CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer Behaviour refers to the behaviour that consumers display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. The study of consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items. It includes the study of what they buy, why they buy, when they buy, where they buy, how often they buy and how often they use.

The term ‘consumer’ is often used to describe two different kinds of consumer entities - the personal consumer and the organizational consumer. The personal consumer buys goods and services for his or her own use (e.g. shaving cream or shampoo), for use of the household (a VCR), or a gift for a friend (a book).

The organizational consumer buys goods for profit and not for a profit business. Government agencies (local, state and national) and institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, prisons) all of which must buy products, equipment and services in order to run their organizations, fall under this category.

The study of consumer behaviour holds great interest for us as consumers, as marketers and as scholars of human behaviour. As consumers we benefit from insights into our own consumption related decisions, what we buy, why we buy, how we buy and the promotional influences that persuade us to buy. The study of consumer behaviour enables us to become better – i.e. wiser – consumers.
As marketers and future marketers, it is important for us to recognise why and how individuals make their consumption decisions, so that we can make better strategic marketing decisions. If marketers understand consumer behaviour, they are able to predict how consumers are likely to react to various informational and environmental cues, and are able to shape their marketing strategies accordingly. Without doubt, marketers who understand consumer behaviour have great competitive advantage in the market place.

As scholars of human behaviour, we are concerned with understanding consumer behaviour, with gaining insights into why individuals act in certain consumption related ways and with learning what internal and external influences impel them to act as they do.

Profits from customer relationships are the major aspect of all business. So the basic objective of any business is Profit maximization through customer satisfaction. But it is always difficult to get customer satisfaction. A consumer may state his needs and wants and yet may act otherwise. He may not be aware of his deeper motivations and may change his mind at any stage.

Inspite of such diversities among consumers, there are many similarities among them. To find these, the study of target customers’ wants, perceptions and shopping and buying behaviour will be helpful as it will provide the information necessary for developing new products, prices, channels communication and other marketing elements.

In the majority of markets, however buyers differ enormously in terms of their buying dynamics. The task faced by the marketing strategist in coming to terms with these differences is complex. In consumer markets, not only do buyers typically differ in terms of their age, income, educational levels and geographical location but more fundamentally in terms of their personality, their lifestyles and their expectations.
The importance of Consumer behaviour in marketing has been beautifully described in a journal titled, “Modern Management”, Calcutta, January 1999 in the following words, “Consumer behaviour is a rapidly growing field of research and teaching, which, in addition to marketing managers is also of considerable value to others who are professionally concerned with buying activity.” An important reason for studying consumer behaviour is evaluation of consumer groups with unsatisfied needs and desires. The essence of modern marketing concept is that all elements of business should be geared for the satisfaction of consumers.

1.2 Emerging Potential Of The Indian Market

The recent Indian market trends are from mass to direct marketing, from transaction to relationship marketing. The new trend is only evolutionary and not revolutionary. The economic boom of the late 1980’s and early 1990’s and a more open industrial policy in India have brought in a new sense of optimism among the marketing managers, especially those dealing in consumer and durable goods. It has become common to talk about unlimited opportunities and the market reaches awaiting to be tapped in urban as well as rural India. The marketers are no doubt expanding and the very significant growth rates witnessed in small towns and rural areas over the past few years have opened new vistas for further growth.

The consumerism of the 80’s has been a topic of many popular writings. There is a talk of the emerging middle class which finally got recognition under the former Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi’s liberal economic policy. As a result of this, the consumer and durable goods industry expanded their production. Conspicuous consumption became the way of life for a section of the population. Consumer asserted his sovereignty by choosing such products and brands which suited his or her personal image and changing life style, compelling the industry to become much more competitive and innovative. It also brought with it a commotion in the marketing welfare for acquiring and
retaining a market strategy. The Indian consumers could no longer be taken for
granted. With the fast growing small scale sector and large number of tie ups
with foreign collaborators by the corporate sector, the nineties proved to be the
watershed in the history of competitive marketing in India. The need to
understand the emerging markets and the consumers who comprise them, has
thus become a big challenge to the marketing experts, especially those of
consumer goods which reach the entire realm of the population.

The present day Indian market for durable consumer goods is master
minded by multinationals and their Indian counter parts. The producers are
willing to invest large fortunes in competitive advertising and product
differentiation. India might not yet be on par with the Asian tigers like, Hong
Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, but it is certainly on the way to
becoming one.

Economic liberalization in India has opened the doors for a massive
expansion in investment and production in the entire spectrum of industry.
Alongside this substantial growth depending of the industrial structure, the age
of high mass consumption also seems to be a foreseeable prospect. Thus, India
was identified as one of the largest markets for consumption goods in Asia,
next only to China. The 200 million strong middle class consumers in India
have clearly sent a message to the world that their appetite for consumer goods
is enormous by any standard. What all this means to marketing and the
consumers of the Indian market, is a topic to be examined in detail.

The rapid rise in consumer spending, which is no doubt derived from
higher levels of disposable personal income, is not a mere quantitative spurt. It
represents a significant qualitative change in the people’s perceptions of what
they want and how they would go about the job of fulfilling their wants. Thus,
the growing numbers of companies are increasingly looking towards orienting
their business to go beyond customer needs and wants.
1.3 Development In Women Consumer Behaviour

In Indian society traditionalism to modernism is taking place. Women working outside the home are being gradually encouraged after 1970. Liberalization from 1991 had changed the role of women very much through increased education and employment opportunities. She is no longer confined to the four walls of the kitchen. She has acquired a place in the society by virtue of her education and employment. Increasing educational opportunities for women has opened up new kinds of career opportunities enabling them to move into previously male dominated trades and professionals. They have also been entering the salaried/ remunerative occupations both in public and private sectors and thereby enjoy the status more or less on par with men. The percentage of working women has been growing at a steady pace. At present, if a woman works outside the home she is not only realizing and fulfilling herself but also utilizing her capabilities and skills usefully, besides benefiting the family economically.

KR Kim, Managing Director, LG India (Pitch, October 2006) said that “The consumer and her consumption is changing, consumer wants reasonable price, good quality as well as good after sales service. So, the three factors of price, quality and after sales service should be in balance to satisfy her and it is important that Indians are not just looking for low prices. On the changing consumer preferences, there is a discernible shift from the low-end to the high end, but today this is not so fast”.

People are exposed to the Western lifestyle and there is a drastic shift in their tastes and preferences. Unlike a few years ago, when only the males used to decide what to buy, today it is a totally different scenario. Today, it is the female who influences the family purchase decision. Obviously women decide what to buy today. The social role interpretation, however, is changing, visibly in the more urban areas also. Roles are getting overlapped and there are new interpretations emerging. Notably, gone are the days pulling out their partners
from a store, pleading them not to spend anymore or may be spend somewhere else. Times truly are changing. House wife is an active partner in the family and major factor in the purchase decision making. Nowadays women from urban have taken their husbands to the shops, to spend. This is a manifestation of the social role interpretation. Women are rapidly gaining purchasing power in the household. For household appliances, which are directly used by females like the washing machine, refrigerator, grinder and etc, it is the wife who usually decides which product to buy. Usually, the head of the household might take major decision individually or jointly, along with other working or non-working members. But, now, it is changed. Women are independent in purchase decision of household.

Due to the presence of imperfect competition in the appliance sector, the price of home appliances decreases following the technological progress in the consumer durables sector and as a result, both women's employment and the fraction of household that buys home appliances rise. The changing role pattern of women in purchase decision making develops a new concept in marketing, namely women consumer behaviour. This is important from marketing segmentation point of view and understanding her position in the changing socio-cultural scenario. It becomes imperative for marketers to launch their products consistent with women’s wants and needs.

1.4 Rationale For Selecting The Topic

“Consumers” or the “Customers” play a very critical role in durables industry as these are the people who finally buy the goods of the organization and the firm is always on the move to make them buy so as to earn revenue. It is crucial from both the points of view as given below:
i. **From the customers’ point of view**: Customers today are in a tough spot. Today, in the highly developed & technologically advanced society, the customers have a great deal of choices & options (and often very close & competing) to decide on:

   i. they have the products of an extreme range of attributes,
   
   ii. they have a wide range of cost and payment choices,
   
   iii. they can order them to be supplied to their door step or anywhere else
   
   iv. and finally they are bombarded with more communications from more channels than ever before.

ii. **From the marketers’ point of view**: “The purpose of marketing is to sell more stuff to more people, more often, for more money in order to make more profit”. This is the basic principle of requirement for the marketers in earlier days where aggressive selling was the aim. Now it can’t be achieved by force, aggression or plain alluring. For the customers are, today, more informed, more knowledgeable, more demanding and more discerning. And, above all, there is no dearth of marketers to buy from. The marketers have to earn them or win them over.

The global marketplace is a study in diversity; diversity among consumers, producers, marketers, retailers, advertising media, cultures, and customs and, of course, the individual or psychological behaviour. However, despite prevailing diversity, there are, also, many similarities. The object of the study of consumer behaviour is to provide conceptual and technical tools to enable the marketer to apply them to marketing practice, both profit and non-profit.
The study of consumer behaviour is very important to the marketers because it enables them to understand and predict buying behaviour of consumers in the marketplace; it is concerned not only with what consumers buy, but also with why they buy it, when and where and how they buy it and how often they buy it and also how they consume it and dispose it. Consumer research is the methodology used to study consumer behaviour; it takes place at every phase of the consumption process: before the purchase, during the purchase and after the purchase. Research shows that two different buyers buying the same product may have done it for different reasons, paid different prices, used in different ways, have different emotional attachments towards the things and so on. The purpose of a business is to create and keep customers. Customers are created and maintained through marketing strategies. And the quality of marketing strategies depends on knowing, serving and influencing consumers.

Consumer behaviour is interdisciplinary, that is, it is based on concepts and theories about people that have been developed by scientists, philosophers and researchers in such diverse disciplines as psychology, sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology and economics. The main objective of the study of consumer behaviour is to provide marketers with the knowledge and skills that are necessary to carry out detailed consumer analysis which could be used for understanding markets and developing marketing strategies. Thus, consumer behaviour researchers, with their skills for the naturalistic settings of the market, are trying to make a major contribution to our understanding of human thinking in general.
1.5 Scope Of The Study

The study aims at analysing Women Consumer Behaviour with reference to Home appliances viz. refrigerator, washing machine and microwave oven. The scope of the study has been limited to certain purchasing behavioural aspects of women consumers of the above said durables such as lifestyle perception, information search, product awareness, product evaluation process, promotional offers, brand preference, factors of motivation, mode of payment and post-purchase behaviour. The study broadly aims at examining perceptions of the women purchasers of the above said durables mainly in terms of sources of information, location where the purchase is made, influence of communication and promotional mix and the ultimate purchase decision factors.

1.6 Statement Of The Problem

India has the world’s largest number of professionally qualified and also more working women. This includes the female workers at all levels of skills from surgeon and airline pilot to bus conductors and labours. But, still on an average, the Indian women are socially, politically and economically gained more attention and prominence only after the economy has liberalized which provided them ample work opportunities inside and outside the country in the recent past. Along with this, the Indian family system has undergone a dramatic change resulting in more and more nuclear families in the urban cities, nowadays. This change in the family systems has given an opportunity to work outside and actively participate in major family purchase decision. This changing role of women from housewife to home manager/earning member has been successfully exhausted the attention of both national and international marketers and retailers.

The purchasing behaviour of women consists of both physical and mental activities. The physical activities involve visiting a shop, examining the product, selecting products and eating/drinking outside that is the actual act of
consumption. Mental activities, on the other hand, involve deliberations on formation of attitudes, perceiving communication material and learning to prefer a particular brand of product.

Women are gatherers and men are hunters. Consequently, women have better peripheral vision than men and would benefit them as gatherers. Men are interested in finding the right product and want quick answers and being able to leave the store quickly. Women, on the other hand, prefer to have a more personal interaction with the sales associate with more eye contact, support and collaboration during the buying process.

The woman consumer deliberates within herself before she finally makes a purchase move. This deliberation relates to many variables and is aimed at solving their consumption problems. Amongst these problems, the first and foremost is to decide whether to spend money and the second problem is what to buy because the needs are multiple and the resources are scarce.

Bijapurkar (2005) stated that “Residual women are more self-sacrificing and residual men are more authoritative. Emergent men are more yielding, understanding and emergent and women are more confident but stressed.” Gefen and Straub (2007) and Tanner (2004) stated that “Male and female are different in many perspectives such as psychology and communication.”

As rapid socio-economic changes sweep across India, the country is witnessing the creation of many new markets and a further expansion of the existing ones. According to a study by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) (2008),” Indian incomes are likely to grow three-fold over the next two decades and India will become the world's fifth largest consumer market by 2025, moving up from its position in 2007 as the 12th largest consumer market. With over 300 million people moving up from the category of rural poor to rural lower middle class between 2005 and 2025, rural consumption levels are expected to rise to current urban levels by 2017.”
The economic outlook report by Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) (2007) states that “The next decade belongs to Indian and Chinese consumers as Asian consumers will continue to splurge owing to improving economic conditions. Also, households will be confident that their newfound wealth is not ephemeral, allowing them to reduce precautionary savings.”

“Moreover, approximately 315 hypermarkets are expected to come into existence in tier-I and tier-II cities across India by the end of 2011, riding on the boom in organized retail sector” says a joint study by consultancy firm KPMG and industry body, ASSOCHAM (2007). Further, as per an NCAER report (2005), compared to urban areas, the ‘lower middle income' group in rural areas has nearly doubled. The overall number of rural households is estimated to grow to 153 million in 2009-10 from 135 million in 2001-02. This major consumer base accounts for 41 per cent of the Indian middle class having access to 58 per cent of the total disposable income. Marks & Spencer and Reliance Retail joint venture is planning to open 35 more stores over the next five years. It already has 15 stores in India. Bharti Wal-Mart Pvt. Ltd, the joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and retail giant Wal-Mart, opened its first cash-and-carry (wholesale) store in India at Amritsar in Punjab. The joint venture plans to invest over US$ 100 million in setting up 15 more such outlets in the next three-four years.

"Younger women and working women have a greater range of interests." (Mr. Edelman, 2005). "Women are buying houses by themselves, and women are buying all kinds of other products that before had been sold to a dual audience," said Anne Marshall (2007), a partner at Women Trend, a consulting firm in Washington that is part of Holman Communications.

“As companies are realizing women are valuable consumers, we are taking it more seriously both in the brand as well as the way of communication with regard to women consumers," (Ms. Davis, 2006).
An understanding of purchase behaviour of women is an essential aspect as it reflects the influence of brands, buyer & customer influence on the purchase of a particular brand, promotional and communication mix and purchase motivation, etc. The success of particular segment of the market or the failure of the same depends on the purchase behaviour of women consumers. The main point for developing successful marketing strategy is a clear understanding of the women consumers mind before, during and after a purchase. As all women consumers are not alike and their shopping patterns and preferences are constantly changing, they prefer varieties of products which reflect their own needs, personalities and lifestyles.

To solve the problems of women consumers and marketers, there must be continuous studies in the field of Women Consumer Behaviour. Hence this study is undertaken to provide solutions to solve the problems of women consumers and marketers taking into account the household durables.

1.7 Objectives Of The Study

i. To study the socio-economic profile of women consumers of home appliances.

ii. To analyse the factors influencing the purchase decision process of women consumers of home appliances in terms of article evaluation, lifestyle perception, information search, promotion and communication mix, brand consciousness, mode of payment and post purchase behaviour.

iii. To identify the determinants of women consumer behaviour on home appliances and to classify them based on the factors influencing the same.

iv. To analyse and interpret the constraints of women consumer behaviour on home appliances.

v. To measure the influence of demographic variables on women consumers of home appliances.
1.8 Hypothesis Of The Study

The following research hypothesis are formulated and structured for the study.

i. There is no significant difference among purchase decision factors of women consumers of home appliances.

ii. Women consumers of home appliances do not differ in their perceptions.

iii. There is no significant influence of article evaluation, lifestyle perception, information search, promotion and communication mix on women consumer behaviour with reference to home appliances.

iv. There is no direct influence of brand consciousness, mode of payment and post purchase behaviour on women consumer behaviour with reference to home appliances.

1.9 Research Design

1.9.1 Research Methodology

The project study adopted descriptive research methodology.

1.9.2 Pilot study

A preliminary investigation was undertaken by contacting 40 women consumers of durables in Chennai and Kancheepuram Districts. Random sampling method was applied. The purpose of the pilot study is to test the quality of the items in the questionnaire and to confirm the feasibility of the study. The Cronbach alpha method and Hotellings t-square method are applied to check the reliability of the statements in the questionnaire. The tests revealed that the alpha value is 0.917 and t-square value is 245.17 which are statistically significant.
1.9.3 Sources of data

The sources of data are primary as well as secondary. The data collected from the women consumers survey constitute primary and information gathered through books, journals, magazines, reports, dailies and internet consist of secondary data. The data collected from both the sources are scrutinized, edited and tabulated. The data were analysed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer packages. Factor analysis is applied to find out the major factors of purchasing behaviour of women consumers of durables.

1.9.4 Products selected for the study

The products selected for the study are consumer durables which are directly used by women viz. Refrigerator, Washing Machine and Microwave oven. The study is conducted to analyse the women purchasing behaviour on these home appliances from different perspectives.

1.9.5 Variables

The study depends upon both independent and dependent variables. In the present study, the demographics of women are considered as independent variables and the variables in Likert’s five point scale are dependent variables.

The Questionnaire administered is a structured closed end questionnaire. Variety of both the question and the responses are structured with 20-sections. Section 1 to 7 of the questionnaire is framed to obtain general information about the women consumers of home appliances. Section 7 to 20 deals with selection of shop, article evaluation process, lifestyle perception, gathering information, influence of advertisement, influence of the type of promotional offers, brand consciousness, purchase decision process, mode of payment, consulting with family members and post purchase behaviour, respectively. The questionnaire, with a covering letter, is handed over personally to each and every respondent and they are requested to return the filled in questionnaire in
about 15 days. The basic instructions are given. Additional information is sought by encouraging the respondents to give suggestions and opinions and by asking questions. The respondents took the period of fifteen days to two months to return the completed questionnaire.

1.9.6 Population

The population considered for the study is well defined. Since the study focuses on the women and their purchasing behaviour towards home appliances, total population of women in Chennai are considered as respondent sources.

1.9.7 Sample Selection

Sample selected for the study covers different areas of Chennai and Kancheepuram Districts. Totally 540 women consumers of durables are selected on simple random sampling method. Out of the sampling, 520 women consumers only returned the filled questionnaires and of that 435 only are usable. Hence, the exact sample of the study is 435.

The sample size was calculated by using the following formula.

\[ n = \left( \frac{ZS}{E} \right)^2 \]

Where \( Z \) = standardized value at 5% level from statistical table.
\( S \) = Sample SD (from pilot)
\( E \) = Expected Sampling error

1.9.8 Research Tools

Primary data collected through a well-framed questionnaire is the research tool for the present study. The tools used for the analysis are demographic factors, selection of shop, article evaluation process, lifestyle perception, gathering information, influence of advertisement, influence of the
type of promotional offers, brand consciousness, purchase decision process, mode of payment, consulting with family members and post purchase behaviour.

1.9.9 Types of Analysis

The sources of data are primary as well as secondary. The data collected from women in Chennai and Kancheepuram Districts are analysed descriptively as well as empirically. The data collected from both the sources are scrutinized, edited and tabulated. The data are analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) and other computer packages.

1.10 Data Analysis

The processing, classification, tabulation, analysis and interpretation of data were done with the help of SPSS software package. The following statistical tools and mathematical techniques have been applied depending on the nature of data collected from the respondents.

1.10.1 Factor Analysis.

Both Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were used in this thesis. “Factor analysis is a branch of multivariate analysis that is concerned with the sharp internal relationship of a set of variables. The numerous variables used in a multi-item scale such as those utilized in the thesis, can be analyzed to note if those variables could be seen as approximately explaining a single factor” (De Groot et. al. 1982). “EFA refers to the determination of the number of common factors necessary and sufficient to account for the inter correlations of a given set of variables” (De Groot et. Al 1982). “It is traditionally used to explore the possible underlying structure of a set of items without imposing any structure” (Child 1990).

“CFA, on the other hand, is where the number of factors are assumed to be known and the main issue is to fit a postulated pattern of zero and non-zero
loading to a given correlation matrix” (De Groot et. al 1982). “CFA is more of a theory testing, rather than a theory rating method, as it is based on strong theoretical and empirical foundations” (Hair Jr. et. at. 1998). Data obtained were investigated by an exploratory factor analysis to determine the number of latent constructs underlying the variables. This was then used in the CFA carried out by utilizing the first or second order CFA for the various scales used in the tests.

1.10.2 Cluster Analysis.

This procedure attempts to identify relatively homogenous groups of cases based on selected characteristics using an algorithm that can handle large number of cases (Cox 1999). However, the algorithm requires to specify the number of clusters. It allows the researcher to analyse the existence of different perceptions of the respondents. The number of clusters may be derived by trial and error method or by computing the large scale differences among co-efficient obtained from hierarchal clusters. This technique is considered appropriate, whenever the research is concerned with a comparison of mean scores, especially in the case of experimental study, involving manipulations such as in the case of this thesis (Bray and Maxwell 1988, Towncend 2002). The basic assumptions of cluster analysis are, the variables should be quantitative at the interval or ratio level. The distances are computed using Simple Euclidean distance among the appropriate variables. In the case of this thesis, clusters are formed with respect to the factors obtained though factor analysis.

1.10.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

ANOVA allows for the study of a single factor or several factors, but will only measure one variable (Bray and Monwall 1985, Towncend 2002). An ANOVA works by measuring the variance of the population in two different ways; the first is by noting the spread of values within the sample; the second is
by the spread out of the sample means. If the samples are from identical populations, these methods will give identical results. The basic assumptions for ANOVA are random sampling independent measurements, normal distribution and equal variance (Jowncend, 2002).

1.10.4 Karl Pearson’s Co-Efficient of Correlation

The Karl Pearson’s Co-efficient of Correlation measures how variables or rank orders are related. This is useful in a linear relationship among variables. It also develops the linear parametric relationship among any of the factors.

1.10.5 Non-Parametric Chi-square Analysis.

Chi-square association test is a non-parametric test useful to establish an association between two categorical variables. The frequency dumping in each cell of the cross tabs allows identification of the association between two types of heterogeneous groups and also the nature of cases in that particular cell. It also exhibits linear by linear relationship and Crammer’s Phi-statistics to study the relationship.

1.10.6 T-Tests.

T-tests are used in situations where the research wants to compare two statistics. The basic utility of a t-test is that it produces a straight forward easy to interpret results of significance. In the case of this thesis, two failed t-tests were used, after all other analysis was completed only to note the differences of assumed mean and computed mean, directly. The basic assumptions for t-tests are one random sampling, independent measurements, normal distribution and equal variance (Jowncend 2002). The t-tests were further strengthened by the use of the Bonferroni correction test which uses t-tests to perform pair-wise comparison between group means. It controls overall error rate by setting the error rate for each test, to the experiment-wise error rate divided by the total
number of tests. Hence, the observed significance level is adjusted and the multiple comparisons are being made (SPSS In. 2001).

Details of Statistical Tools used for analysis noted against each are given below:

i. **One sample T-test** is applied to anlayse the women consumer’s preferences on various elements of purchase decision process in respect of home appliances.

ii. **Factor analysis** by principle component method is applied to analyse the various elements of women consumer behaviour in respect of home appliances.

iii. **One-way analysis of variance [ANOVA]** is used to identify the significant differences among the various elements of women consumer behaviour with regard to home appliances.

iv. **K means cluster analysis** is applied to classify the respondents in to various groups based on the mean scores of various elements of women consumer behaviour on home appliances.

v. **Paired sample t – test** is used to find the mean values of various elements of women consumer behaviour in respect of home appliances.

vi. **Non-parametric Chi square test** is employed to find the association between clusters of buyers of home appliances and various demographic characteristics. Karl Pearson’s co-efficient of correlation is used to find the relationship between the variables of the study.
1.11 Limitations Of The Study

The study takes into account certain factors influencing the purchase decision process of women consumers of durables. The sample size of the study is restricted to 435 and it covers the women consumers of Chennai city only.

The products selected for study are from consumer durables viz. Washing Machine, Refrigerator and Microwave oven. Individual products in the case of non-durables are not selected for the study. Individual name of the brands are not taken for study.

The study focuses mainly on the factors influencing the purchasing behaviour of women consumers of durables. However the role of dealers not analysed through the views of the women consumers.

1.12 Expected Contribution From The Study

i. For Corporate

The study on purchasing behaviour relating to the women consumers of durables is important to make better strategic production decision by the corporate. Study of women purchasing behaviour helps in designing production, scheduling, segmentation, positioning, pricing, distribution, advertising and promotional strategies.

ii. For Government

The study also helps Government in providing products and services and understanding what could be the future problems. e.g. inflation, taxes, etc.
iii. For Marketers

If marketers understand the women purchasing behaviour, they are able to predict how women consumers are likely to react to various situations and are able to shape their marketing strategies accordingly. Studying the women purchasing behaviour has great competitive advantage in the market place. Further it helps in market opportunity analysis, target market selection and marketing mix determination. Women purchase decision process which is characterized as more complex in its nature, has been subject to research often, only recently. This study is an attempt to explore the purchase decision process within a family with special reference in women’s purchasing behaviour and their role in purchase decision. To the marketers women influence in the purchase decision process is to be considered more seriously than the influence of any other factor, for simple and most importance reason, that, it is the woman who decides the consumption pattern, choice of products, brands, stores and other product related aspects, nowadays. The marketing strategy to be adopted under conditions where purchase decisions are husband-dominated has to necessarily differ when such decisions are wife-dominated decisions. In order to reach the prospective buyer without any complications, the marketer’s prime responsibility is to identify the person dominating the decision making process and she is to be influenced further towards the desired action. It is believed that such an approach will serve the purpose more effectively than a generalized approach often practiced by Indian Marketers towards the women purchase activity. Women consumer behaviour research is an effective tool in marketing for all types of organization. It provides clues as how to reach and serve the women consumers more effectively. In order to achieve success in the market, the companies may adopt this methodology.
iv. For Public

Women should be aware of the new products introduced in the market and of its special features, price, quality, etc. They should be capable of identifying duplicate products and should avoid purchasing unnecessary items. Purchase is to be made on the basis of the quality, income and according to the budget. Women must know the standard shop which sells products at reasonable prices with excellent service. They should give importance to the package date, manufacturing date, ISI marks, expiry date, brand etc while purchasing. They should bargain and should clarify their doubts regarding the product, they buy. Proper planning is essential before going for purchasing and should know the credit facilities, offers, discounts, etc. available for the products in the market. To conclude, in order to bring about lasting happiness in purchase, decision should be ‘Joint Decision’. To protect women consumers and help to evaluate products comes, it is essential to study the purchasing behaviour of the women.

1.13 Chapter Layout

The different processes regarding the study have been discussed in five chapters. The contents of each chapter are given below:

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The first chapter is introductory part of the study. It contains consumer durables market in India, development in women consumer behaviour, rationale for selecting the topic, justification for selection of Chennai and Kancheepuram Districts scope of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypothesis of the study, research methodology, products selected for study, limitations of the study, expected contribution from the study and the chapter layout.
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Literature Review sketches a detailed review of the literature relevant to the present study. Previous studies and research findings on Demographics, Place of Purchase, Product features, Period of Purchase, Lifestyle perception, Source of Information, Advertisement, Brand, Purchase Decision making, Mode of Payment, Family Influences, Post Purchase behaviour are included in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Background

This chapter deals with four sections as follows.

Section I: Consumer Behaviour

Deals with the theoretical background of consumer behavior, demographics, consumer decision making, lifestyle in consumer behaviour, outlet choices, consumer shopping styles, reference groups, post purchase behaviour, etc.

Section II: Consumer Durables

This section deals with the classification of consumer durables, demand and penetration level of white goods in India, key trends driving growth in the Indian consumer durables industry, present conditions in Indian consumer durables industry, etc.
Section-III: Home appliances – Microwave oven, Refrigerator and Washing machine

This section deals with the details of the products selected for the study viz, available brands, models, etc.

Section IV: Women Consumers

This section deals with the development of women in India, Indian households and women purchasing power and the development in women consumers segment.

CHAPTER 4: Analysis of Demographic Variables on Women Consumer Behaviour

This chapter presents an application of ANOVA technique to analyse the influence of demographic variables on the selection of purchase outlets, promotional offers and article evaluation process of women consumers.

CHAPTER 5: Analysis of Factors Influencing Women Consumers of Home Appliances

This chapter highlights the application of t-test and Factor Analysis to analyse the variables which were likely to influence women consumers of home appliances in their purchase decision. ANOVA technique is used for the analysis on mode of purchase and Cluster analysis for the classification of women consumers of home appliances.

CHAPTER 6: Summary of Findings and Suggestions

This chapter provides the predominant findings of the rigorous statistical analysis carried out to analyse the primary data pertaining to microwave oven, refrigerator and washing machine and the findings arrived at from the study. It crucially presents behaviour of women consumers along with suitable suggestions and scope for further research.
CHAPTER 7: Conclusions

This chapter provides the conclusions about the study. After analysing the primary data pertaining to microwave oven, refrigerator and washing machine and the conclusions arrived at from the study.