1.1. Introduction

“India lives in villages” the golden saying of Mahatma Gandhi, remains true, even after seven decades of independence. The Hindu (2016) in an article reveals that today, approximately 70 percent of the population lives in rural area. According to McKinsey report (2007) 63 percent of the population will continue to stay in rural area by 2025, amidst mounting urbanization and migration. In terms of economic output, rural India accounts for more than half of Indian consumption and almost half (48 percent) of the country’s economy has a greater potential to reach $500 billion by 2020.

The ‘LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) Revolution’ has transformed the nation’s economy and lifestyle in an unprecedented manner. The Indian market is flooded with different kinds of goods and services, which has a significant effect on the purchase pattern of the consumers. The private players and international marketers, who had once ignored the rural market, now view it as a land of immense business opportunity. The impact of globalization is gradually being felt in rural India as in the urban. However, in the long run it will have its impact on target groups like farmers, youth and women. Indian rural market can be broadly categorized into two categories, they are;

(a) Market for Consumer goods, comprising of durable and non durable goods, and
(b) Market for Agriculture inputs such as pesticides, seeds, fertilizers etc.

In India, the concept of rural marketing has often been viewed as an uncertainty because of vagarious of monsoon but, rural people also search for new products and services similar to urban people. As a result, rural marketing is ascertained the role of carrying out business activities by the flow of goods from urban to rural market, besides the marketing of diversified products manufactured by the non farm workers.

The situation in India is quite encouraging such as to become net employer of agricultural-based products. Furthermore, India plays one of the major roles in oilseeds production among other countries. They are groundnut, rapeseed, mustard, sesame…etc. India stands second in the production of castor seed, after Brazil, Edible oil which is frequently used by all the people is considered as one of the most important and essential
products in the market. Edible oil is one of the basic ingredients used for cooking items. The oils generally, used for cooking are groundnut oil, gingelly oil, coconut oil, sunflower oil, mustard oil... etc. Traditionally people have been using unrefined gingelly oil, groundnut oil and coconut oil.

In recent years, there is a growing awareness among the consumers towards quality and they have also become health conscious which has resulted in the arrival of refined oils. Thus, in the recent past, the edible oil market is catered by many branded refined oils available in loose as well as in consumer packs. The refined oil is available for different varieties, like gingelly oil, sunflower oil, groundnut oil... etc. This has resulted in the growth of many brands and among the brands a different variety which ultimately leads to competition among the manufacturers. This intends the researcher to identify the awareness and the purchasing behavior of women towards branded Cooking Oil, in the rural platform, which is explored and analysed.

1.2. Emerging Trends of Rural Market

Presently the rural market is better grown than urban because of the expansion of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) to all corners. In India, the rural population is huge and the growth rate is also high. This becomes the first important and motivational factor for the FMCG companies to tap into the rural market and now there is a change in the behaviour of rural consumers. According to Nielson Report (2010) the FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) sector in rural and semi-urban India is expected to cross 20 billion dollar in 2018 and 100 billion dollar by 2025. Compared to the urban market more than 80 percent of the FMCG product has posted higher growth in rural markets.

The increase in rural consumption has been led by a combination of increasing incomes and higher aspiration levels and the increased demand for branded products in rural India. Rural consumers have traditional influence in their way of life and behavior that the marketer may find difficult to compete with. As like the urban market, rural customers also discover the new and exciting choice of brands, which creates demand for the available product in the market. Marketers have entered the rural markets by extending the distribution of their existing offer or by developing a separate marketing strategy for the rural markets.

Delshad Irani (2016) Economic Times, Brand equity reporter highlighted that Women are the single most powerful consumer group in the world. He considers “the new
power consumer group as Women in rural India”. Companies must understand the needs and wants of the new rural consumer and recalibrate their strategies accordingly. Hence forth rural women have been chosen as the target respondents in this study.

1.3. Rural Marketing Mix (4 A’s)

Thus the rural market provides a tremendous opportunity for various marketers. Recently people living in rural areas are more cautious to their health and future and there is a growing awareness among the rural female consumers, towards quality. This has resulted in the arrival of branded edible oils in rural areas. At the same time production and marketing problem are also faced by industry. However, the rural consumer is not unlike his urban counterpart in many ways. Rural consumers also face the marketing problem at time of buying products due to various reasons.

Hence the so many MNCs are meeting the consequent challenges in rural marketing approach of Availability, Affordability, Acceptability, and Awareness. (The so-called 4 A’s) Chintan Shah, Rency Desai (2013)

1.3.1. Affordability: This first challenge is affordability. It is making the product and service with small package with low price to the rural consumer. E.g. Small package with low price produced by Godrej -three brands of Cinthol, Fair Glow and Godrej in 50-gm packs, priced at Rs 4-5 meant specifically for Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

1.3.2. Availability: The second challenge is making the availability of the product or service. E.g.: Hindustan Lever, a subsidiary of Unilever, has done a strong distribution system by using company delivery vans and direct selling by setting up of temporary stalls, which helps its brands reach even the interiors of the rural market.

1.3.3. Acceptability: The third challenge is acceptability. It is ensuring their acceptability for the product or service. Therefore, there is a need to offer products that meet their expectation and possibility in the rural market. Because of the lack of electricity and refrigerators in the rural areas, Coca-Cola provides low-cost ice-boxes - a tin box for new outlets and thermocol box for seasonal outlets.

1.3.4. Awareness: Creating awareness is another essential approach to the rural market using the right source of media. Mass media explore more in the rural market. E.g: HDFC Standard LIFE topped private insurers by selling policies worth Rs 3.5 crore in total premia. The company tied up with nongovernmental organisations and offered reasonably priced policies in the nature of group insurance covers. Hence, it is concluded that, Companies have
to find ways to provide the products and service to the rural markets by taking into account the ‘4A s’, i.e. affordability, awareness, availability and acceptability.

1.4. Key Concepts of Consumer Buying Behavior

1.4.1. Defining Consumer Buying Behavior

According to Kotler “Consumer behavior includes mental activity, emotional and physical that people use during selection, purchase, use and disposal of products and services that satisfies their needs and desires.”

1.4.2. Stages of the Consumer Buying Process

Consumer behavior will determine the decision-making process in purchasing. The purchasing process consists of five steps: first, needs identification; second, search for information; third, evaluating the information; fourth, purchase decision; fifth, post-purchase behavior. Consumers behaviour is a continuous process or in other words, if consumers are satisfied then they will not undertake initial process, they may immediately go to purchase decision process. (Indah Mulia Sari, et.al. 2015).

**Figure: 1.1.Consumer Buying Behavior Process**

1.4.2.1 Need Recognition

According to Maslow's hierarchy, only when a person has fulfilled the needs at a certain stage, then he/she can move to the next stage.

1.4.2.2. Information Search

The consumer use to collect information regarding various products/service. Through information gathering, the consumer learns about competing brands and their features.
Information may be collected from magazines, catalogues, retailers, friends, family members etc. Marketers should find out the source of information and their relative degree of importance of the consumers.

**Personal Sources:** Family, friends, neighbour and acquaintances.

**Commercial Source:** Advertising, sales persons, dealers, packaging, displays.

**Public sources:** mass media, consumer rating organizations.

**Experimental source:** Handling. Examining, using the product.

It also includes: 1. Internal search  2. External search

*Internal* search involves the consumer identifying alternatives from his or her memory. For certain low involvement products for example, few people will search the *Yellow Pages* for fast food restaurants; for high involvement products, consumers are more likely to use an *external* search. Before buying a car, for example, the consumer may ask friends’ opinions, read reviews in *Consumer Reports*, consult several web sites, and visit several dealerships.

### 1.4.2.3. Evaluation of Alternatives

There is no single process used by all consumers or by one consumer in all buying situations. There are several consumer processes. Some basic concepts are: First, the consumers trying to satisfy need. Second, the consumer is looking for certain benefits from the product. The marketer must know which criteria the consumer will use in the purchase decision. These attributes of consumer evaluation has been used in this study for measuring the rural women intentions on products like branded Cooking Oil.

### 1.4.2.4. Consumer Purchase Behaviour Patterns

This is the fourth stage, where the purchase takes place. According to Philip Kotler, Keller, Koshy and Jha (2009), the final purchase decision can be disrupted by two factors: negative feedback from other customers and the level of motivation to comply or accept the feedback. For example, after going through the above three stages, a customer chooses to buy a Nikon D80 DSLR camera.

#### 1.4.2.4.1. Role of rural women in Purchase Decisions:

They are defined below:

**Initiator:** The rural women (person) who first initiate or thinks of the idea of buying a particular product.

**Influencer:** A rural woman (person) whose idea or advice influences the buying motive.
Decider: As an individual woman with the buying power and make decision role to make the ultimate choice regarding which branded product to buy.

Buyer: The person (rural woman) who concludes the transaction and buys the product.

User: The woman (or persons) who is ready to use the product.

1.4.2.5. Post-Purchase Behavior:-

In this stage, customers compare products and service with their expectations and are either satisfied or dissatisfied. If customers are satisfied the outcome is brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is the ultimate aim of many companies. On the basis of either being satisfied or dissatisfied, a customer will spread either positive or negative feedback about the product. So, companies should carefully create positive post-purchase communication to engage the customers.

So here in this research Female consumer behavior encompassing the above said variables in rural environment is observed and analysed.

1.4.2.6. Brand Loyalty

Women show a higher sensitivity in health and are currently operating the propensity than referred to follow the recommendations for nutrition, Ionica Soare, et.al, (2014). So here the cooking oil purchase will be dependent upon health consideration of buyer and hence this comment gain significance in this study.

With the above allusions this study frames the questionnaire to find the facts relating to the rural women loyalty status on Branded Cooking oil in Villupuram Taluk.

1.4.3. Factors Influencing Consumer Purchasing Behavior:

Figure1.2. Factors Influencing Consumer Purchasing Behavior:

(Source) Sarangapani (2009), rural consumer Behaviour in India.

Buying behavior of an individual varies with diverse influencing factors like culture, motivation, socio economic status, environmental factors, cost of living and attitude, etc. The marketer is interested in understanding rural consumers and competition. Marketing options
are relevant for the decision variables, which include product decisions, channel decisions, decisions on media, message and pricing decisions and consumers’ decision. Many corporate companies in India as well as foreign players are firming up concrete plans to tap the rural retail market. The study of changing consumer behavior implies how and why a particular consumer reacts to the decisions of producers.

The sequence reflects the need to look outwards at the environment of rural markets before examining the options in each of the marketing decision areas. Rural consumer buying options are also relevant to decision variables of marketers, which include product decisions, channel decisions, decisions on media, message and pricing decisions. The strategic marketing decision integrates decision variables to reflect elements of the rural marketing system. So, the marketers have to focus on the influences as a predominantly with regards to rural market. The following are the influencing factors,

1.4.3.1. Cultural and Social Practices influence on Consumer Behaviour

The cultural and social practices have a major influence on the behaviour of the rural consumer. Increasing access to urban areas and information dissemination possibly reduces the influence of traditions. The influence of culture reveals itself in consumer preferences for product features, product size, shape and colour. The information source is also influenced by social practices. In typical farming communities, it is the men who do the purchasing and women are not often allowed to step outside the home.

According to Khatri (2002) he stated that the social-cultural influences on behaviour need understanding for developing an effective marketing strategy. The relevant others include family members, members of the social groups and retailers. The influencers vary according to the type of product purchased. Also, children are sent by their mothers to purchase something without specifying a brand. They ask for products they have seen or heard on radio or TV. The influencing members in the community include the village elders and also the educated youth of the village is added by Rajan, (2005). Retailers also influence consumers in rural markets. An important reason for this is the credit that the retailer extends to many of his customers. This is true for FMCG. So here in this research Female consumer behavior encompassing the above said variables in rural environment is observed and analysed.
A marketer’s response to the influence of cultural and social practices is in the areas of product and of promotion. Marketers should design products to reflect the social and cultural influences. The message to promote products should make use of the signs and symbols the villager is familiar with.

Hence this study takes rural culture and social practice as a parameter to analyse the rural women consumer behavior.

1.4.3.2. Geographic and Demographic Influences on Behaviour Differences

Rural buying behavior of consumers helps to understand the factors that influence the purchase preference and the behavioral differences.

The behavior differences are inimitable to rural markets which are influenced by the place of purchase and the demographic profile of the rural market is described in terms of, sex distribution, literacy levels, age, household size, occupation and income. Individual buying behavior varies with their age factor. Buying pattern and satisfaction change among the individual women, based on the age background, the level of preference and other demographical factors. It is also true that the same consumer could buy from different locations depending on the product and the need. Rural consumers do not rely on the local outlets and haats alone, as some of the purchases are made in the urban areas.

Hence this study focuses on socio economic profile of this selected Villupuram area and find out the impact of demographical profile on rural women buying behavior.

1.4.3.3. Perception and Attitude of Product Design and attributes Influences on Consumer Behaviour

The marketer seeks to modify the behavior of the rural consumer needs to influence the consumer’s perception and attitude. The decision variables of product and message like the colour, shape and actions are critical to marketing effectiveness in rural markets as they hold meaning for rural consumers and are different from those held by the urban consumers. In interior markets, brand identification is through visual patterns.

Consumer’s interpretation of product and promotion contribute to creating the position for the product. The interpretations of the rural consumer differ from those of the urban consumers. The lower literacy levels in the rural markets increase the importance of the perceptual influences. In interior markets, brand identification is through visual patterns. The strong influence of perceptions on rural consumers provides a good reason for the marketer to develop separate marketing strategy for the rural market.
An increased exposure of rural consumers to urban lifestyle has led to the ongoing changes in norms and roles prevalent in the social fabric of villages.

1. A primary symptom of the change is the shift from collective thought to individual action.
2. Another change is in the similarities in perceptions, attitudes and benefits.
3. A third change is in the behaviour of the rural consumer.

This presents a wider target rural women audience for marketing and wider media options for advertisers.

1.4.3.4. Rural Women Buyers

In the traditional set-up, decision-making on a purchase is limited to the male heads of households. An increase in rural literacy coupled with superior access on information has resulted in the involvement of the other members of the family in purchase decision-making. This presents a wider target audience for marketing and wider media options for advertisers.

Senthilkumar & Ramki (2015) stated that, the rural women are empowered through self-help groups (SHGs), which help those women to be in frequent contact with urban places, increase their mobility, economic security, purchasing power and decision-making power. An increased exposure of rural consumers to urban lifestyle has led to the ongoing changes that happened on influencer and role of buyers who are rural women especially in the purchase of household goods.

Hence this study generally concentrates on consumer purchase decisions on Cooking Oil with relevance to rural women.

1.5. Edible Oil Industry

1.5.1. Global Production Trend of Major Edible Oils

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, commodity profile of edible oil (2016) China is expected to be the top producer of Groundnut oil followed by India and Burma in 2015-16 and India’s share in global production of Groundnut Oil in 2015-16 may be around 20 percent. European Union (EU) is expected to be the top producer of Mustard Oil followed by China and Canada in 2015-16. India may be the fourth largest producer. India’s share in global production of mustard oil in 2015-16 may be around 9.0 percent.
Ukraine is expected to be the largest producer of Sunflower oil followed by Russia and EU in 2015-16. India may be at the 10th position in global producer. India’s share in global production of sunflower oil in 2015-16 may be around 1.0 percent. India was the largest importer of Sunflower oil followed by Turkey, China and Netherlands during 2015-16. There is a secular increase in the importation of Sunflower oil of China. China, United States, Argentina and Brazil are expected to be the key producers of Soybean oil in 2015-16. India’s share in global production of Soybean Oil in 2015-16 may be around 3.5 percent. India was the largest importer of soybean oil that constituted 29.89 percent of the global import in the year 2015-16.

1.5.2. Major Exporting Countries of Edible Oils

Argentina and Brazil were the top two exporting countries of Groundnut oil in 2015-16. India was the 10th largest exporting country of groundnut oil in the world in 2015-16. Canada was the largest exporter of Mustard oil in the world followed by Germany and Poland in 2015-16. Ukraine and Russia were the top two global exporters of sunflower oil during 2015-16.

1.5.3. Major Importing Countries of Edible Oils

China and Italy were the major importing country of groundnut oil in 2015-16. The US and China were the leading importing countries of Mustard oil in the world. India was the 6th largest importing country in 2015-16. India was the largest importer of Sunflower oil followed by Turkey, China and Netherlands during 2015-16.

1.5.4. Edible Oil in India

India plays a dominant role in the production of oil seeds across the globe and a country’s agricultural economy is determined by the oilseed sector. Production of oilseed crops is the second highest in the country when compared to that of cereals. In terms of factor of production and the economic value, these crops are next to food grains. Among the countries of the world, India is the fifth largest vegetable oil economy, next only to United States of America (USA), China, Brazil and Argentina, and has an annual turnover of about Rs.80,000 crores which accounts for about 12-15 per cent of oilseeds area, 7-8 per cent of oilseeds production, 6-7 per cent of vegetable oils production, 9-12 per cent of vegetable oils import and 9-10 per cent of the edible oils consumption.

With its rich agro-ecological diversity, India is ideally suited for growing all the major annual oilseed crops. There are nine oilseed crops, but the crops have been classified into two major
types, namely, edible oil seeds and non edible oil seeds. The edible oil seeds are soybean, rapeseed-mustard, groundnut, sunflower, Niger, safflower and sesame. The non edible seeds are linseed and castor. Emerging in 1986, the constitution of Technology Mission on Oilseeds (TMO) declared that India’s oilseed production exceeded the target of 18 M.t. The edible oils during the early 1990s proved to be a temporary phenomenon as the country began to depend heavily on imports from the later part of the decade to meet its domestic edible oil requirement as reported by Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, (2010).

1.5.4.1. Indian production Trends of Domestic Oilseeds

India dominates the most in the production of major and minor oil seeds namely safflower, sesame, castor and Niger. It ranks first in the production of groundnuts, followed by rapeseed-mustard in the second place and soybeans stands in the fifth place. A wide range of other minor oilseeds of horticultural and forest origin, particularly coconut and oil-palm, are also grown in the country. The oilseeds area and output are concentrated in the central and southern parts of India, mainly in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Production of Groundnut increased substantially from 4.70 million (2012-13) to 7.4 million tonnes (2014-15) showing a growth of about 57%. However, production is estimated to be at 6.89 million tons in 2015-16.

Figure 1.3: Production Trend of Domestic Oilseeds

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics
1.5.4.2. Indian Production Trend of Domestic Edible Oils

The demand for both edible and non-edible oils is increasing due to different causative factors like rising income, growing population and expanding urbanization. As a result, there is an overall decline in the per capita availability of edible oils. The domestic demand for vegetable oils and fats has been rising rapidly at the rate of 6 per cent per annum, but our domestic output has been increasing just by 2 per cent per annum. The twin factors, the rising demand and declining per capita accessibility invariably leads to higher prices of edible oils. In addition, substantial quantities of vegetable oils are also obtained from rice bran and cotton seed along with a small quantity from tobacco seed and corn.

India is the second-largest producer of Rice bran oil after China and the country has the potential to produce more than 1.4 million tonnes of rice bran oil. Rice Bran Oil market in India is still at its nascent stage, but the segment has showcased immense growth in the past few years. In 2012, the market for Rice Bran Oil in India grew at a sizeable growth rate of 14.0%. Adani Wilmar is the leading player in the Rice Bran oil segment. A large proportion of the rice bran oil market is dominated by regional and local players.

1.5.4.3. Challenges of Edible Oil Seeds Production in India

The present state calls for some urgent measures to be taken to step-up oilseeds production on a sustainable basis since the growth in oilseeds production has not kept pace with their increasing domestic demand. In India, the return on investment is uncertain pertaining to the cultivation of oilseeds in high risk regions due to insufficient and uneven rainfall, poor soil health etc. As the oil seeds are grown in dry lands, there has been a high degree of variation in the production of oilseeds annually. There is lack of supply of quality seeds due to constraints in their large-scale production. Also, farmers are hesitant to adopt improved varieties of seeds which require high doses of fertilizers and pesticides as well as high investment. Thus, there is a kind of virtual stagnation in the yield levels of most oilseed crops Exploiting the emerging technologies and intensifying the use of land seem to be the feasible options, when there are limited chances of area expansion, introduction of HYVs (High-Yielding Varieties) and development of genotypes will provide tailor-made vegetable oils for the edible and industrial oil market. The post-WTO (World Trade Organization) era, necessarily demands adoption of a cohesive strategy to increase production of oilseeds in the country by both area expansion and productivity enhancement. On-farm demonstrations and adoption of improved technologies need to be embraced to get higher recovery of oils and higher recovery of oil through efficient processing methods. In order to make these crops
economically superior and cost-effective, yield-boosting technologies need to be developed. Policy change is likely to play key role in achieving the desired growth and composition of India’s oilseed and product trade.

1.5.4.4. Oilseed Crops Vs GDP

Oilseed crops contribute a significant proportion to the agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2009-10, the area under nine oilseed crops had been 26.11 million hectares (M ha) with production of 24.88 million tonnes, and the total edible oils production in the country stood at 6.17 million tonnes (m.t). India’s oilseed and edible oil sector is being increasingly exposed to international markets and the influence of policy options like the minimum support price and other market intervention policies have prevented to generate the desired changes and to commensurate with the needs and target. The productivity trends in annual edible oilseeds have shown considerable variability in response to the prevailing policy environment and priority considerations in India.

1.5.4.5. India’s Import of Major Edible Oils

This policy of liberalization stemmed, as much from the lack of self-sufficiency in domestic edible oil production as from the commitments under the new multilateral trade regime under World Trade Organization (WTO). The quantity of edible oils imported also shows an increasing trend.

Table 1.1: India’s Import of Major Edible Oils during 2012-13 to 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Soybean Oil</th>
<th>Palm Oil</th>
<th>Sunflower Oil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17( Apr-Sept)</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department. Of commerce

1.5.4.6. India’s top import sources of Palm, Soya and Sunflower Oils

Table 1.2: India’s Top Import Sources of Palm, Soya and Sunflower Oils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edible Oils</th>
<th>Import Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soybean Oil</td>
<td>Argentina and Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Oil</td>
<td>Indonesia and Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower</td>
<td>Ukraine and Mexico</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Commerce
India imports substantial amount of edible oils for its domestic consumption. Among all edible oils importation into India, Palm oil share is around 70-80 percent.

1.5.5. Emerging Trend and potential of Edible Oil

Ken Research Report, (2015) Reported that India's edible oil consumption is about 22 million tonnes and the country imports about 65-70 per cent of its requirements. Out of total consumption of cooking oils in India, institutions/enterprise sales form 30 per cent share while domestic consumers form 70 per cent share. Rice bran and blended oil markets are expected to be the fastest growing categories in the entire edible oil segment with other edible oils and would tend to remain region specific in the near future with a moderate fluctuation in their prices.

Table 1.3. India’s edible oil demand and supply (in million tonnes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oil year (nov-oct)</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Import</th>
<th>Consumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>14.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>14.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>15.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>9.98</td>
<td>16.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>10.38</td>
<td>17.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>11.62</td>
<td>18.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>14.42</td>
<td>20.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>14.59</td>
<td>20.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17 (E)</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td>21.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18 (F)</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>15.12</td>
<td>22.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GGN International; E = estimate; F = forecast; Business standard (2017)

Business standard (2017) stated that forecasts of total edible oil production in the country at 7.66 million tonnes for the oil year (November–October) 2017-18, compared to 7.05 million tonnes in the previous year.

The Central Government raised import duty on CPO (crude palm oil) and RBD (refined, bleached and diodized) to 15 per cent and 25 per cent in August from their respective levels of 5 per cent and 15 per cent earlier. Thanks to the government’s decision to raise import duty early August, both edible oilseeds and oils have become a little costlier, making soybean crushing profitable. Oil manufacturers used crushing domestic seeds. It leads to higher oil availability from local sources,” reported by Govindbhai Patel, Managing Partner - Patel and Nikhil Research Company. It helps to protect farmers’ interest to continue oilseed production, as farmers had opted this kharif season, for shifting from oilseeds to other
remunerative crops, including cotton, which threatened oil availability in India. The further study covers the major edible oil companies and brands in India.

1.5.6. Major Players of Branded Cooking Oil Companies in India

The competition is highly fragmented owing to the existence of a huge number of organized as well as local and unorganized players. The major players are Adani Wilmar, Ruchi Soya, Cargill, Agrotech Foods, and others.

1.5.6.1. Top 10 Edible Oil Companies in India 2017

These companies are well known for their quality and health concerned products.

Table no 1.4. Top 10 edible oil companies in India 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.no</th>
<th>Edible oil companies</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marico</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adani Wilmar Limited</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agro Tech Foods Limited(ATFL)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mother Diary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vimal Oil And Foods Ltd</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bungel Ltd</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cargill American Multinational company</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ruchi Soya Industries Limited</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rasoya Protein Limited</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gujarat Ambuja exports Limited (GAEL)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.trendingtopmost.com/

The market for Sunflower oil showed growth in revenues and was controlled by the market players namely Kauleeshwari, Ruchi Soya, Cargill, Adani Wilmar and other players such as Rasoya proteins, Kaneriya Oil industries; local and regional players as well as imported brands also command a substantial proportion in the overall market. The market for Blended Oil in India has been largely subjugated by organized players which has accounted for major share in the overall market. The organized market which incorporates branded players such as Agrotech Foods, Marico and Adani Wilmar also has a strong regional dominance in the country.
1.5.6.2. Top 10 Best Cooking Oil Brands in India 2017

Table no 1.5. Top 10 Best Cooking Oil Brands In India 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Brand Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Wide Ranges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fortune</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adani Wilmar Limited</td>
<td>Fortune vivo, rice bran health oil, soya health oil, sunliteoil, mustard oil, groundnut oil, cottonliteoil, plus sunlite oils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Saffola</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Marico Limited</td>
<td>Saffola total, saffola gold, saffola tasty, saffola active,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sundrop</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agro Tech Limited</td>
<td>Sundrop superlite, Sundrop -advanced, goldlite, heart, olivea, nutrilit, nutrilit, lite, heartlite, superlite and slimlite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dhara</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mother Dairy</td>
<td>Dhara health, rice bran oil, refined cottonseed oil, refined soyabean oil, refined vegetable oil, refined mustard oil, kachi Ghani mustard oil and groundnut oil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dalda</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bunge Limited</td>
<td>Soybean oil, sunflower oil and mustard oil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mahakosh</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ruchi Soya Industries Limited</td>
<td>Soyabean Oil, Rice Bran Oil, Sunflower Oil, cottonseed oil, Groundnut oil, Vanaspati and Mustard Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nutrela</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ruchi Soya Industries Limited</td>
<td>Soybean oil, sunflower oil and mustard oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nature Fresh</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cargill</td>
<td>Refined soybean oil, refined sunflower oil, Ghani pure mustard oil, nature fresh shakti, refined Pamolein oil and olive oil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Vimal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Vimal Group</td>
<td>Cottonseed oil, groundnut oil, mustard oil, soybean oil, sun flow oil, corn oil, rice bran oil, canola oil and palm kernal oil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gemini</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Carill Multinational Company</td>
<td>Soyabean, groundnut, cottonseed, mustered oil and Vanaspati</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://scoophub.in/top-10-best-cooking-oil-brands-in-india/

1.5.7. Edible Oil in Tamilnadu

In India, different cooking oils are used in different states according to their availability and custom-oriented food habits. Major edible oils manufactured in Tamil Nadu are sunflower oil, groundnut oil, gingelly oil and coconut oil…etc., produced largely in the districts of Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari by using seeds
obtained from earlier harvest and seed imports from other states. The demand for edible oil has been estimated to be 7.28 and 8.06 lakh tones respectively for the years 2010 and 2015. The supply of edible oil is expected to be 4.89 lakh tones and 5.17 lakh tones in 2010 and 2015 respectively. Thus, the study concludes that there will be a deficit of 2.39 lakh tones and 2.89 lakh tones for the period 2010 and 2015. In addition to the production of oilseeds, the productivity of oilseed, the oil content in the seed, the oil recovery rate achieved by different oil extraction technologies and the extraction method adopted influence the supply of edible oils. The excessive import of edible oils is crippling the domestic oil industry. Farmers oppose the import of oilseeds as they do not get remunerative prices for oilseeds. It is, therefore, suggested that the government should regulate the import of oils by rationalizing the duty structure.

Vemuri Lakshmi Narayana (2009) stated that in Tamilnadu state, local and regional edible oil players as well as imported brands also command a substantial proportion in the overall market. The Packed/branded category has a strong presence among regional companies. The share of national brands continues to retain between 10 and 12 percent. Consumer awareness of the benefits of using packaged oil from a known brand, the ability to afford the higher price and switching from loose oil to branded and packed oils. Rising financial scalability of consumers with health benefits spur demand the branded cooking oil reported Dilip Kumar Jha (2013). Major edible oils brands in Tamilnadu are Fortune, Saffola, Sunland, Mantra, Orysa, poorna, Pasumark, Annapurna, Sunrich, Sundrop, Dalda, Gold Winner, Idhayam, R-gold, Balaji, Anuman, Mr. gold, Ganga, Nutrela, ALR, Rich&Rich, Sunrise, Thangam, Ruchi gold and Nalam brand etc. Punjab Food Authority (PFA) (2016) declared that various cooking oil and ghee brands are unfit for human consumption due to absence of Vitamin A and rancidity (no good fat), artificial flavor addition and more acid values. These various brands include Shan Cooking Oil, Shan Banaspati, and Soya Supreme Cooking Oil, Kissan Vegetable ghee, Smart Canola Cooking Oil, Sundrop cooking oil etc.

This study induces to examine how rural women consumer behavior is influenced from among the available brands in this study area.

1.6. Perspectives of the Study

The rural women buying behavior viewpoint is used throughout the study, it is important for the women to understand the market to identify critical issues that need to be addressed, and develop options to resolve these issues. These processes are examined for the rural marketing system. Elements of the rural marketing system include rural consumers,
competitors in rural markets and the channel members serving rural markets. This study focuses on the understanding of rural women consumer buying behavior towards branded cooking oil by assessing the aspects such as oil marketers’ suitable brand value proposition, products and price; competitive strategy of rural marketers and marketing problems…etc.

1.7. Statement of the Research Problem

A clearly specified list of problems is the most suitable basis for identifying solutions. Problems can be identified, both now and in the future, as evidence for objectives not being achieved.

1. Sarangapani (2009) stated in his study, by the myth of most urban–born marketers, low purchasing power, the low awareness and knowledge of several products including FMCG (Fast moving consumer goods) is poor among rural women consumers. The rural women had low level of literacy and less encouraged to decide themselves in buying products. But now, rural consumer behavior has changed greatly over the last 2 decades.

2. The marketers have to understand the consumer buying behaviour in the rural market. It has been noted that there is much change in the lifestyle among the rural consumers and there is also a notable rise in their disposable income. Due to these changing patterns, the rural consumers have greater affordability. Moreover, the increased advertisements have become, yet, another influential factor to key changes among the buying behaviour of the rural consumers. It is felt there is a need and it is necessary to study the rural consumer to understand their buying behavior.

3. Women play a dominant role in the retail market in urban areas. They do grocery shopping and influence more on what to buy and what not to buy, which brand to buy etc., by the myth, the awareness and knowledge of several products including FMCG (Fast moving consumer goods) is poor among rural women consumers. The rural women are less encouraged to decide themselves in buying products. But now, with the changing lifestyle and mass media exposure they are empowered through self-help groups (SHGs). These help those women having economic status, disposable income and buying habit for their household products. So, rural women have initiated to concentrate on branded products.
4. Till now, very less attention has been paid in the rural women buying behavior study than the common rural market study and urban market study. Here there is a scope for studying the rural women as untapped market.

5. Cooking oils were chosen by the researcher to address a solution to the following issues are,
   5.1. Whether Rural women are aware and buyer of available local, regional, national and multinational branded cooking oil or not.
   5.2. Buying decision taken by only male or head of family in rural area with respect to cooking oil,
   5.3. The Myth of Rural women is that they are Price sensitive and give importance to sales promotion.
   5.4. They are not aware of health consciousness at the time of buying cooking oil.
   5.5. The urban people give first preference in buying sunflower oil due to health consciousness rather than other types of oil and to find whether rural people have same preference or not.
   5.6. To find if rural women have brand loyalty because, product quality satisfaction leads to brand loyalty and also quality is an important factor in selecting the brand of edible oil, as it is more related to health.
   5.7. To study the awareness and facing the rural marketing problem related to adulterated and duplicate products.
   5.8. To find out the level of knowledge in consumer rights and protection.

6. This study also tends to examine how rural women consumer behavior is influenced in emerging markets by the marketing strategies of business firms and analyzes its impact on market.

1.8. Need and Importance of the Study

1. In 2005, Challapalli raised a question “Is the difference between urban and rural markets significant enough to justify rural marketing as a separate area for study?” The justification for a separate treatment lies in the behavioural differences of rural and urban consumer. The study suggested that rural marketing is based in behavioural variation rather than on geographical location. So, this subject matter is based on the relevance of different marketing approach which is signified difference on micro and macro environment of consumer located in rural areas.
2. There is an old saying that the customer is the ‘KING’, but now, the customer is the ‘QUEEN’ since the rural women have great purchasing power due to their earnings from different sources like 100 days job assurance scheme, agricultural job, micro finance, own business... etc. They are able to spend money for themselves and can independently buy.

3. Still, the young population in rural India is well educated, they prefer branded oils by keeping health and quality in mind. This last point is usually an overriding factor. Understanding the product-use situation creates opportunities for marketers. This is because the rural environment does not have the infrastructure facilities available in urban areas, which affect the consumption of both durable and non-durable products.

4. Hence, the main purpose of the study is focused on how rural women are involved in the steps of buying behavior stages and finding out the other sources of customer in choosing the brand and how they evaluate the cooking oil product with respect of health consciousness, packaging, quality, price in buying decision in Villupuram. Therefore a research title BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF RURAL WOMEN TOWARDS BRANDED COOKING OIL IN VILLUPURAM TALUK was carried out with the following objectives.

1.9. Objectives of the Study

The main focus of the study is to understand the buying behaviour of rural women towards branded cooking oil in Villupuram District. With the view to the above, the following are the specific objectives of the study

1. To study the socio-economic profile of rural women respondent.
2. To study the awareness level of rural women about various branded cooking oils.
3. To identify the factors influencing rural women towards the purchase of branded cooking oil.
4. To assess the stages of decision making role of rural women towards buying cooking oil.
5. To analyze the impact of demographic factors on the buying behavior of the rural women towards branded cooking oil.
6. To offer suitable strategies and suggestions to the manufacturers, for quickly influencing the rural consumer for the purchase of branded cooking oil.
1.10. Statement of Research Hypothesis of the Study

On the basis of the research objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. Ho: There is no significant association between the self-help group membership and their influence factors towards buying decision of branded cooking oil.

2. Ho: There is no significant difference among the Age, Educational qualification, Occupation, Monthly income, marital status and Family type with Need recognition factors.

3. Ho: There is no significant difference among the Age, Educational qualification, Occupation, Monthly income, marital status and Family type with Information search factors.

4. Ho: There is no significant difference among the Age, Educational qualification, Occupation, Monthly income, marital status and Family type with Evaluation of alternatives factors.

5. Ho: There is no significant association among the age, Educational qualification, Occupation, Monthly income, and marital status with their preference of various brands of cooking oil.

6. Ho: There is no significant association among the age, Educational qualification, Occupation, monthly income, marital status and family type with their place of purchase of various brands of cooking oil.

7. Ho: There is no significant association among the age, Educational qualification, Occupation, monthly income, marital status and family type with their frequency of purchase of various brands of cooking oil.

8. Ho: There is no significant association among the age, Educational qualification, Occupation, monthly income, marital status and family type with quantity of purchase of various brands of cooking oil.

9. Ho: There is no significant association among the age, Occupation, Monthly income, marital status and Family type with and their preference of types of package of various brands of cooking oil.

10. Ho: There is no significant difference across the Age, Educational qualification, Occupation, Monthly income, marital status and Family type with and Customer satisfaction factors.
1.11. Scope for the Study

The buying aspect of cooking oil mostly relies on quality of the product which is always important for any production. But, in the case of edible oil, health aspect is more a reliable factor for purchase preference. So, the manufactures of cooking oil need to be focused on both health and quality aspect.

This study focus on how rural women make purchase decision related to branded cooking oil. How they gather/ search information about the branded cooking oil, how they assess or evaluate the alternative products available in the market and whether they stick to a particular brand or not. If so, how much they are satisfied about the following aspect such as health of the product, packaging, quality, price etc., at the time. Hence, this study conducted in the selected villages of Villupuram Taluk, in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu, will shed light on various issues pertaining to buying behaviour of branded cooking oil among rural women.

1.12. Limitations of the Study

The study has been designed carefully to avoid all the limitations within its control. Some of the unavoidable shortcomings of the study are mentioned hereunder:

1. The scope of the present study is concentrated only on Villupuram Taluk among scattered remote villages and inaccessible roads, whereas the research background “buying behaviour of rural women consumer towards branded cooking oil" and the consumer behaviour thereon across rural areas may vary considerably in its degree and variety. But acknowledging the constraints of time and money as well, the research design was kept pragmatically relevant to the aims of the study.

2. The consumption of branded cooking oil is subjected to the awareness level on the part of consumers, which is preconditioned with a certain level of literacy.

3. The choice of rural consumers with regards to cooking oil is, highly volatile, in terms of brand loyalty owing to media influence.

4. Potentiality of any products cannot be too accurately assessed, as it is dependent on sound channels available and the infrastructural development in the rural area.

5. Behaviour and habit of consumers is continually changing based on the availability of information.

Despite these limitations, the researcher has presented a reliable picture about the buying behaviour of rural women consumers.
1.13. **Chapterisation**

The thesis is organized into five chapters. The first two chapters’ addresses background of the study with regard to buying behaviour, rural women consumer, brand preference towards cooking oil and the theoretical framework. The remaining chapters present the empirical research, covering the aspects of methodology, results, discussion and conclusion.

The thesis report has been presented in the following chapters:

**Chapter I: Introduction**

This chapter aims at describing the research background study of Rural Market, concept of consumer buying behaviour, Edible oil industry, perspectives of the study, statement of the research problem, Needs and importance of the study, Objectives of the study and hypotheses of the study, Scope of the Study and limitations of the study.

**Chapter II: Review of Literature**

This chapter discusses the extensive literature review pertaining to the topic of the research, and research gap.

**Chapter III: Research Methodology**

This chapter includes the research methodology in broader perspective by incorporating the Description of research area, research design, sampling design, questionnaire construction, pilot study, Research model, data source, hypothesis of the study and statistical tools used for data analysis.

**Chapter IV: Results and Discussion**

This chapter provides the results of data analysis pertaining to buying behaviour of rural women consumer towards branded cooking oil.

**Chapter V: Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion**

In the Chapter the major findings of the investigation are mentioned, Suggestions are made; suggestions for future research and conclusion are drawn in detail.

The next chapter review of literature is certainly going to discuss the previous research related to the concept of consumer buying behaviour and attitude towards edible oil, brand, rural consumer, rural women behavioural aspect and decision making process. A brief review of the studies on the Indian and foreign context on buying behaviour of branded cooking oil are given and relevant studies also discussed.