ABSTRACT

With the advancement in technology, globalization and increased purchasing power, the consumers in recent years have become more aware of hygiene and beauty which led to the rapid development of Cosmetic Industry all over the world. The Indian cosmetic industry experienced rapid growth rate since the economic Liberalisation in 1991. The cosmetic industry is now a multibillion dollar industry. India is the second largest exporter of thermal cosmetics to the world market after China. The Indian cosmetic industry has witnessed a rapid growth over the last couple of decades when the Indian competitors started manufacturing products in order to meet the increased needs of both the Indian and the international markets.

Kerala is one of the fastest urbanizing regions in the country. Exposure to markets, acceptability and proximity to modern amenities has resulted in a change in taste and preference of the consumers. The migration of people to the Gulf and the European countries has also resulted in an unexpected change in the socio-economic condition of Keralites. This resulted in the entry of females to various fields of work and their desire to look beautiful and attractive has provided an activism to the cosmetic industry.

In the present scenario, changing life style, higher disposable income, increasing advertisement, rising status, migration of people, demand for superior quality, changing consumer preference and the advertisements resulted into a paradigm shift in the behaviour of females in the purchase and use of cosmetics. The rise in the number of women joining the work force over the decade enhanced the purchasing power of women community. As a result, the women started investing more on their appearance and looks. It is in this background the study on behavior of female consumers in the purchase and use of cosmetics is attempted.

The present study focuses on the behaviour of females in the purchase and use cosmetics in Kerala. All types of female consumers who use four type of
cosmetic care products such as Lip care, Eye care, Nail care and Skin care products are included in this study. The response of female consumers about the products of selected leading manufactures such as Revlon, Lakme, L’Oreal, Himalaya and the leading unbranded manufacturers were collected and analysed. The study attempts to understand the behaviour of female consumers towards the marketing mix of selected cosmetic manufacturers. The cosmetics are becoming an increasingly essential item for every woman in day to day life. The Cosmetic products are being used by a majority of people in Kerala and it has become a part of their life. The present study examines the various reasons for the purchase of cosmetics, the preferential buying habits of consumers for the selected cosmetic manufacturers and their level of satisfaction for the use of cosmetics. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature in the sense that it describes and analyse the behaviour of the female consumers in the purchase and use of cosmetics.

For the selection of sample, the state of Kerala is divided into three regions on the basis of geographical location namely South, Central and North. For the purpose of study, a district from each region was identified and selected for the detailed study and analysis. The selected regions include Thiruvanthapuram from Southern region, Ernakulam from the central and Kozhikode from the northern region. Primary data were collected from 450 female respondents using structured interview schedule. The total sample size consists of 150 respondents selected from three regions such as southern region, central region and northern region. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to augment the researcher’s inference. The statistical analysis was carried out with the help of SPSS 17.0. The data were analysed using table, percentage, cross tabulation, Chi square test, ANOVA F test, Post-Hoc and Kruskal Wallis test.

The study reveals that the socio economic factors such as age, income, area, occupation, family size and family type influence the buying behavior of female consumers. The influence of the various elements of Product, Price, Place and Promotion Mix of the brand Revlon, L’Oreal, Lakme, Himalaya and other unbranded cosmetic manufacturers were found influencing the purchase of cosmetic
products. It was also noted that there is a tendency among the female consumers to use herbal beauty products especially the skin care products of the brand Himalaya. The limitation of the study is that the inner psychological characteristics of the cosmetic users could not be learned and the opinion of the respondents could not be quantified.

**Key words:** Cosmetic industry, Cosmetics, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer, Lip care product, Eye care products, Nail care products, Skin care products, Brand, Marketing Mix - Product Mix, Price Mix, Place Mix, Promotion Mix, Consumer Satisfaction.