brother's daughter) which is as a result of mélange of different ethnic elements. In Maharashtra majority of the people speak Sanskritic language, while many people in east speak Dravidian languages and Marathi includes many words of Dravidian origin. The majority of the people practice one type of cross-cousin marriage while
other types of cross-cousin marriages are taboo but marriage to father's sister's daughter is followed in southern Maharashtra. In north junior levirate is allowed in many castes while in central and southern Maharashtra it is not allowed. The state is most affected by the southern practices as is evident in the kinship behavior, kinship terms, folk-songs and literature. In Orissa more than one-fourth of the population is tribal and the languages spoken here belong to all three linguistic families in India. The region is not homogenous like Maharashtra but many agriculturists allow one type of cross-cousin marriage. This zone though diverse in its various areas but permits one type of cross-cousin marriage.

3) **Southern Zone**: This region encompasses those parts of southern and central India where the languages of Dravidian family are spoken and can be divided into five regions: Karnataka where the Kannada language is spoken; Andhra Pradesh or Telingana, where Telugu is spoken; Tamil Nadu where the language is Tamil; Kerala or Malabar where the Malayalam is spoken; region from north of Andhra Pradesh through Bastar and Western Orissa into Southern Bihar where a number of mixed languages are spoken. The Dravidian languages are related in both form and history (Trautmann 1993).

In this zone though patrilineal and patrilocal family is the dominant family type but there are some important sections which follow matrilineal and matrilocal and a substantial number whose systems possess features of both types of organizations. In marriages exchange of daughters is favorable and marriage among close kin is preferred. There are cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriages but one cannot marry member of one's own clan. The girl can marry any of her older cross-cousins or her mother's younger brother, so a boy can marry any of his younger female cross-cousins or daughter of any of his elder sisters. The children of brother and sister should marry while children of two brothers and two sisters must not marry (Trautmann 1993). In north there is clear distinction between blood-relations and in-law relations and one can't marry within a blood
relation. But in south people can marry in blood relations and marriage strengthens the existing bonds of kinship. This brings in society that is totally different from north. The distinction between daughters and wives is not as sharp as in north and a wife enjoys greater freedom. Similarly the distinction there is minimal distinction between house of father and father-in-law and usually marriage takes place between kins not living too far and there is much visiting between the two houses. The women in lower castes enjoy a comparatively higher position to the Brahmin women as divorce and widow remarriage is permitted, there is economic independence and gender equivalence within the lower castes (Gough 1993).

4) Eastern Zone: This zone comprises regions of regions in east and north-east where languages belonging to Austro-Asiatic family of languages are spoken. But there is not much known among the kinship patterns of these groups. The succession of property in Khasi community of Meghalaya devolves in the female line and sons have no right to it. It is a multilineal society but patrilineal principles are gradually introduced by modernization (Nongbri 1993).

The kinship systems and institutions of North India are different from Dravidian or the South Indian systems (Dumont 2000 p.111). While the family and kinship system in North-East India is totally different from the system and institutions prevalent in the other regions of India.

For most Indians, family ties are more important than others which closely bind an extended group which is more than a nuclear family and their parents (Stern 2003 p.37). In general the connectedness is more important in the Indian family and the family functions like a psychological unit. Chaudhary (2004 p.106) feels that people largely interact on “the principles of relationships linked with kinship, age and gender dynamics”. She believes that there is an intense desire for social links as kinship terms are often invoked in conversations even though people are not linked to each other and the family functions like a psychological unit. The individuals are incomplete on their own and constantly search for completeness.
in the family. The young people strongly align with their parents and search for outside relationships only if there are problems within the family (ibid).

3.5 Indian Psyche

Indian culture is marked by “pluralism in life patterns and experiences (Venkatesh 1995). Though Indians have been often labeled as collectivists but they tend to refer to the context before acting in a situation and there is rarely any ethical or moral code that is applied universally in all the situations (Chaudhary 2004 p.105). Indians are collectivists but they also strive to serve their self interests and have highly individualistic thoughts, feelings and fantasies (Sinha and Kumar 2004 p.99). Gupta (1997 p.302) opines that Indian psyche is a mix of individualism and collectivism where individualism plays a role as long as it doesn’t violate the social norms. Sinha and Kanungo (1997) view that Indian managers exhibit dual mode of behavior: the primary mode of behavior is rooted in the traditional Hindu values like collectivism and high power index; the secondary mode includes values like individualism and pragmatism which are acquired from the foreign management practices (Kumar 2004).

Sinha (2004) explains that Indians lay emphasis on context sensitivity and balancing disposition. Indian society is marked by moderation in everyday living and it is “common to hear the adult correcting the child for laughing too much or crying excessively, working too hard or too little, eating too much or too less” (Chaudhary 2003 p.186). Sinha and Kumar (2004 p.100) elucidate this contextual way of psyche of Indians. They avoid extreme decisions and incorporate opposite ideas in a complex way. The context can be specific to place (desh), time (kaal) and person (paatra). People follow different norms and values at different places, time and with different people. The behavior norm at public place like job is different from a private situation like family. An individual may put in extra effort if the situation requires thus deviating from the normal behavior and similarly family members and relatives are trusted and favored while strangers are distrusted and discriminated against Kumar (2004 p.44) describes this Indian mindset as being rooted in Brahmanical idealism and
Anarchial Individualism. Brahmanical Idealism is represented by wishful thinking that may be totally different from reality. Indians are prone to thinking in highly idealist ways, though irrational and but are poor in implementation. Even though Hofstede (1980) has found Indian society to be collectivistic but still Indians sometimes exhibit individualistic characteristics. In anarchical individualism though individuals act out their personal views and achieve their personal goals but they find it difficult to coordinate and achieve the common shared group goals (Kumar 2004). Bharati (1985) feels that Indians tolerate inconsistency more than westerners and their thinking is more contextual, leading to contradictory self concept elements (Triandis 1999). The values and beliefs usually deviate from action (Taeube 2005 p.208).

The society does recognize performance but the performance evaluators in organizations usually avoid giving poor performance ratings (Chhokar 2007). Indians are usually uncompromising in their views as they have high expectation levels and the aspiration levels are very rigid. Further they are over optimistically confident, have tendency to devalue a concession and are emotional which negate effective business negotiations (Kumar 2004 p.47). Indians usually crave for higher social status (Mathur, Zhang and Neelankavil 2001 p.264).

Chatterjee and Pearson (2000) find that the tradition values at work are receding in importance and “there is the emergence of global value paradigms” (Kakar et al.2002 p.242). The leader in an organization is idealized and is revered probably due to the high power distance index as a result the leader is more committed and satisfied but is deprived of the feedback (Kakar et al.2002 p.247).

For the Indians, objects have meanings at three levels i.e. aesthetic, functional, and spiritual, whereas in Western cultures the notion is that objects have only aesthetic and functional dimensions (Venkatesh 1995). Mehta and Belk (1991) observe that the reasons for possession of religious objects differ among the lower and upper middle classes in India. The lower middle-class people possess religious objects to pray for better life while upper middle class people who are
successful in life possess these objects to avoid wrath of natural resources that may take away their worldly possessions.

3.6 Social Change

The study of social change is a difficult task because of its vague theory and it becomes more difficult in case of Indian society which has great historical depth and plurality of traditions (Singh 1998 p.1). There are two concepts in case of social change which have been widely discussed ever since their introduction by M.N. Srinivas (1952): Sanskritization and Westernization.

3.6.1 Sanskritization

It refers to “the process by which a “low” Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of, and frequently, “twice-born” caste” (Srinivas 2003 p.6). Sanskritization “means not only the adoption of new customs and habits, but also exposure to new ideas and values which have found frequent expression in the vast body of language, sacred as well as secular (Srinivas 1974). Sanskritization results in upward mobility of the caste in question and it only deals with positional change not any structural change. This process has occurred throughout the history of India and still continues to occur. It is responsible for bringing in major cultural change in the history the nation and took place in the whole of the subcontinent (ibid). The fluid political system before The British served as a potent source of social mobility throughout India. When a low caste man became wealthy, it was followed up by Sanskritizing his life and ritual, style and claiming to be belonging to a higher caste.

3.6.2 Westernization

The British rule brought in a new type of society (Srinivas 1965 p.428). The British brought with them new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values which helped them in laying the foundations of a modern state during the nineteenth century (Srinivas 2003 p.49). Westernization refers to the societal and cultural changes that took place in the Indian society as a consequence of
150 years of British rule and the term encompasses the changes that took place in fields of technology, institutions, ideology and values (ibid.). There are implicit values in Westernization: humanitarianism, equalitarianism and secularization. These values brought in many reforms in society which were aimed at achieving these values (ibid.).

Singh (1988 p.86) feels there are two types of Westernization which have modernized the Indian tradition: primary and secondary. The primary Westernization resulted in the emergence of a westernized sub-cultural pattern in which minority section of Indians that came in direct contact with western people. They were primarily intellectuals and scholars who adopted and fostered the expansion of “many Western cognitive patterns and styles of life”. The second type of primary Westernization refers to the process in which there was general percolation of Western cultural traits, like “use of new technology, dress, food, and changes in the habits and styles of life of people in general, resulting from the cultural contact with the British” (ibid.). The modernization of the Indian society began under the British who developed an effective and administrative judicial system, introduced higher education, and promoted modern banking and commerce, and some modern industries. (Bottomore 1965 p.181). The new middle classes which grew up during later period of British rule were the products of the growth of secondary and higher education (ibid.). Singh (1988 p.87) feels that the emergence of institutions and structures like “education, law, science and technology, new forms of politicization, urbanization, industrialization and finally new media of cultural transmission through press, printing and facilities of transport and communication” has resulted in the “cultural modernization.”

Srinivas (2003 p.56) enumerates some of the traditions that have changed as a result of Westernization: Traditionally Indians ate their meals sitting on the floor. The food was served either on the leaves or on metal plates. Eating was a religious act among the upper castes and Brahmins. The food was first served to the deities, then to the men and children. But now, people in urban areas prefer
to eat at tables along with the whole of the family. The office and school timings
determine the eating time. The earlier diet restrictions are fading away as
tomatoes, onion, radish and eggs are making their way in diet, which were
earlier forbidden. Though people have adopted Western technology they carry
their religious attitudes along with them as many technical workers have religious
symbols inscribed or painted on their machinery. On Vishawakarma day most of
the workers just clean and worship their tools and machinery, and don't work
with them. There is increase in vernacular and English literature. Generally the
urban people are more exposed to Westernization and bigger the town more is
Western influence (Srinivas 2003 p.65). In urban India Westernization “has
resulted in nontraditional clothing, foods, furnishings, and occupations, all which
help in the gradual process of replacing caste prestige with a social class system
of status” (Mehta and Belk 1991). Singh (1988 p118) views, that cultural
modernization has resulted in "changes in dress, food habits, rituals, vocabulary,
material culture, mode of travel and types of conveyance and customs.”

3.6.3 Secularization

“Secularization” implies that all that was regarded as religious previously has
ceased to be so (Srinivas 2003 p.126). There is rationalism, which involves the
replacement of traditional beliefs and ideas by modern knowledge (ibid.).
Srinivas (2003) lists the various societal changes that have taken place as a
result of secularization: Earlier there was a notion of pollution and purity based
on caste system. A higher caste man is more pure than a lower caste and it was
believed that the food and touch of the lower caste pollutes the higher caste.
With the onset of puberty a confined to a room for several days and women
during monthly periods were regarded as polluted. The days of mourning in case
of death were regarded a polluted: These notions of pollution and purity have
weakened and this is more true in urban cities. The eating is no more regarded a
sacred ritual and usually all members of family eat together. There is a tendency
to drop the life-cycle rituals like name-giving (namakarana), the first tonsure
(chaula) and the annual ritual of changing the sacred thread (upakarma). The
widow marriage is acceptable and the shaving of Brahmin widow’s head, a part of funeral ritual is no longer followed. The Brahmin wedding which used to last from five to seven days is reduced to few hours or single days and the main rituals are attended by the close relatives while the rest of the guests attend the reception. The time spent on daily rituals by Brahmans has been decreasing and have lost importance with growing secularization. The marriage age for girls has increased and most of the urban girls are educated. People in large cities tend to form voluntary associations based on language, sect and caste to make way to make up for the loss of the traditional social and cultural environment (ibid.). There is increase in consumption of non vegetarian food among the castes like Brahmans in which it was considered a taboo earlier (Singh 2000 p.29).

Mukherji (1965 p.200) hypothesizes that material and cultural amenities available to increasing number of people along with mass education could lead to break-up of joint families into nuclear but joint family system still remains a dominant phenomenon. Family has shown resilience and adaptability as it has still remained a dominant institution maintaining a adult-child proximity (Kumar 2000 p.7).

Singh (2000 p.213) feels that before the dawn of globalization the local and regional cultures were forced to restructure their cultural identities. The rise of middle class has caused migration to urban areas and there is increase in politicization thus resulting in breakdown of community values in villages. Modernization has resulted in breakdown of community values which leads to increase in communal tensions. The cooperation among the castes that symbolized common cultural identity and contributed to collective efforts in the celebration of festivals, fairs and other cultural events are rare. Many of the fairs and festivals are commercialized and market forces are encroaching into the cultural landscape of the villages. These occasions though now are effectively organized but they have become entrepreneurial. Globalization further extends the scope of this commercialization and fragmentation of the village culture. The
paintings and sacred objects of artistic values are traded for their commercial value which provides support to rural artisans. There is a revolution in the electronic media which act as agents for sharing cultural experiences. There is homogenization in the dress patterns and fusion of styles among the urbanites and this change is evident among the younger generation. There is emulation of western values and practices in interpersonal relationships among the youth and issues like dating, sexual relationship and live-in relationships are more common in urban India. The burden of metropolitan life style and increasing work pressure will further result in rise in consumerism and individualism (ibid.).

3.6.4 Rise of Middle Class

Another striking feature of India today is the rise of middle class and it is growing rapidly (Das 2002 p.280). The middle class is estimated at 100 to 350 million people depending on the criteria of estimation (Wessel 2004 p.94). Sridharan (2004 p.411) conceives the middle class based on the income into three types: “elite” middle class that corresponds to high income (above Rs.140, 000 per annum) group; “expanded” middle class that is associated with high and upper middle income (Rs.105, 001-Rs.140, 000 per annum) groups; “broadest” middle class that corresponds to the high, upper-middle and middle income (Rs.70, 001-Rs. 105, 000 per annum) groups. Between 1989-90 and 1998-99 there is significant increase in number of households in these categories in both urban and rural population and there is consequently fall in the number of households in lower income group but the “broadest” which comprises of the concept of middle class is only 6 per cent of the population. The Indian middle class is totally different from the middle class of United States as only eight million of Indian population has household income above 20,000 dollars (Ramachandran 2000 p.44).

Though many social changes have taken place due to Westernization and secularization but many issues of concern still remain in the society. There remains a wide chasm between de jure and de facto rights of the women in India (Agarwal 2000 p.37). Though there is a substantial decrease in the poverty in the
1990s (Deaton 2003; Sundaram and Tendulkar 2003) but presently the Indian economic scenario is juxtaposed by 7 per cent annual growth on one side and huge mass poverty on the other (Gupta 1997 p.297). But there has been and is there presently duality in Indian society of privileged and non privileged (Thapar 2000 p.xxi). India is moving towards multiculturalism in which there are majority and minority cultures, rather than the emergence of a composite culture (Kakar 1996 p.368). The forces of modernization have fostered ethnicity, which has resulted in growth of movements for autonomy and identity (Singh 2000 p.213).

3.7 Globalization and Indian Consumption Patterns

India’s economic growth and emergence as a profitable destination has generated interest in the country (Ganguly and Ayres 2006 p.5).

Globalization has wide spread impact on Indian society and the changes are evident in the lifestyle, consumption patterns, production of cultural objects and the religious practices etc. This has significantly altered the traditional modes of “cultural expressions, usages of language and communication media at the local, regional and national levels” and has led to the emergence of new kinds of urban sub cultures of consumption (Singh 2000 p.51). Venakatesh (1995) has identified thirteen different factors that point to the emergence of India as a consumer society:

- A burgeoning middle class, the changing values and the growth in consumer demand.
- Role of women is changing and so is the structure of family.
- Consumers’ expectations are rising across the population.
- The past savings and introduction of credit system has resulted in the increased spending on luxury items.
- New shopping environments and retail outlets.
- Proliferation of Media, satellite and cable television, and existing film industry.
- Familiarity of English language among the people and sophisticated media.
- Increase in consumer awareness and sophistication.
- Exposure to world wide consumer products and rise of overseas travelled Indian consumers, professionals, tourists and workers.
- Competitive domestic consumer goods producers.
- Reemergence of hedonism
- Entry of multinationals
- Emergence of rural markets

Viswanathan (2001 p.1187) posits that development and increase in income has resulted in change in consumption patterns as there is increase in budget shares of non food items as compared to food items. There is also a change in consumption pattern of food items from cereals, milk and milk products to vegetables and fruits. Singh (2000 p.28) observes that there is increase in consumption of milk, eggs, fruits, fish, meat, etc., followed by their increase in production. There is rise in food processing and packaging. There is homogenization of inter regional culinary practices. Nandy (2004) opines that the movement up the food chain hierarchy from starch, to grain, to animal protein and vegetables is identical to modernity.

Alcohol in one form or the other is prevalent among 50 per cent of the total communities in India (Singh 2000 p.29). The entry of multinational alcoholic brands has led to the shifting of beverage preferences and there is increase in quantities of absolute alcohol consumption (Mohan et al. p 110). The national average of alcohol consumption is 53.27 percent and state of Punjab has the largest incidence of drinking occasionally by men which is 81.05 per cent (Singh 2003b p.xxix).

Goyal and Singh (2007) posit that young Indian consumers are passionate about visiting fast food outlets for fun and change but home food remains their first choice as they regard home food as better than fast food. The youth value taste and nutritional values for making food choices which are followed by ambience and hygiene.
Singh (2000 p.98) enlists the changes in consumption patterns of the Indians. There is more consumption of electricity and the expansion of road networks and media has brought in some homogenization in consumption patterns. Products like tea, coffee, eggs, meat and fish have become popular and cosmetics, soaps and detergents have been employed even by remotest villagers. People have become conscious of their looks and there is growth of beauty parlors, beauticians and health clubs. The middle class is increasingly buying the dresses and brands by the multinationals.

Wessel (2004 p.95) observes that “a standard middle class residence is made of brick, neatly plastered, has two or more rooms, a separate kitchen and space outside for washing clothes and utensils. Good money is spent on the home decoration, refrigerators, mixer-grinders, television, sofa sets, fans, coolers and music systems. Most the middle class owns mopeds, scooters and motorcycles and increasingly buy cosmetics and packaged foods. There are diverse clothing fashions and youngsters adopting western dresses). The enjoyment of the goods is central and the values of morality are irrelevant.

The growth of middle class has resulted in emergence of distinct teen culture which is potential market for variety of goods and who are “recognizable by their distinctive dress, hair-style, lingo, habits and life-style” (Srinivas 2003 p.185). This has resulted into emergence of popular cultures in big cities wherein youth coalesce around their interests ranging from music to drugs. They are more influenced by peer pressure than to the family influence. Singh (2000 p.117) observes that there is the emergence of new values among the youth who “accept western food and beverages, dress, cosmetics and ornamentations, music, dance and artifacts” substantially. “The western style of living, such as internal furnishing and stylizing of household, reading of western journals, magazines and literature, has grown very fast” (ibid.).

Liberalization coupled with the spread of media and communication has led to increase of materialism in the society (Chhoker 2007). Wessel (2004) observes that simplicity is equated with non-modern. Although the middle class places

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premium on simplicity and abstinence from material goods but there is no adherence to this principle and there is a change from morally superior life to 'modern' which is consumption oriented. It is believed that wealth earns a person respect and social recognition. Possessions rather than character grants one status. The products are graded and valued on the basis of price rather than on the qualities; foreign goods are preferred over indigenous goods; branded products are preferred over unbranded; expensive brands are regarded superior to economical brands. Consumption is desired and entails “comfort, pleasure and participation in modernity”. Style and image is communicated through products.

Materialism coupled with avarice for wealth has resulted in corruption (Chhokar 2007). The material gratification entails corruption and dehumanizes an individual. The consumption is viewed as contributing to societal fragmentation but it is central to middle class (Wessel 2004 p.105).

Globalization and liberalization has resulted in startling growth of technology which has far reaching implications for business (Dixit 2000). There is plethora of choices available before the consumers (Mukherji 2005 p.260). The electronic media like radio, television, cell phone, and web based technology has revolutionized the banking, services, trade, management practices and inter-cultural communication (Singh 2000 p.55). Adoption of new technology has resulted in growth in consumerism and proliferation of media, satellite and cable television.

Mitra and Pingah (2000) observe that the liberation process has changed the economic and social environment of the rural households as media and migration has caused profound effect on the consumption patterns, leading to desire for products outside the village economy. Though there is a tendency to save instead of buying white goods but there is a gradual tendency to consume rather than build assets. There is demand for high status consumption goods among the low income groups. The rise of consumerism results in buying goods which are not needed (Srinivas 2003 p.185).
Liberalization has resulted in an increase in the number of private and state-controlled television networks. Rao (2000 p.3571) observes that regional television has penetrated 26 per cent in rural areas, which would facilitate the opening of rural markets. This has resulted in fostering regional identities, emergence of separate nations in India, and strong political powers (McMillin 2001 p.48). There is a resurgence of strong beliefs in Hinduism, which can be interpreted in various ways (Chhokar 2007). The Hindi cinema after 1990s has portrayed the Indian identity as Hindu, wealthy, and patriarchal in nature (Malhotra and Alagh 2004). The distressed middle class, which has been tired and confused by modern life, finds refuge in Hindu nationalism, which communicates a moral discourse against consumption (Wessel 2004 p.110).

Modern India has new orientations of leisure and entertainment (Singh 2000 p.231). The traditional entertainers are losing their vocations to the new forms of entertainment. The traditional pattern of interpersonal communitarian mode of communication and leisure is being increasingly eroded by radio, television, videos, audio magazines, and newspapers. People are resorting to hedonistic and individualized types of entertainment and leisure (ibid.).

Gupta (2000 p.89) feels that consumerism is not pervasive as there are just few "consumerism enclaves or high consumption zones" which can't be separated from the rest of the country and regarded as modern. Singh (2000 p.118) also observes that these cultural influences are concentrated in the major cosmopolitan cities. Srinivas (2003 p.181) on the other hand, opines that the buyers of consumer durables are not just limited to the urban areas but even the people in rural areas are buying them.

3.8 Markets and Marketing

Westfall and Boyd (1960) had pointed out the weaknesses in the Indian marketing and opined that education was expanding. This would facilitate advertising and create demand, which would help in branding, franchising, and standardization. Nearly 47 years after this forecast of the researchers seems to
be very true as education and globalization has further provided trajectory to the development of marketing system in India.

Ramachandran (2000 p.47) reviews the marketing environment of Indian market and opines that the Indian market is highly price sensitive which is fostered by propensity to save and the lack of social security system. People try new foods but they return to their traditional products and Indians are not brand loyal. The price promotions are not effective and small packages are preferred. Advertising entails communication in local dialect and direct marketing could be considered in Indian conditions.

There is a tendency to use and reuse a product (Ramachandran 2000; Keller and Moorthi 2003). Rao (2000) analyses the Indian consumer market and observes that the trends suggest a strong growth of consumer durable and non-durable products. There is faster penetration of sophisticated fast moving consumer goods suggesting the expansion of rural markets. Mukherji(2005) contends that there is rise of consumerism and advertisers should use children advertisements for communicating with children and mothers, as the communication between mother and children is an important aspect of the mother-child relationship.

3.9 Conclusion

It is well known that culture influences consumer behavior (Maheswaram and Shavitt 2000 p.56). Cross-cultural research which tries to unfold the effects of culture on consumer behavior is rife with plethora of methodological problems. The problems increase manifold when trying to understand and unravel its effects on behavior in the Indian context. The complexity and diversity of multicultural India has been widely recognized in the literature. The phenomenon like “cultural difference, confluence, domination, and confrontation” which form the vocabulary of multiculturalism” are part of a longer and deeper historical experience in countries like India” (Ganesh 2005 p.14).
This chapter traces the historical past of the Indian cultural syncretism. An effort was made to explore the factors behind the Indian cultural mosaic. The social change in Indian society and factors behind it are looked into and literature on the contemporary, Indian consumption patterns and markets have been explored. In the forgoing review of literature, the different aspects of Indian culture and consumption have been outlined and an effort has been made to make this literature as the base for the present study.