CHAPTER - 1
INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This being an introductory part of the research, this chapter includes the introduction, background of the research, statement of the problem, scope of the research, objectives of the research, hypotheses of the research, methodology, ethical considerations, operational definition of concepts and significance of the research, limitation of the research and scheme of the report.

1.1 Introduction

Today the market situation in India is highly competitive across all the product segments. With the continuous evolution of the demographics and psychographics of the target consumers, the situation is becoming more and more complex. The ever-changing customer buying behaviour, rising consumerism, new entrants in the market, and continuously evolving technological innovations resulting in product differentiation in the short run which further resulting in shorter life cycles for durables particularly and also for other lifestyle products are adding new dimensions to already complex situation.

India is the second largest consumer market in the world. The Indian consumer profile has been changing in terms of education, income, occupation, and reference group and media habits. There is a shift in consumer buying behaviour for household durable goods for the past decades with the influx of modern technology. The consumer buying behaviours are rapidly changing and moving towards high-end technology products with acculturation. Products which were once considered luxury items have become a necessity because of the changing lifestyle and rising income levels. With a growth in disposable incomes, the demand for household durable goods such as kitchen appliances, home appliances, transport appliances and personal appliances have
increased considerably. It is also facilitated by the easy availability of finance and prevalence of nuclear families. Increasing demand for consumer household durable goods in the market the fall in prices as Indian consumers continue to attach a high degree of importance to value for money. The consumer is brand-conscious, but not necessarily brand-loyal, and might even pick up a reliable private label if it offers good price and quality values.

The study of consumer buying behaviour is of utmost importance in a number of aspects. First of all, consumers’ behaviour can influence the economic health of a company. Consumers will have their preferences in purchasing products. Companies are selected using the rule of ‘survival of the fittest’. Therefore, consumers’ decisions can provide a clue for an industry’s survival, which companies to succeed, and also which products to excel. Secondly, through understanding the reasons for consumers to buy the products and their buying habits, the firms can make use of such information to devise corresponding marketing strategies in response to the consumers’ needs.

1.2 Background of the Research

The market situation and its outcome are becoming increasingly uncertain. In the light of this scenario, the organizations are becoming more and more desperate to hold the customers, to retain the market share and to survive. The scenario in the household durable goods industry is equally challenging. The leading companies of household durable goods by introducing brands at various price points have effectively segmented the market which has resulted in faster market expansion and penetration. Product differentiation and innovative marketing efforts have resulted in attracting more and more customers to their brands. In fact, the competition in the market has assumed a battlefield dimension and struggles for the survival of the fittest. Therefore in the light of the scenario where the marketing environment is changing at a very fast pace and the
heightened aggression of the players in the household durable goods in India, it is most appropriate to conduct a study on various dimensions of consumer’s buying behaviour regarding household durable goods.

Household durable goods industry in India is one of the fast-growing and competitive industries of the country. The growth of this industry is really attributed to the most distinct feature of Indian economy—population explosion. In modern times, life has become highly mechanical, and the utility of household durable goods is inevitable. Though the ultimate users of the household durable goods are housewives and housemaids, the purchase decisions and brand preferences are enacted by husbands and wives together. Unlike in the past, the consumers are more educated and more enlightened today. The market trends reveal that the consumers are well informed and therefore they demand greater assured performance from products and companies. This has lead to a change in the marketing approach of the growth conscious companies. A shift has taken place from the seller’s market to the buyer’s market. Due to the growing competition in the household durable goods industry, the companies are under the pressure to win customers and this has empowered the consumers more. The emphasis traditionally was on making sales rather than building relationships; on selling and reselling rather than caring for the customers. But now every company of the household durable goods industry wisely concentrates enough to regularly measure and systematically maintain the customer satisfied, because the key to customer retention is customer satisfaction. A highly satisfied customer stays longer, buys more as the company introduces new products, offers products or service ideas to the company, pays less attention to the competing brands and is less sensitive to price, and it costs less to serve them than new customers because transactions are routine. On an average, a satisfied customer tells three people about a good product experience, but the average
dissatisfied customer bad mouths to eleven people. If each of them tells other people, the number exposed to the bad word of mouth may grow exponentially. If a company wants to adapt to the empowered consumer, it is a must to recognize the importance of satisfying and retaining customers and should design its strategies in such a way that it will encourage consumers to purchase on regular basis, tell good words about the company to more people. In addition, the company should motivate the dealers to sell more through scheming appropriate plans in this regard.

In the global environment, the expectation of consumers towards the products as well as the awareness of the products is very high. On the other hand, producers have introduced several products into the market according to the customer's taste, preference, and choice. Understanding the buying behavior of the target market is the essential task of marketing managers under marketing concept (Ramasamy and Namakumari 1995). A marketer, who understands how the consumer will respond to different product features, price, and advertising appeal, will have an enormous advantage over his competitors. When a buyer takes a decision to buy, there is no rigid rule to bind him. Sometimes the decisions are taken on the spot or after evaluating various alternatives available and reassuring himself with the opinion of those who have already purchased the product. The buyer is also influenced by the social environment in which he lives – his family, society, neighbors, friends, colleagues. Every component of his social environment leaves an imprint on him and influences his buying behavior (Philip Kotler, 1994).

At present, several products with distinguished features are available in the market for household durable goods. The study is confined to consumer’s buying behavior towards household durable goods that are available in the market and how does a consumer select a product among alternatives. The research study has analyzed the perception of consumers on various household durable goods and their buying behaviour
towards the household durable goods. It is assured that the study would give more information, inferences and unique buying behaviour of the consumers of household durable goods.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Household durable goods are gaining popularity in the present modern world. Many brands and different varieties of household durable goods are available in the market. To the consumer, products of different brands seem similar because products of different brands are available at the same rate, same colour, same design and with the same performance. The consumers have different perception and different behavior for buying the household durable goods. The market for household durable goods is becoming more competitive nowadays. Hence, the producer of household durable goods should understand consumer to find a higher sale of their products. Generally, it has been seen that consumers expose different behaviours for buying household durable goods.

Today, business around the world recognizes that the consumer is the king. Knowing why and how people consume products helps marketers to improve their existing products, to know what type of products that are needed in the market and how to attract consumers to buy their products. The era of liberalization, privatization and Globalization has brought changes in society and lifestyle of people. The study of consumer behaviour focuses on how individuals make a decision to spend their available resources (time, money and effort) on consumption related items.

The understanding of how the consumer forms a perception of the product, a purchasing behavior and influencing factors on their buying behaviour will help the marketers to predict what the consumer may choose and if there exist, homogeneous groups, marketers can also segment the market, either on the basis of the psychological characteristics or product attributes in order to better reach the target market. It is also
important on the part of the sellers to retain their customers for a very long period as the competition level has been soaring. Therefore, the perception of consumers, the buying behavior of consumers and the impact of various influencing factors on buying behavior of consumers are considered as very important for the producers and the marketers of household durable goods for better marketing. Hence, the researcher endeavors to study the buying behavior of consumer with reference to household durable goods in Tirunelveli District.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The study aims at analyzing the buying behavior of consumer with reference to household durable goods viz. kitchen appliances, home appliances, transport appliances and personal appliances. The scope of the study has been limited to certain buying behavioural aspects of consumers of the above durables such as need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, purchase and post-purchase evaluation. The influencing factors of buying behavior of consumers of the above durables such as inducement factor, attributes factor, promotional factor and favourable factor are covered in the study. The study broadly aims at examining the demographic characteristics of the consumers, the perception of consumers towards the household durable goods, the buying behavior of consumers of household durable goods and the impact of various influencing factors on buying behavior of consumers of household durable goods in the study area.

1.5 Objectives of the Research

The main objective of the present study is to analyze the buying behaviour of consumer towards the household durable goods in Tirunelveli District, Tamilnadu. To achieve the main objective, the following specific objectives are considered:
➢ To study the demographic characteristics of the respondents

➢ To examine the perception of consumers towards the household durable goods

➢ To analyze the buying behavior of consumers of household durable goods

➢ To analyze the impact of various influencing factors on buying behavior of consumers of household durable goods

➢ To offer suitable suggestions based on the results of the study

1.6 Hypotheses of the Research

To give a specific focus to the objectives, hypotheses have been formed to test the objectives in clear terms using appropriate statistical tools. It necessitates the development of hypotheses at each and every stage of the analysis. Following null hypotheses were formulated for the study.

1\(H_0\) : There will be no statistically significant association between the gender and the perception of household durable goods.

2\(H_0\) : There will be no statistically significant association between the age and the perception of household durable goods.

3\(H_0\) : There will be no statistically significant association between the literacy level and the perception of household durable goods.

4\(H_0\) : There will be no statistically significant association between the domicile and the perception of household durable goods.

5\(H_0\) : There will be no statistically significant association between the household monthly income and the perception of household durable goods.

6\(H_0\) : The consumers would have no significantly optimistic buying behaviour towards the household durable goods.

7\(H_0\) : The buying behaviour of consumers towards the household durable goods will not be influenced by the demographic variables.
8H₀ : The buying behaviours of the consumer of household durable goods will not significantly predict the post-purchase satisfaction of household durable goods.

9H₀ : There will be no significant impact of Inducement Factor of consumers on their buying behaviours of household durable goods.

10H₀ : There will be no significant impact of Attributes Factor of consumers on their buying behaviours of household durable goods.

1.7 Research Methodology

The research methodology has to be robust in order to minimize errors in data collection and analysis. The methodology adopted in the present study includes research design, research approach, research strategy, research variables, selection of study area, resources of data collection, population, sampling procedure, research instrument, pilot study, reliability and validity of research instrument, data collection, data processing, data analysis strategy, ethical considerations, limitations of the study and scheme of the report.

1.7.1 Research Design

The descriptive research design and causal research design were adopted considering the nature of the study. The descriptive research, also known as statistical research, describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. Descriptive research answers the questions who, what, where, when and how. The explanatory research describes the relation between and the cause to different variables. It tries to find out specifically the relationship of ordinal variables with nominal variables such as gender, age, literacy level, domicile and household monthly income and effect of independent variables on dependent variables. So the adoption of
conclusive research design has been very effective in the present study and the normative survey technique was used for gathering data (“USC Libraries,” n.d.).

1.7.2 Research Approach

The most prevalent research approaches in social sciences and humanities are quantitative and qualitative research. Moreover, the social science research can be conducted within a quantitative or qualitative or mixed context (Patton, 1990). By considering two research approaches qualitative and quantitative, this research covers both. Being qualitative research, the researcher has studied various qualitative aspects and attributes. Research is quantitative in the sense that researcher has quantified the responses received from respondents to draw the logical conclusions from them. Thus the study was conducted based on the research approaches of mixed research method.

1.7.3 Research Strategy

The main three strategies used by most researchers are experiments, surveys, and case studies (Poilt and Hungler, 1985, p 94). Table 1.1 visualizes how Yin, R.K. (1994) relates the three conditions to the different strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Strategy</th>
<th>Form of Research Question</th>
<th>Requires Control over Behavioral Events</th>
<th>Focuses on Contemporary Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, Why</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who/Which, What, Where, How many, How much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>How, Why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This research aims to test the buying behavior of consumers towards the household durable goods by considering which household durable goods are good perceived among the consumers, what are the socio-economic status of the consumers, where are the significant influence of gender, age, literacy level, domicile and household monthly income occurred in the perception of consumers, how many buying behaviours are optimistic among the consumers and how much the influencing factors did affect the buying behaviours of consumers towards the household durable goods. The researcher has no control over the respondents and focuses on contemporary events. So the appropriate strategy for this study was surveyed. In other words due to the fact that in the survey, respondents will be asked questions in order to find the buying behaviours of them towards the household durable goods.

1.7.4 Research Variables

The distinction of variables is necessary for a research to reach to the response to a research question or hypothetical tests. Researchers are most interested in the relationship among variables. The type of variables used in this research has been brought here:

1. The independent variable is a specialty from the physical and social environment that is accepted after the selection, interference or modification by a quantitative researcher so that its impact may be observed on other variables (Dependent variables).

2. The dependent variable is a variable in which changes occur under the impact of the independent variable.

3. A moderating variable is a second independent variable that is included because it is believed to have a significant contributory or contingent effect on the originally stated dependent – independent variables relationship.
In this research, consumers, household durable goods and influencing factors are independent variables. The perception and buying behaviours are dependent variables. And respondent's socioeconomic statuses like gender, age, literacy level, social status, religion, marital status, domicile, family size, current occupation, family type, household monthly income and type of living house are considered as moderating variables.

1.7.5 Selection of the Study Area

Tirunelveli district in Tamil Nadu state has been selected as the study area for several specific reasons. Tirunelveli district is considered to be one of the developed districts in the state. Tirunelveli is considered as the Oxford of South India. The District is one of the most important landmarks of Tamilnadu and known for its multifaceted dimensions of its rich cultural heritage, patriotism and educational advancement. The literacy rate of the district is 82.92%. The literacy rate of male and female of the district is 89.66% and 76.38% respectively which is above the state average. Today the market situation of household durable goods in Tirunelveli district is highly competitive across all the product segments. With the continuous evolution in the demographics and psychographics of the target consumers, the situation is becoming more and more complex because of ever changing buying behaviours of consumers, rising consumerism, new entrants in the market. These are the main reasons for selecting Tirunelveli district for the study. Easy accessibility for collection of data also has been a compelling reason for the selection of Tirunelveli district since the researcher resides in this district.

1.7.6 Resources of Data Collection

Primary data have been collected from the consumers of household durable goods in the study area. A structured questionnaire was developed and used to collect the required data during the survey. Secondary data of the information related to research literature and the background of the study were collected from various published and
unpublished sources, including Journals, Magazines, Publications, Reports, Books, Dailies, Periodicals, and Web sites. This process was mostly performed via the internet.

1.7.7 Population

Population plays a significant role in determining the sample design. Since the present study is confined to evaluate the buying behaviours of consumers towards the household durable goods, the consumers of household durable goods residing in the study area were defined as population for this study.

1.7.8 Sampling Procedure

The judgmental sampling is adopted for the present study. Judgmental sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher selects units to be sampled based on their knowledge and professional judgment (“Explorable,” n.d.). In the study wherein a researcher wants to know the buying behaviours of consumers towards the household durable goods, the only people who can give the researcher first hand information are the individuals who get knowledge about the household durable goods. With this very specific and very limited pool of individuals that can be considered as a subject, the researcher adopted the judgmental sampling.

Previously the researcher decided to find out the sample size for the study based on the population. The standardized and most accepted Raosoft sample size calculators were used to determine the sample size for the study (“Raosoft,” n.d.). To find out the sample size, the margin of error was fixed at 5%, the confidence level was fixed at 95%, the response distribution was fixed at 50% and the population size was fixed at infinity. Then the Raosoft sample size calculator computed that the minimum recommended sample size of the study is 377 (Annexure II). To achieve minimum recommended sample size, a total of 385 consumers representing 11 Tehsils / Community Development Blocks (C.D.Blocks) of Tirunelveli district from each of 35 sample units were selected.
for the study for collection of data by adopting the judgmental sampling method. Table 1.2 shows the sampling distribution of the present study.

**Table 1.2**

**Sampling Distribution of the Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Tehsils / Community Development Blocks (C.D.Blocks) in Tirunelveli District</th>
<th>Sample Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Alangulam</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ambasamudram</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Nanguneri</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Palayamkottai</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Radhapuram</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Sankarankoil</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Shenkottai</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sivagiri</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Tenkasi</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Tirunelveli</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Veerakeralamputhur</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>385</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1.7.9 Period of the Research**

A study of buying behaviours of consumers towards the household durable goods in Tirunelveli District was for a period of consecutive three years starting from 2015 - 2016 to 2017 - 2018.

**1.7.10 Research Instrument (Questionnaire)**

A structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher. In the light of the specific objectives set, all information and data were collected from the sample respondents through structured questionnaire (Appendix I). The structured questionnaire which has been used to collect information from the consumers of household durable goods has been divided into three parts as follows:
The part A of the questionnaire focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents with twelve questions.

The part B of the questionnaire contained twenty-eight questions testing the perception of consumers on household durable goods based on kitchen appliances, home appliances, transport appliances and personnel appliances.

The part C of the questionnaire contained thirty questions to get information about the buying behaviours of consumers towards the household durable goods such as need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, purchase and post-purchase evaluation.

The part D of the questionnaire contained forty-five questions to get information about the influencing factors of buying behaviours of consumers of household durable goods like inducement factor, attributes factor, promotional factor and favourable factor.

A covering letter with the description of the purpose and the importance of the study was attached to the questionnaire. Respondents were assured of their anonymity and freedom to decide whether to participate in the study or not. Clear instructions were given to the respondents regarding completion of specific items throughout the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in such a format where the data could be easily entered into the computer. Items numbers that could be used in a dataset were incorporated into the questionnaire.

The questionnaire on the part A was measured by the nominal scale, whereas the questionnaire in the parts B and C was measured by an ordinal scale. The ordinal scale was developed in the Likert's four-point scale for part B which ranges as follows: Essential Product (1), Comfort Product (2), Luxury Product (3) and Unnecessary Product (4) and the score can be vice-versa also. For part C, the Likert’s five-point scale was
carried out as follows: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) and Strongly agree (5) and the score can be vice-versa also. For part D, the Likert’s five-point scale was carried out as follows: Not at all influential (1), Slightly influential (2), Moderately influential (3), Highly influential (4) and Extremely influential (5) and the score can be vice-versa also. The reason for choosing Likert scale was that respondents preferred this scale and they considered this scale easiest to fill out. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions because it is easier to administer and to analyze.

The objectives of the study and the literature review guided the researcher in the formulation of questions. After consultation with the statistician and a computer expert, the questionnaire was submitted to the guide of the study. After incorporation of recommendations made by the statistician, the guide of the study and the computer expert, the questionnaire was made ready to be pre-tested.

1.7.11 Pilot Study

The pilot study formed the pedestal for the research. It was conducted on 50 consumers of household durable goods in the Community Development Blocks (C.D. Blocks) such as Tenkasi and Shenkottai for pre-tested the questionnaire. They were asked to list down the various risks and problems when handled the questionnaire which helped in improving upon the questions and the final questionnaire was framed which have been appended. Based on the findings of this pilot study, the final questionnaire was designed. In addition, the researcher discussed the questionnaire with various traders and marketers of household durable goods from the marketing fields for assessing the significance and validity of carrying out the present research work. Since the researcher got favorable results from the pilot study, the present study has been undertaken.
1.7.12 Reliability and Validity of Research Instrument

The reliability of an instrument is the degree of consistency which measures the attribute; it is supposed to be measuring. The less variation an instrument produces in repeated measurements of an attribute, the higher its reliability. Reliability can be equated with the stability, consistency, or dependability of a measuring tool. Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring (Robson, 2002).

In order to test the reliability and validity of research instrument (Questionnaire), the same was administered to 50 respondents. Initially, the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha is used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. For that, a survey was carried out with the help of the questionnaire to the same sample of consumers on two occasions and then compares the scores obtained by computing a reliability coefficient. The higher value of Cronbach’s coefficient alpha reflects a higher degree of internal consistency.

Further, Kaiser-Meylen-Olkin measure of adequacy test and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were done on the final test score to measure the homogeneity of variables and to test for the correlation among the variables used respectively. They were performed for assessing the validity of the research instrument. As the rule of thumb of Kaiser, KMO should be 0.60 or higher in order to determine the homogeneity of variables. If the significant value less is than 0.05 in Bartlett’s test, there exists a significant relationship between the variables (“The analysis factor,” n.d.). Table 1.3 summarizes the results.
Table 1.3
Tests of Reliability and Validity of Research Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number of Variables</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>KMO Measure</th>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception on Household Durable goods</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>Approx. Chi-Square</td>
<td>4040.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying Behaviour towards Household Durable Goods</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>.640</td>
<td>Approx. Chi-Square</td>
<td>3597.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing Factors on Buying Behaviour</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>.852</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>Approx. Chi-Square</td>
<td>6991.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
<td>990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at 0.05 levels**

The Cronbach’s Alpha Criterion was applied to test the reliability. The value was determined as 0.807, 0.748 and 0.852 for the questions of perception on household durable goods, buying behaviour towards household durable goods and influencing factors on buying behaviour respectively in the questionnaire collected from the consumers. This also explains that the statements in the questions of perception on household durable goods, buying behaviour towards household durable goods and influencing factors on buying behaviour in the questionnaire are understood by the consumers at 80.7, 74.8 and 85.2 percent level respectively. Since the values of Cronbach's alpha for the questions of perception on household durable goods, buying behaviour towards household durable goods and influencing factors on buying behaviour are more than 0.7, and then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.
Since the values of the KMO test for the variance; perception on household durable goods, buying behaviour towards household durable goods and influencing factors on buying behaviour are higher than 0.60, it is confirmed the homogeneity of variables in the questionnaire. The p-values (Sig.) of Bartlett’s test of sphericity for the variables are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this field are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the variables in the questionnaire are consistent and valid to be measuring what it was set to.

1.7.13 Data Collection

The researcher himself carried out the fieldwork for this study. The work was conducted for six months during the period from October 2017 to March 2018. While collecting data one consumer of household durable goods was considered as a sample unit. The researcher used the questionnaire for the collection of primary data from sample consumer selected for the study. The researcher took responsibility to rectify the doubt and to explain the question in native language from English if necessity when a consumer fill up the questionnaire. The filled up questions in the questionnaire were checked and edited. The omissions and commissions in the questionnaire were rectified on the same day after collecting the questionnaire. The total targeted sample is 385. On scrutiny of the questionnaires, some questionnaires with insufficient data provided were found out and then they were rectified by personally contact the respondents through phone by the researcher. In such way, the researcher achieved the collection of 385 questionnaires from the sample respondents.

1.7.14 Data processing

After the completion of data collection, filled up questionnaires were edited properly to make them ready for coding. Questionnaires were coded numerically in different numbers from serial numbers to enable the researcher to enter the data
systematically and efficiently and to maintain no missing questionnaires. The processing of data was done through computer technology packages of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version. Data screening was performed through the frequency to assure check for any error.

1.7.15 Data Analysis Strategy

The primary data collected were analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 21 and AMOS (Analytical Movements Structure) version 21. The data were screened in order to study the consumers of household durable goods about the demographic characteristics, perception on household durable goods, buying behaviours towards the household durable goods and the impact of influencing factors on buying behaviour. The following statistical tools have been employed in the study to obtain torrent of results from the primary data analysis:

- Cronbach’s coefficient alpha
- Kaiser-Meylen-Olkin
- Descriptive analysis
- Pearson Chi-square test
- One sample $t$-test
- One Way MANOVA
- Multiple Regression Analysis
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique

1.7.15.1 Cronbach’s coefficient alpha

The Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. It is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability (“Research Data Sercices,” n.d.).
1.7.15.2 Kaiser-Meylen-Olkin measure of adequacy test and Bartlett’s test of sphericity

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was used to measure the homogeneity of variables in the questionnaire. It is a statistic that indicates the homogeneity of variables that might be caused by underlying factors. Bartlett’s test of sphericity was used to measure the validity of questionnaire. Small values (less than 0.05) of the significance level of the test indicate that the variables in the questionnaire may be validity (“IBM Knowledge Center,” n.d.).

1.7.15.3 Descriptive Statistics

A descriptive statistical procedure, including frequency distributions and percentage analysis, has been used for analyzing the demographic characteristics and perception of the consumers on household durable goods (Allen Rubin and Earl R. Babbie, 2009, pp 148-149).

1.7.15.4 Pearson Chi-square test

The Pearson chi-square test was used to determine the existence/non-existence of an association between the selected demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perception of household durable goods. Phi (ϕ) and Cramer's (V) values in the Chi-square test was used to find out the strength of the association between the variables (“Statistics Solutions,” (n.d.). The rule of thumb for Phi (ϕ) (in the case of 2 x 2 tables) and Cramer's (V) (in the case of other than 2 x 2 tables) values above 0.35 is strong, values between 0.25 and 0.35 are moderately strong, and values below 0.25 is weak (Denzin, 1978, p 154).

1.7.15.5 One-Sample t-Test

One-Sample t-Test has been used to find out whether any significant optimistic buying behaviours of consumers towards the household durable goods are there or not.
To calculate an effect size, called $d$ or Cohen's $d$ is used. The rule of thumb for Cohen's $d$ above 0.7 is the very strong, a value between 0.5 and 0.69 is strong, a value between 0.2 and 0.49 is moderate, and a value below 0.2 is low (“Statistics Solutions,” (n.d.).

1.7.15.6 MANOVA

According to Borg and Gall (1989, p 557), Multiple Analysis of Variance or multivariate (hereafter, MANOVA) refers to “a statistical technique for determining whether several groups differ on more than one dependent variable”. In the current study, the technique was used to determine whether the buying behaviour of consumers towards the household durable goods differ significantly in relation to gender, age, literacy level, domicile and household monthly income.

1.7.15.7 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression is an extension of simple linear regression. It is used to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables. In the study, it is used to predict the post-purchase satisfaction of household durable goods based on the buying behaviours of consumers (“laerd statistics,” n.d.).

1.7.15.8 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was used to analyze the impact of the influencing factors of consumers of household durable goods on their buying behaviours towards the household durable goods. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical methodology that takes a confirmatory approach to the analysis and it is schematically portrayed with geometric symbols. Within the graphical display of the model, there are boxes and arrows. Boxes represent observed data and the arrows represent assumed causation. The impact level was fixed as Small impact ($0.10 < r < 0.30$), Medium impact ($0.30 < r < 0.50$) and Large impact ($r > 0.50$) (Benbasat, Goldstein and Mead, 2007, pp 368-85).
1.8 Ethical Considerations

The conducting of research requires not only expertise and diligence but also honesty and integrity. This is done to recognize and protect the rights of human subjects. To render the study ethical, according to Bryman and Bell (2007, p 168) the following principles of ethical considerations were observed in the study as a result of analyzing the ethical guidelines of professional social sciences research associations:

- Research participants were not subjected to harm in any ways whatsoever.
- Respect for the dignity of research participants was prioritized.
- Full consent was obtained from the participants prior to the study.
- The protection of the privacy of research participants was ensured.
- An adequate level of confidentiality of the research data was ensured.
- The anonymity of individuals participating in the research was ensured.
- Any deception or exaggeration about the aims and objectives of the research was avoided.
- Any type of communication in relation to the research was done with honesty and transparency.
- Any type of misleading information, as well as representation of primary data findings in a biased way, was avoided.
- Texts belonging to other authors that have been used in any part of this study were fully referenced with APA (American Psychological Association) System.
- The questionnaire of the study did not contain any degrading, discriminating or any other unacceptable language that could be offensive to any members of the sample group.
The questionnaire was designed to collect information directly related to the research questions, and no private or personal questions were asked of the respondents.

1.9 Operational Definition of Concepts

1.9.1 Household

All persons living under one roof or occupying a separate housing unit, having either direct access to the outside (or to a public area) or a separate cooking facility. Where the members of a household are related by blood or law, they constitute a family (“Business dictionary,” n.d.).

1.9.2 Consumer

An individual who buys products or services for personal use and not for manufacture or resale. A consumer is someone who can make the decision whether or not to purchase an item at the store, and someone who can be influenced by marketing and advertisements. Any time someone goes to a store and purchases a toy, shirt, beverage, or anything else, they are making that decision as a consumer (“Investor Words,” n.d.).

1.9.3 Demographics

Demographics are defined as statistical data about the characteristics of a population, such as the age, gender and income of the people within the population (“Your Dictionary,” n.d.).

1.9.4 Household Durable Goods

Household durable goods are a category of consumer products that do not have to be purchased frequently because they are made to last for an extended period of time (typically more than three years). They are also called durable goods or durables (“Investing answers,” n.d.).
1.9.5 Consumer Perception

Consumer perception refers to the process by which a customer selects, organizes, and interprets information/stimuli inputs to create a meaningful picture of the brand or the product. It is a three stage process that translates raw stimuli into meaningful information (“MBA Skool,” n.d.).

1.9.6 Consumer buying behavior

Consumer buying behavior is the sum total of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding the consumer's behavior in the marketplace when purchasing a product or service (“Study.com”, n.d.).

1.9.7 Need Recognition

Need recognition occurs when a consumer identifies a need and thinks of a product that might meet this need. It is oftentimes recognized as the first and most crucial step in the buying behavior process because if consumers do not perceive a problem or need, they generally will not move forward with considering a product purchase (“Wikipedia.org,” n.d).

1.9.8 Information Search

Information Search is a stage in the Consumer Decision Process during which a consumer searches for internal or external information. During this stage, a consumer who recognizes a specific problem or need will then likely be persuaded to search for information, whether it be internally or externally. This is also when the customer aims to seek the value in a prospective product or service. During this time, the options available to the consumer are identified or further clarified (“lumen,” n.d.).

1.9.9 Evaluating Alternatives

During the evaluation of alternatives stage, the consumer evaluates all the products available on a scale of particular attributes. During this stage, consumers
evaluate their entire product and brand options on a scale of attributes which have the ability to deliver the benefit that the customer is seeking. The brands and products that consumers compare – their evoked set – represent the alternatives being considered by consumers during the problem-solving process (“lumen,” n.d.).

1.9.10 Purchase Decision

Purchase decision is the thought process that leads a consumer from identifying a need, generating options, and choosing a specific product and brand (“Knowledge @ Wharton High School” n.d).

1.9.11 Purchase

During the purchase decision stage, the consumer may form an intention to buy the most preferred brand or product. During this time, the consumer may form an intention to buy the most preferred brand because he has evaluated all the alternatives and identified the value that it will bring him (“lumen,” n.d.).

1.9.12 Post-Purchase Behavior

The behaviour after a product purchase is called Post purchase behaviour. Generally after a product purchase the buyer undergoes post purchase dissonance means the buyer regrets his /her purchase. Post-purchase behavior is when the customer assesses whether he is satisfied or dissatisfied with a purchase (“MBA Skool,” n.d.).

1.10 Significance of the Research

Indian household durable goods industry has witnessed a considerable change over the last few years. Household durable goods have been a part and parcel of our day-to-day life. In fact, a differentiated product is one that is viewed as different from others by majority of the buyers. In the market for household durable goods almost every day, advertisements are given in different media asking the consumer to return or throw away the old household durable goods. Knowledge of consumer buying behaviour in relation
to household durable goods renders immense help for marketing household durable goods. Consumer orientation in marketing household durable goods is absolutely essential for a marketer as the market for household durable goods is highly competitive. By gaining understanding of the factors that affect the buying behaviour of the consumer of household durable goods, marketers will be in a better position to understand how consumers will respond to give situation. Therefore, this study was conducted to uncover the realities or issues in the marketing of household durable goods pertaining to buying behaviours of consumers. The result of this study will assist the producers and marketers of household durable goods to understand consumer interest much to find higher sale of their products so that the marketers can communicate with consumers and try to convince through every possible media. Furthermore, the results may also provide ample insights to the producers and marketers of household durable goods to become kingpin around the entire marketing activity revolve. The findings of the study will help the producers and marketers of household durable goods for self-appraisal regarding their sales and marketing.

1.11 Limitations of the Research

Every research work has some noted as well as implied limitations. As far as the present study is concerned, the following limitations have been noticed.

- Since time was a limiting factor for the study, the researcher could concentrate only on selected durable goods based on kitchen, home, transport and personal.
- The present study is limited to the consumers’ point of view only.
- Even though, the respondents discuss with family members and friends for answering the questions, the study was limited to individual buying behavior.
- Time, cost and location factors become major difficulties in completion of research.
While collecting the information by means of the questionnaires, some of the information was not solicited by the respondents for certain private reasons and lack of interest.

The authenticity of secondary data, in small cases, could not be checked or verified. However, the researcher feels confident in minimizing their adverse effects, by taking suitable remedial measures.

There is possibility of some error to a limited extent. However, to overcome the limitations and maintain the effectiveness of research work sincere efforts were put.

1.12 Scheme of the Report

The total study is presented in the form of following six chapters

The First Chapter, “Introduction and design of the study” presents the introduction, background of the research, statement of the problem, objectives of the research, hypotheses of the research, methodology, ethical considerations, operational definition of concepts and significance of the research, limitation of the research and scheme of the report.

The Second Chapter, “Review of Literature” presents the previous studies related to the present research and enables gap identification leading to the objectives of the present study.

The Third Chapter deals with the overview of consumer buying behaviour and the study area.

The Fourth Chapter deals with the analysis and interpretations of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, perception of consumers towards the household durable goods, buying behavior of consumers of household durable goods and impact of various influencing factors on buying behavior of consumers of household durable goods.
The **Fifth Chapter** presents the summary of findings along with the conclusion and suggestions based on the analysis done.

**1.13 Summary**

This chapter introduced the perspective of the study which aims to find out: Buying behavior of consumer towards the household durable goods in Tirunelveli District. The background to this research, need for the research, statement of the problem, objectives of the research and hypotheses of the research were explained. Subsequently the research methodology was outlined, followed by ethical considerations, operational definition of concepts and significance of the research and limitation of the research. Finally, the structure of the thesis was presented in the form of scheme of the report. In brief, this chapter sets out the foundation for this thesis.