CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Indian retail:

Retailing can be defined as an activity which ensures that customers get maximum value out of its purchase (Dunne, 2002). These values are created continuously through a combination of services, price, accessibility, and experience (Newman, 2002). In India, the existence of current *kirana* format and other shops has existed right from *Manusmriti* and *Kautilya’s Arthshastra* era. These historical scripts are encrypted with guidelines for dealing with customers, after-sales-services, and quality and price guarantees. Such statistical calculations encrypted the equivalence for exchange in case of barter, tax structure for retail and wholesale transactions (Sinha, *et. al.*, 2012). In the 21st century India witnessed a new format of stores which became a place to visit and see, and allowing customers to drive a significant hedonic experience out of shopping. In today’s scenario, shopping has taken a new meaning. It has embedded the leisure time of people in itself. These retailing activities also ensure product availability to customers, reduced waiting time, provide them desired lot sizes, and enhance variety of the merchandise mix available to customers (Bucklin, 1966). Bucklin’s classification was further refined into accessibility, product assortment, assurance of product delivery at the desired time, in the desired form, and availability of information and ambience (Betancourt, 1990; 1998). The India Retail Report 2010, a survey conducted by business consultancy Technopak Advisors, yielded that the country's retail market was expected to touch 620 billion Euros (around Rs. 37 lakh crore) by 2020 at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of more than 25%. In the last two decades, India has observed rapid urbanization and changing consumption patterns. This has pushed retailers to focus their energies and build capacities to harness this potential. The Indian retail industry is estimated to be US$470 billion. The organized or modern retailing with 6% share stands at US$26 billion. Ger and Belk (1996) described global consumerism as ‘a widespread
and unquenchable desire for material possessions’. It is a culture in which the majority of consumers avidly desire, and therefore try to acquire and display goods and services that are valued for non-utilitarian reasons such as status seeking, envy provocation and novelty seeking. Prahlad and Liebertal (1998) stated that India is new consumer base consisting of hundreds of millions of people; starved of choice for over 40 years, the rising middle class is hungry for consumer goods and a better quality of life for which it is ready to spend. It is projected that Indian retail sector will reach US$ 1.3 trillion by 2018 and the organized retail market is estimated at compounded annual growth rate of 40% which was anticipated at US$ 107 billion by the year 2013. As per the McKinsey Report, 'The Rise of Indian Consumer Market’, by the year 2025, the Indian consumer market is expected to grow four fold. In the coming years India will raise its retail growth rate to such a level which shall make it lucrative to most of the big retailers in the world. Retailers across the globe try to enter the emerging markets, like, India, because of its presence in top national rankings for the last four years in comparison to China, Ukraine and Vitenam (Kearney, 2007). It is speculated that the size of retail market in India may reach US$ 320-350 billion by the end of year 2015. The Indian retail is a combination of organized and unorganized market. The organized market occupies 4% of the retail market share which includes independent stores, boutiques, chain stores, and discount stores, and the traditional retail occupies rest of the market share which gives jobs to 20 million urban workers and 12 million rural vendors (Kumar, 2007) and includes open-air markets, second-hand goods merchants, artisan retailers, and mom-pop stores (Sternquist, 1998, 2007). Most of the retail outlets in India are less than 500 square feet in size (Goldman Sach, 2005). In India the trend of retail chain is not old and during the period 2005-2007 big multinational companies started investing in India (MarketResearch.com, 2007). The Indian middle and upper middle class is lucrative market segment in India (Vikram, 1999) which has been growing at a rate of 13% annually (MarketResearch.com, 2007). The Indian middle class in the age group of 25 to 35 years have high disposable income. Goldman Sach (2005) predicts that Indian economy will overcome Chinese economy by 2015. India has the highest number of shops in the world with 11 retail shops per 1000 persons which means one shop for every 20 to 25 families. If we have a close look at the unique demography of India, we would discover that it comprises of 29
states with different cultural districts existing concurrently in a market. While urbanization seems to be mixing these cultures, people tend to be living in coherent cultural groups, mainly described by the state from where they originate. Most stores have trading areas that are mixed in their demography, thereby making the retailers work harder while meeting the varying demands of diverse consumers. The areas consist of heterogeneous group of consumers who have predominantly varying buying power (Sinha, 2012).

Shoppers behave differently in different shopping situations. When they shop at small stores they are informal and talk in local language. But when they shop in modern retail stores or exclusive retail stores they are formal and use English for communication. In often frequented shopping stores they are demanding and brave, but in new stores they are timid and patient. All this happens because, as human beings, shopper’s behavior is likely to be modified by stimuli in the external environment. Every shop is a part of a larger social system called the market. Shops tend to cluster around the place where there is traffic and, in the process, get located on a “main road”. Such roads are the spines of the city and tend to be the busiest areas where shoppers from in and around the town gather to shop. In India, usually the roads, where the shops are clustered are narrow, and there is heavy traffic and congestion. There is often the problem of parking on such roads. There is all kind of vehicular and pedestrian traffic including animal and human drawn transport and stray animals on the roads, with the vast majority of vehicles being self-driven. These roads are also used by mobile vendors (business on wheel). Shop owners use them for priority parking. Because of the chaotic and disorganized nature of the market, it is very difficult to differentiate one shop from the other which add clutter to congestion. The link between these external elements and shopper behavior becomes clear in the shopper’s emotional relation to retail environments. This emotional reaction may be influenced by the individual’s personality, the amount of stimulus screening, shopper’s mood, including capabilities of the shopping experience (Frederick, 1991).

**Retail structure:**

By 1947 Indians had low per capita consumption. The retailing focused only on need based items than luxury items. Most of the shops were mom and pop stores owned
and operated by single person who carried out all the operations. The sales pattern not only depended on cash transaction but also included credit system for customers. Most of the items available in traditional stores were unbranded merchandise. In many cases traditional stores provided loose items, like, rice, wheat, edible oil, cereals, milk and eggs rather than in packages as available in modern stores, the benefit of having loose items was to get desirable quantity of the same. The evolution of modern retail includes retail chain, specialty stores, super markets and hyper markets. With its introduction, there is a flood of brands in retail stores. The sizes of the packed goods are available in large variants with various price points (Sengupta, 2008).

Traditional retail scholars believe that retail marketing can be better understood by focusing on sociocultural dimensions of retailing, shopping and consumption. Many previous researchers in the area of sociology, anthropology and cultural geography believe that consumption is socially and culturally influenced instead of considering consumers as totally rational in consumption. Social and cultural researchers believe that retail space is influenced by identities (Jackson and Holbrook, 1995), gender (Gregson and Crewe, 1998; Clarke, 2000; Pettinger, 2005), ethnicity (Friend and Thompson, 2003; Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo, 2009), experiences (Falk and Campbell, 1997; Sherry, et. al., 2001; Kozinets, et. al., 2004), ideologies (Arnold, et. al., 2001), multiple meanings (Jackson and Holbrook, 1995), and that the retail spaces handle technical and psychological spaces.

**Indian culture:**

In order to understand India, it is necessary to learn its cultural background through secondary sources as without a proper understanding of Indian culture any field work undertaken by the researcher may go in vain. It is a society with history dating back 3000 years with strong cultural and historical roots. Religion plays a very important in the psychology of India. Hinduism which is the main religion of India has been practiced through years. It has variations in rituals, beliefs, and symbolic patterns, food and clothing but has common linkages on social and religious basis. Indians also believe in spiritual dimension of life and consider that spiritualism and materialism are not opposite
to each other, but are two sides of the same coin. They believe that objects have symbolic meanings at three levels: aesthetic, functional and spiritual. In India people link material objects with spirituality. India has undergone a drastic change in economic and social status in urban areas. The emerging middle class in India is working very hard and the trend of caste hierarchy has been converted more into a class based system. If we leave the caste system aside, it is easy to define India as a multi-layered society that includes salaried middle class which brings social change in India. It seems that caste hierarchy is disappearing in the upper strata of society but it does not mean that caste differences have been eliminated completely. The economic prosperity in India has integrated people from different caste systems into a common strand of society. But in some cases, the attachment to traditional norms is so strong both in males and females that they closely associate themselves with symbolic processes usually embed in traditional family systems (Venkatesh, 1994).

**Caste system:**

India is a multilingual and multi-cultural nation and culturally speaking it is highly diverse (Dumont, 1986). It is stratified on the basis of caste, and this caste system is unique in its own way and can not be compared with the race based system followed in Western practices (Beteille, 1991). Both social and cultural systems depict the picture of institutions and patterns of behavior. In India there are hundreds of castes and each has homogeneous structure. The castes are categorized into four divisions, like, *Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas* and *Shudras*. Even the minorities, like, Sikhs and Muslims organize themselves along the lines of caste. Caste depicts the social organization of every group and determines the social status and behavior of members of the group. The caste system controls the communication between groups and the content of interpersonal relation. Each caste works as a society within the society, and has its own endogamy, customs, gods and temples. Every caste has its position in social hierarchy and its numerical strength determines its relation with other castes. Castes also influence their member’s consumption, dress style and living habits (Kapp, 1963).

In India few states have homogeneous culture, but most have heterogeneous culture, in which every ethnic group has different normative aspects. India has 4634
communities in its social structure. In multicultural society, people understand and maintain individual and collective lives. Different ethnic groups have different beliefs, values, practices, literature, and historical memories. The sense of bonding evokes the sense of community among people, but the interaction among communities weakens cultural boundary and enhances the flow of ideas and practices among communities (Parekh, 2007).

**Multiculturalism:**

The concept of multiculturalism means that every individual living in a national boundary has to deal with different cultural patterns of different communities but at the same time has the right to choose his lifestyle and religion. It promotes the concept of living together but in a separate way that may lead to ghettoization, which means passive multiculturalism (promotes cultural exclusion) as every choice has its own restrictions that lead to active multiculturalism (allow unacceptable levels of cultural freedom). The combined effect of multiculturalism reflects in culturally diverse individual’s “consumption of food, dress, worship styles and the like, which finally leads to conflict” (Oommen, 2002). Besides, cultural pluralism raises more differentiation by promoting institutionalized inequality in culturally diverse system, which itself is a gift of hierarchical caste system.

Further, multiculturalism focuses on the availability of separate distinctiveness of identities with equality and does not lead the diverse cultures towards a composite culture. Parekh (2000) emphasized that in multicultural societies shared culture penetrate only when the diverse communities do interactions and give respect to each other’s culture. The multiculturalism gives the notion of hybridization among diverse communities’ beliefs, values, norms and rituals along with homogenization, pluralisation, and traditionalization. Hindu philosophy completely depends on caste system (Oommen, 2007). Pieterse (2004) described multiculturalism in four ways: (a) pluralist multiculturalism: which talks about the recognition of group identities and group rights, (b) individualist multiculturalism: individual should be given freedom to choose the lifestyle he likes, (c) strategic multiculturalism: we should accept inter-group differences among diverse ethnic groups and inequalities which reside within their psychology, and
(d) cosmopolitan multiculturalism: social system is mobile and flexible which keeps on changing and old boundaries disappear and new one are created and the process remains consistently changing and emerging into new ones.

Social identity and consumerism:

Tajfel and Turner (1986) considered that people avoid threatened situations under the perseverance of social identity. The social identity emerges from individual’s actual or perceived membership in social groups. White and Argo (2009) predicted that collective self-esteem (CSE) people are more aware of their social identity. They consider themselves as worthy members of the social group, give value to its social identity, and consider social identity as an important aspect in defining their self concept (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992). Those who donot take care of social identity are concerned about individual self in threatening situations (Doosje and Ellemers, 1997).

Socialization is a process of transaction with other people, acquiring knowledge and skills which develop an individual to behave in an effective manner in which the group and society members behave. It focuses on social roles and social behaviours (Hill and Aldous, 1971). There are various types of knowledge and skills which are required directly or some indirectly for consumption. The consumer role enactment plays a major role in understanding their physical and mental activities in making purchase decision, which involves shopping, talking to others in relation to products and brands, and analyzing purchasing parameters. The indirect knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important for individuals because they effect their motivation related to purchase (Ward, 1974).

Social categorization theory (Turner, 1985) is an extension of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). It states that identity consist of: (a) personal identity, and (b) social identity. The theory suggests that situational requirement evokes individual thinking, feeling and behaviour. The sense of group membership develops a sense of belonging and connectedness (Corell and Park, 2005), which protects people from certain type of social rejections (Knowles and Gardner, 2008).

Social categorization:
The difference between group identification and social categorization forced researchers to think about ethnic identification from a number of views (Jenkins, 2002a, 2008). Jenkins (2008) developed a model of human world which had embodied individuals, and gave three phenomena to understand the human world, which include: (a) “The individual order is considered as made of embodied individuals and ‘what-goes-on-in-their-heads’, (b) The interaction order is constituted in the relationships between embodied individuals, ‘what-goes-on between-people’, and (c) The institutional order is seen as pattern and organization, as established ‘ways-of-doing-things’”. This scheme describes that the practical world is produced and reproduced by individuals’ thoughts constituted in and by individuals, the interaction between individuals, and the institutions. All the three schemes are embodied by individuals and are materialized differently in individuals. Some like collective space and some preach for interactional practices, while others emphasize on buildings, territories, visible symbolism. To understand the priority of these three schemes, it is required to understand its order, because of possibility of overlap in these three schemes. From these orders it is clear that internal and external dialect of identification possibly exists, but not in isolation, which means that individual identification can not be done through unilateral process. Jenkins (2008) established this notion in three ways: “(a) categorization- external definition- is a basic dimension of internal definition. The process of defining ‘us’ demands that ‘they’ should be split off from, or contrasted with, ‘us’; group identification is likely to proceed, at least in part, through categorization of others, whether positively or negatively, (b) external definition- by others of us- undoubtedly has an impact on our internal definitions, and (c) pre-existing established internal definitions may provide a defense against the imposition of external definitions.

The categorizations of ethnic groups identify their resistance and reactions by other groups. Mead (1934) described the difference between ‘I’ and ‘me’. He interpreted ‘I’ as “energetic characteristic of self which responds to others”, and ‘me’ as “the attitude and response of significant others”. He described ‘me’ as the representation of individual through its community, and ‘self’ as the individual consciousness towards social organizations. His theoretical framework represented three things which include Mind, Self, and Society (Cited in Jenkins, 2008). Giddens (1984) described self as conscious
element in human psychology and Bourdieu (1990) described that ‘self’ lies neither in conscious self nor in unconscious self, but it reflects in the habitus of individuals. The sense of ‘self’ is a combination of cognition and behavior, which means it is reflected in both areas. Sense of ‘self’ gives a sense of self identity to individual, when he interacts with others through his verbal and non-verbal dialogue. In contrast, sense of ‘me’ is embodied in individual through his group members which initially start from his family members (Mead, 1934), and also provide ethical sense of doing things in a way which is accepted by the society (Giddens, 1984). Individual comes to know about his identity through others in the society and learns about himself through social interaction, and develops relationship with himself.

Learning through primary socialization, develops an individual viewpoint toward the members in the world or towards the members with whom he does social interaction and builds a sense of ethnicity and its ethnic components. Epstein (1978) described that how individual interprets himself and others, like an individual knows that it is a single unit which has specific characteristics, and with those characteristics what he can do, and what opinion others have of him, and also has knowledge about what others mean towards him, and what are the boundaries of others, and also interprets about the behaviours of others; others might include individuals from same ethnic group or different ethnic groups. It means that during interaction people are conscious about their public image and self-image. Self-image shows how an individual considers himself in the social world and how other members of the social organizations consider him. Goffman (1969) described that presentation of self includes four elements: “(a) identity is a matter of performance, (b) in interactional terms, there is no necessary consistency in selfhood, but rather a range of partial aspects of revelations of self, depending on the situation, (c) that management of the awkward relationship between the desired presentation of self and other, countervailing aspects of one’s biography and present situation is of great importance, and (d) that validation of the performance by others, if not their complicit collaboration, is central to successful impression management” (Cited in Jenkins, 2008). The focus of individual towards ‘presentation of self and other’ and ‘validation of performance by other’ shows that individuals are conscious about their public image, which further supports the interaction between self-image and public-
image (Jenkins, 2008). In the society it is also seen that person from his childhood takes care of self-image and public image from school to unemployment and from unemployment to employment (Jenkins, 1983; Macleod, 1987; Willis, 1977). The individual behavior in internal and external spheres of life defines his social identification by significant others, who are in an authoritative position and in a situation that their judgment matters for identification of individual (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1972; Matza, 1969) and sometimes from school, identities are imposed on individuals (Cicourel and Kitsuse, 1963; Rist, 1977). All ethnic groups are institutionalized and categorize social groups as ethnic groups, and teach members of those groups, about how the things are done which fit well in their local context, the social groups also tune the behavior and decision making capabilities of individuals. The social groups play an important role in the discussion of ethnicity, which describes that ethnic groups are defined by the unique trait adopted by individuals from their ancestry to identify themselves (Barth, 1969a). But still there is scarcity of research on social categorization which shows caste and hierarchy in system, like, in India (Jenkins, 2008).

Jenkins (2008) described that three social orders “individual, the interaction and institutional” are intertwined in each other, occupying the same space and each made up of embodied, socialized individuals. The unitary sense of self lies behind the self-image. Self-images mould with public images in the complex negotiation of shared meanings, understandings and practices that constitute group identification. Group identification and categorization combine in situationally specific relations of resistance or reinforcement to produce the social reality in historical time and space of institutionalized ethnic collectivities”.

In public sphere, people can do formal and informal interaction. But in the case of inter-racial public interactions the chances of formal interaction increase like in the encounters in South Africa of apartheid (Jenkins, 2008). In the real world, people do face to face interactions with people of other ethnic groups and categorize them through various signals, like, language, clothing, bodily adornment, which can turn into clear cut dimension of ethnic identity. The marketing specialist’s job is to identify consumer
categories and read them ethnically, to understand the local behavior of consumers (Costa and Bamossy, 1995). The clear understanding of ethnic categorization of localities helps to make efficient promotion of goods and services with focus on self and group identification (Bourdieu, 1984; Mackay, 1997). It is also seen that social world shopping is done by individual from the point of view of others rather than self-oriented (Miller, 1998). One group of people has the capability to define the conditions of existence which is experienced by others as important in the internal-external dialectic of collective identification. The individual behavior includes the elements of individualism and collectivism. Even the individualized behavior of individual is formed through social situations. The ethnic identity of individual can also be understood through two elements - the nominality and virtuality. The nominality represents the name given to ethnic groups and virtuality includes the perception of a particular ethnic group; virtual perception can change but not the nominal labeling (Jenkins, 2008).

**Culture personality approach:**

This approach adopts psychoanalytic method and describes that adult personality has its roots in childhood experiences (Mead, 1953). The upbringing practices shape the thoughts and feelings of the people and personality of society represents their culture which is observed by caste, community or tribe (Whiting and Child, 1953; Wallace, 1952). Indians are considered as individuals with weaker super-ego (Spratt, 1966), obsessive-compulsive (Berkeley-Hill quoted in Hartnack, 1987). The foundation of their personality is based on sense of instability and insecurity, due to which it is hard to rely on them. Even they do not fully rely on their own self, and they easily loose self-control under the influence of strong emotions (Carstairs, 1971). Narian (1957) described Indians as individuals with lack of commitment, masculine qualities, dependence on others, poor in handling emotions, and have huge gap in ideals and performance, and their greed for material things is impossible to satisfy. The fashion of relating personality with culture continued in India for a long time (Nanday and Kakar, 1980). Hsu (1963) described that Indians are supernaturally centred and do not separate actual from ideal (Lannoy, 1971). Some researchers define Indians as: cosmic collectivism animate (bring to life) and inanimate elements of life, hierarchical order (everything on this earth follows an order.
In humans, hierarchical order starts from caste and within caste, on age and gender), and spiritual orientation (humans should strive for spiritual pursuits in life) (Paranjpe, 1988).

Modernity brings openness to new experiences, high aspirations, respect for personal dignity, and rationality in decision making (Inkeles and Smith, 1975). In India people are rigorous about social concerns; they respect others, help others, and observe the social codes of behaviour (Argarwal and Misra, 1985, 1989). Indians are both individualist and collectivist, but the use of both the approaches either individually or collectively depends on situation (Sinha, et. al., 2001; 2002). India is country of more than one billion people and over 1600 different languages, and thousands of castes and tribes, various ethnic groups (Sinha, et. al., 2004). The complexity of Indian culture can be understand by encompassing (Dumont, 1970) and enfolding (Schulberg, 1968), which helps to first distinguish people, ideas and things to uncover the unknown cognitive categories, and build new ones to understand and distinguish the distinct attributes. Indians have both independent (individualistic thoughts, feelings) and interdependent (collectivist) self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Indians are content specific and balance their personality accordingly. The balance of content specific depends on place, time and person, and the mix of the above stated criteria builds different norms and values which an individual holds at same point of time (Sinha and Kanungo, 1997). Indians are collectivist people, but there is no high degree of individualism and collectivism (Mishra, 1994). Sinha and Tripathi (1994) described Indians as familial self. In modern society people have different occupations, knowledge, expertise, beliefs and experiences. The shared beliefs generate people’s collective consciousness which further controls their thoughts, attitudes and practices (Durkheim, 1965).

The economic and commercial relations are derivatives of culture which exist in society, and both are secondary institutions. People first establish social culture through language, agreed codes of behavior, and wit. After the establishment of social culture, social trust comes into existence and supports commercial and government institutions. If culture is shared by group, then cultural interaction within the group or between the groups can be considered as transaction or exchange of symbolic or material goods within an economic framework. Cultural diversity defines culture as a way of living.
together which widens human opportunities and choices (Perez de Cuellar, 1995). The cultural diversity supports the idea of global ethics which suggests homogenization of culture at global level and diversity at local level (Appadurai, 1996).

**Culture object:**

Griswold (1986) defined culture object as shared meanings. It is audible, visible or tangible and represents socially meaningful expressions. If a consumer wants to purchase quilt from a department store, to warm his feet, then it is not cultural object. But, when consumer considers the beauty of crafting threads by craftsperson and makes a warm cloth to protect oneself from winter, then such a story is considered as cultural object. In order to understand the connection of culture and society, it makes sense if one starts by close examination of cultural objects. Ethnicity is a cultural object, having different creators and receivers, which perceive meanings differently. An American in Europe is considered as American, but an American in America is considered through his ethnic group, to which he belongs. In heterogeneous states, where there are number of subcultures, people follow common culture, which represents the glance of their citizenship. So race and ethnicity can be viewed as constructionist (Armstrong, 2002).

Durkheim, (1965) considered that cultural objects have collective representation which focuses on people’s social experiences, and also recognizes that groups require collective representation to motivate the notion of unity and mutual support, which in broader sense is supported by culture. The collective representation shows people’s collective solidarity to themselves and to others. It focuses on collective experiences which people use in representing their group. The theory of collective production is derived from the concept of symbolic interactionism. Its focal point is on interactions among people and the way such interactions build culture.

**Subjectivity and Objectivity:**

The human mind is composed of both objective and subjective elements. The objective mind takes care of objective world and subjective mind is amenable. The objective mind does reasoning by learning through observation, experience and education. It deals with external things. The subjective mind or subconscious mind works
through intuition and is independent of five physical senses. It accepts suggestions, feelings and beliefs and is controlled by suggestions of the objective mind (Murphy, 2010). In twentieth century sociologists added a new term in it which they called as ‘practices’, describing people’s behavioural pattern which was not necessarily associated with values or beliefs. Peterson (1979) described that in real world people, “joke, love, think, fight and behave in a wide variety of ways”. The term culture focuses on ‘expressive aspect of human existence’, and in contrast society focuses on ‘relational aspect’ (Cited in Griswold, 2008).

The society is formed by the combination of subjective and objective will and the requirements of individuals. The combination of subjective and objective will of individuals is to sustain survival, security, prosperity and progress. The motivation for consensus among individuals is derived by ego-centred subjective will which helps them to form collective society. The collective approach established by individuals under objective requirements leads to the formation of conflict resolution. In collective world people are mutually distinct but have some interrelation between them. The human society is dynamic in nature. But the process of change of any product may be slow, medium or fast. Therefore, one has to understand the central characteristics of group formation. The core structure is composed of mutually distinct products, but these are interrelated to represent the whole picture (Mukherjee, 1991).

So, the changes happen across and within collectives. In the present situation caste and class cannot be ignored to understand the societal phenomenon of Indian society (Beteille, 1969; 1974). Culture includes subjectivity of individuals which represent their group identities, and further these identities are represented as objective products. The complex system of subjective-objective dichotomy is solved by culture and social components of society. Mukherjee (1991) describes that “variations in the individual-collectivity relations within the culture products were conceived as due to cultural processes, while the corresponding variations across these products were interpreted as due to social processes”.

Culture influences individual conscious and unconscious levels, and its presence reinforces its driver’s like objective and subjective aspects. To study culture practices,
values, beliefs and artifacts within ethnic groups, ethnographic approach is better than historical approach, especially when researchers want to study the ethnic groups in objective and subjective aspects (Singh, 2007). The inductive-inferential approach is used for cross-cultural comparisons, to study values and preference of ethnic groups, and ethnic groups are considered as unit. This approach plays an important role in composite cultures like India. Other important aspects of culture in India are inclusion and exclusion which play an important role in defining ethnic identities. The best example of exclusion is Dalits in India; such exclusion causes differences at caste and community level.

The cultures depend on symbols which develop and transmit their thoughts, traditions, customs, values and beliefs and norms to members of the groups. The symbols might be verbal or non-verbal. During communication between ethnic groups one has to understand the codes of the symbols to understand each other’s intentions and thoughts. The tangible aspects of culture like people, language, behavior, action and gestures are considered as objective culture. In contrast, other aspects like feelings, emotions, values and attitudes are considered as subjective culture. If we take the example of iceberg, the upper part of ice from water is considered as objective culture and part lower the water is considered as subjective culture. The objective and subjective culture are interrelated and inseparable. The objective culture reflects the attributes of subconscious mind like the meaning, values, norms and hidden assumptions (Patel, 2011).

Culture is a combination of normative, symbolic and behavioural content which represents meaningful patterns. The process of development makes individuals aware about their symbolic significance. So, the people’s perception is based on the relationship between culture, cultural identity, social change and development. Subjective aspects define the core values of the culture and cultural identity, not only in objective terms but also in subjective terms. Culture sometimes acts as a semiotic mediation which is an individual psychological function. These functions sometimes act as intra-personal processes which include feelings, thinking, memorizing, forgetting and planning, etc. Whenever a person does something or sees something, he usually undergoes intra-personal semiotic mediation. These semiotic mediations sometime act as inter-personal processes and it generally happens when at least two persons are involved in chatting,
fighting, avoiding. These discursive semiotic practices help individuals to develop strategic interactions while dealing with others. The semiotic trap can be in any form, like, shame, inferiority or anything similar. Semiotic mediations can also work as goal oriented systems for social institutions, which control both intra-personal and inter-personal psychological functions. These social institutions regulate social rules for social interactions, monitor their maintenance, and do whatever is required in intra and inter psychological transformations. The social functions and events are used by social institutions for developing semiotic mediation systems. Culture provides basis for inter-subjective shared representation of the world where a person lives, accumulates information, and understands shared meanings, and collective social representations (Valsiner, 2007).

**Dealing with ethnic groups:**

To understand the characteristics of culture of an ethnic group, one has to understand two aspects: (1) stability of an ethnic group in contemporary period; and (2) dimensions of the factors which determine these ethnic groups. The classification of ethnic groups depends on the trait of their culture. The difference between groups is because of variation in their traits. The ethnic groups are the forms of social organizations. Culturally ethnic groups can be defined as: (1) signals or signs, with which ethnic groups use to represent their separate identity, like dress, language, house-form, or general style of life, (2) the standards of ethics and brilliance, which are used as yard stick to measure performance. One cannot say which cultural feature is used by ethnic groups to represent them. Every ethnic category provides ample space to its member to follow varying rules in different socio-cultural systems. There is ample scope for ethnographic and comparative studies to understand the different forms of ethnic organizations.

An American businessman conducts business with Tokyo businessman, but it proves fatal because American businessman takes the card of Tokyo businessman casually with one hand and puts it in his pocket and because of this, the relationship with Japanese firm turns fatal and he loses contract. Cultural ignorance may cause loss of business and interethnic tension.
Anderson (1990) considered that different ethnic groups give meanings to things differently. The meanings are either simple or complex. Simple meanings are face to face communications. These type of meanings are denoted by simple signs, like \( a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \), where ‘a’ denotes one side of the right triangle, ‘b’ denotes other side of the triangle, and ‘c’ denotes hypotenuse. Likewise, red signal light means stop and green light means go. The complex meanings are denoted by symbols. Symbols generate multiple meanings which give suggestions and generate emotions towards something or somebody. The learning process in humans develops social interaction. The human interaction patterns and behavior denote their culture. So, to avoid confusion in the world humans present their culture through objectification (Berger, 1969).

**Ethnic group boundaries:**

The ethnic boundaries which define the social boundaries have their specific territories. When groups maintain their distinction while interacting with different groups, it signals their exclusion. The ethnic groups have their own social life, complex behaviour and social relations. They are not determined as exclusive territories. When an individual identifies others as members of an ethnic group, he shares certain criteria for evaluation and judgment. It might be possible that the members of the same group expand their boundaries differently in terms of social relations. While declaring others as members of other groups, it marks distinction in individual mind and places limitation on sharing ideas and mutual interest, but when the interaction of people from different cultures is continuous, the differences in boundaries get minimized. It happens because during interaction with other ethnic groups, social codes and values are exchanged, and similarity exists between the whole cultures (Barth, 1966). It does not mean that inter-ethnic differences get diluted while interacting with other ethnic groups. It simply means that in inter-ethnic relations people follow systematic rules which are common and acceptable to all ethnic groups (Goffman, 1959).

Ethnic boundaries are patterns of social interaction that give rise to, and subsequently reinforce, in-group members' self-identification and outsiders' confirmation of group distinctions. The locations of cross-group interactions are usually better understood in terms of social space than as physical places. The social spaces wherein cross-group interactions take place are the effective social boundaries between groups. In
this sense, it is "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses". Studying ethnic groups only in terms of their cultural traits and institutional forms leads researchers to confound the effects of cultural tradition with how ecological circumstances lead to changes in patterns of belief and behaviour. The cultural traits of an ethnic group respond to ecological circumstances; therefore, forms of institutionalized behaviour emerge that represent reactions to the environment as much as they reflect a cultural orientation (Barth, 1969).

**Collectivist approach:**

An ethnic group has collective approach to real common ancestry in large society, shared historical memories, and has at least one cultural symbolic element (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998). Ethnicity has three related components which include: (a) ancestry-trust in single kinship, (b) culture- which determines symbols and practices, and (c) collective events- remembered by group members (Brubaker, *et al*., 2007). The ethnicity depends on description of history which in itself depends on cultural act. It is also marked by boundaries which separate groups from each other and their everyday life (Barth, 1969; Wimmer, 2008). Collectivist societies focus on social self and their relation with others (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), they are inclined not only towards their in-groups (Triandis, 1994), but also socially and psychologically towards others (Chen, *et al*., 2002). The Confucianism philosophy in Eastern cultures emphasizes on social harmony, interrelatedness and kindness to others (Bian and Keller, 1999). People in collectivist cultures have a strong sense of belonging to their groups (Bhattacharya, *et al*., 1995).

Various researchers emphasized that consumers from different ethnic backgrounds choice stores differently or do shopping differently (Eastlick and Shim, 1995). Herche and Balasubramanian (1994) worked on the shopping behavior of six ethnic groups, and observed that country of origin influenced the shopping behaviour. Other researchers also found difference among ethnic groups in the U.S. for apparel shopping behavior, which included information source usage, store patronage and store attributes. Shim and Gehrt (1996) described difference in shopping behavior among ethnic groups, and for product and store choice for Latino and Asian consumers. Dillard, *et al*., (2002) studied consumer shopping orientation and store format preference, by
using ethnicity as an indicator of consumption behavior. Most of the researchers judged ethnicity on the basis of surname and languages spoken at home but those variables were not sufficient to depict perceived identity and subjective approach of individuals (Stayman and Despande, 1989). Other researchers described that ethnicity should be considered as a continuous variable (Ynacey, et. al., 1976).

Ethnicity:

The concept of ethnicity is derived from Greek word ethnos which was used to represent non-Greeks. Greek people considered themselves as civilized and non-Greeks as barbarians (Huntchinson and Smith, 1996). Later the word ethnos was related to non-Jewish and non-Christians. The term ethnic or ethnicity was also associated with “race” (Simpson and Weiner, 1989). In nineteenth century, anthropologists believed that race, language and religion described the individual’s physical and cultural traits. Franz Boas (1930) described that the nature of the ethnic groups can be understood through their culture by learning various symbols, values, norms and beliefs to which an individual is exposed. Since 1960’s social scientists have used the term ethnicity or ethnic groups to represents one’s cultural heritage. But Scupin (2012) emphasized that ethnicity should be learned through both aspects, the objectivity and subjectivity, and expressed that as “The objective ethnicity is the observable culture and shared symbols of a particular group. It may involve a specific language or religious tradition that is maintained by the group, or it may involve particular clothing, hairstyles, preferences in food, or other conspicuous characteristics. The subjective ethnicity involves the internal beliefs of the people regarding their shared ancestry. They may believe that their ethnic group has a shared origin, family ancestry, or common homeland”. The subjective ethnicity gives a sense of community within one’s own in-group versus other out-groups. The subjective ethnicity deals with individual’s shared history, unique past and symbolic attachment with a homeland (Smith 1986, 2009).

Ethnicity has various dimensions which include kinship, political solidarity vis-à-vis other groups, common customs, language, religion, values, morality, and etiquette (Max Weber, 1961). But researches focus on single dimension of ethnicity, like for a long
time Hispanic groups were focused on single dimension of it, like in work of Mirowsky and Ross (1980) on surname, Gurak and Fitzpatrick (1982) on country of origin, Massey and Mullan (1984) on language spoken at home, and self identification (Saegert, et. al., 1985). The problem happens during observational studies conducted at home or in a mall on consumer behavior (Pruden and Longman, 1972). The single dimension used in each paper causes divergence in objectivity and subjectivity. Deshpande, et. al., (1986) describe that any combination of objectivity and subjectivity is not fruitful unless individual affiliation with their ethnic groups is understood. They used subjectivity and objectivity approach to study Hispanic groups along with their ethnic identification.

Most of the traditional research on ethnicity focused on single objective indicator, like, the study of Hirschman (1981), but Valencia (1985) did multi-dimensional research on Hispanics and developed ‘Hispanicness index’ which includes: “self-identification, English language ability, the extent of Spanish language used at home, language preference, relative length of residence in the U.S., and miscegenation” (Cited in Laroche, et. al., 1991). There are few studies which incorporate both schools of thought, i.e., subjective and objective approach, to understand ethnicity (Valencia, 1985; Bergier, 1986).

**Approach to Ethnicity:**

Sociologists consider ethnicity as ‘a positive feeling of belonging to a cultural group’ (Spoonley, 1988). It is considered that ethnic groups are those groups which have subjective beliefs in their ancestry because of like customs and physical structure or because of their colonial memories. Ethnic groups are determined not only by biological differences, common customs or cultural characteristics, but also by subjective perceptions in their mind regarding their ancestry, whose beliefs they follow and react on them in their everyday life. It is believed that if one shares his ethnicity he shares it only for political reasons. Even if community dissolves because of political failure still the transformation remains in their mind. It is also described that ethnic groups come into shape because of the role of history, which remains in the minds of people in the form of attachment to their traditions, territory and way of life. These parameters remain in the collective conscious memory of people. It is also described that ethnic groups delimit
themselves into social circles. Every group is based on historical symbols and myths which resemble to their clans. The unity regarding their dependents or their blood supports subjective beliefs of an ethnic group. Every group has its own understanding and they follow their ancestral practices but its interpretation is based on subjective approach. The subjective interpretation of the differences between the ethnic groups depends on their own philosophy or on others interpretation (might be based on physical appearance). Ethnicity helps the individuals to build discipline in their life and develop collective approach in individual mind (Weber, 1922). Both the behaviours are based on symbols (Guibernau, 1996).

The anthropologists have always been keen in studying relationship between groups with dissimilarities in their cultural identities and have expressed interest in understanding interethnic relations and ethnic identity. In the last decade of the twentieth century there was a spread of cultural reflexivity and self-conscious politics of identity. The researchers contributed to several shifts in anthropological studies of ethnicity. Those studies were also linked to other intellectual interdisciplinary trends.

A close relationship between ethnic research and study of nationalism has established normative theory and social philosophy dealing with the issue of multiculturalism which describes majority-minority ethnic relationships. Fredrik Barth (1969) described ethnicity as an aspect of a relationship based on assumptions of cultural distinctiveness and not as cultural properties of a group. The cultural difference between various groups has been taken for granted for a long time, and the research mostly focused on social and economic processes. In 1970s ethnicity had remained a major research interest for researchers (Jenkins, 2008). Mitchell (1956) identified the prevalence of self conscious boundary maintenance in a situation of intensified intergroup contact. The ethnic identity of an individual is defined through its boundaries.

Blom (1969) demonstrated that one could have considerable cultural variation in a group without ethnic variation, or one could have important ethnic variation without much cultural variation. Cohen (1969, 1981) described that ethnicity was purely instrumental and need not necessarily have anything to do with historical cultural groups. Jenkins (2008) focused on “cultural stuff” and considered it as an important factor in
ethnicities. Cohen (1985) discussed similar view that community’s priorities are symbolic construction and boundary maintenance, and it generates “cultural stuff”, and merges it in the creation of symbols.

**Two models on Ethnicity**

a) **The Primordialist Model**

Researchers use a number of theoretical strategies to study ethnic groups and processes of ethnicity. Geertz (1960) described the primordialist model to identity the number of third world nations which were based on civil order- a political system which depends on democratic system, instead of being run by traditional association of kinship and religion. No doubt, the new civil order system clashes with older primordial aspects of kinship, ethnicity and religion (Geertz, 1963a). It was further described that ethnic attachment by individuals is based on social ties and religious traditions which are enrooted in individuals because of enculturation. The individuals stick to their ethnic affiliation because it represents their personal identity, and thus the learned enculturated processes build emotional attachment in them with their ethnic groups. The differences in ethnic groups might include religion, dress, language, and symbols. But Geertz (1963) focused on the relationship of ethnicity and feeling of belonging (subjective) to an ethnic group. The primordial model focuses on the meaning and significance people invest in their attachment with their ethnic groups. These subjective perceptions may or may not attribute to ancestry of a person.

Fishman (1980) described primordialist model in the essay entitled “Social Theory and Ethnography”, in which he wrote: Ethnicity is always described as kinship phenomenon, a connection with the self and with those who link themselves with their ancestry. The body of an individual is itself seen as an expression of ethnicity, and ethnicity is experienced in individual’s bones and flesh. Ethnicity should be considered as a tangible thing which assures of eternity.

b) **The Circumstantialist Model:**

Second model of ethnicity is proposed by Barth (1969) whose research based on multiethnic societies revealed that there is some ethnic relationship between different multiethnic societies but ethnic groups still maintain boundaries to unify their identity.
The author criticized previous researches that represent ethnic groups as discrete. He emphasized on the interaction between ethnic groups and described that how people use these elements of ethnicity again and again in different situations to achieve economic or political goals. This approach is sometimes considered as instrumentalist in nature and named in anthropology as circumstantialist model of ethnicity. He further described that ethnic boundaries are evoked by varying contexts and circumstances, which keep on changing as per need of the hour but are not based on ethnicity. People draw their ethnic identity based on economic, social and political purposes. Ethnicity is not fixed and unchanging, but becomes fluid to meet the basic needs of people.

**Ethnicity and consumerism:**

The concept of ethnicity is widely used in anthropological and sociological literature and is defined as “nesting dichotomizations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness” (Cohen, 1978, cited in Laroche, 1991). In multi-cultural societies ethnicity describes consumer characteristics (Bocock, 1993). A study in Canada on the link between ethnicity and financial services also describes that ethnicity construct lays an impact on consumption (Joy, et. al., 1991). In another study, the bank customer’s expectations and perceptions towards banks in countries, like, USA and UK were focused on service quality. In another study on bank choice in Canada, researchers asserted that customers prefer “convenience, speed of service, competence and friendliness of bank personnel” (Laroche, et. al., 1986, cited in Andronikidia, et. al., 2003). During 1970s and 1980s ethnicity was thought of as an objective aspect of individual which included gender, age or religion, and the focus was on homogeneous subculture. During late 1980s and early 1990s it was believed that ethnicity had subjective features also, and there was need to construct multidimensional model (Touslose, et. al., 2009). Laroche, et. al., (1991) conducted a study on English Canadians and French Canadians and combined one subjective construct with four objective constructs, like, “language, religion, social interaction (between two ethnic groups), and ethnic affiliation. The results predicted that ‘self-identification’ and ‘use of language’ were important indicators in understanding ethnic identity of English-Canadians and French-Canadians. Barth (1969) considered ethnicity as relational and negotiation phenomenon. Till date most of the studies on
Ethnic Identity:

Ethnic identity of an individual depends on his knowledge, consumption, and positioning of ethnically attached symbols and practices. In case of ethnic identity an individual no longer depends on his ethnic ancestry but affiliates himself to ethnic consumption which may evoke his conscious sense to define what it means to be a member of the ethnic group (Nagel, 1994) or may be noticed by others, that he affiliated himself to a particular ethnic group (Jiménez, 2010). Both affiliative and symbolic identification are forms of ethnic identity and allow individuals to identify themselves as a separate identity. The only difference between symbolic and affiliative ethnicity is that symbolic ethnicity shows infrequent attachment to ethnic symbols and practices whereas affiliative ethnicity shows intense interest in ethnic culture.

Ethnicity defines group identity and culture of an individual which remains as a permanent element like a biological essence. Ethnic roots exist in the personality of an
individual like a myth involving memory and legend that stood at the heart of any large, unified group. These groups define the ethnic core of each identity in society at large (Smith, 1986). Glazer, et. al., (1785) describe that ethnicity is not going to disappear through the process of assimilation because it is attached with strong emotion and identification. It happens because of two things: first changing role of government, and second is the involvement of inequality for ethnic communities. Because some communities like and invite the change while others resist the change to retain their ethnic roots and separate identities.

Subjectivity:

Neitzsche’s (1985) described subjectivity as a holistic view and self as a combination of urges which define individual body. With the passage of time in history the urges turn inward and generate subjectivity which further evokes the concept of self and soul. Heidegger (1992) described that subjectivity in individuals exhibits their self-concernfulness, characterized by individual potentiality, which raises the question as to ‘what I am going to make of myself’. It generates a sense of self-determination through self-interpretation. So, the meaning of self existence describes one’s self activity. Strawson (2005) describes the concept of the person as individual consciousness. Freud (1970) discusses subjectivity through three aspects the id, ego, and superego. He describes that mind functions at a multilevel. “The instinctual drives comprise the id, and so the id is fully and permanently unconscious. The ego has the most complexity because it relates to the entirety of mental life incorporating aspects of the preconscious, conscious, and unconscious systems. Arising originally from the perceptual system, the ego can be described as a kind of repository of all our sensations (relating to experimental states and memories). The superego is probably best described as the ‘consciouses’. It is an unconscious, socially acquired mechanism that controls thought and behavior, a kind of censor, or moralizer of the mind”. Ricoeur (1978) describes that humans have double allegiance; one is related to natural world and the other to phenomenal world. This double nature includes activity and passivity, subjectivity and objectivity, identity and diversity, particularity and multiplicity. The two major aspects of dual structure are:
objective time which describes when individual is born, grows and dies; phenomenological time describes the stages of action. So, the personal identity is a complex combination of numerical identity, qualitative identity and uninterrupted continuity. An intelligent person is one who maintains relation of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice and desire. Irigaray (1985) describes that women acquire negative aspects which are positive in men, namely: reason, enlightenment, power, truth, unity, universalism, autonomy, and subjectivity while woman’s aspects are: emotion, irrationality, carnality, multiplicity, dependence, and otherness.

Subjective ethnicity:

Weber (1968) describes ethnicity as subjective (mental aspects) and based on meanings. It focuses on individual personal beliefs and psychological identity which relates to individual cultural attributes. All ethnic groups have subjective beliefs based on their ancestral customs, physical type, and memories of their group formation. The subjectivity is the focus of philosophers whose main concern is to understand cognitive science. The claim that every person is different from the other is difficult to capture which is essentially called subjective. This term defines many things which are complex to define (Chalmers, 1996). The subjective world comprises of thoughts, memories and feelings. The cultural products crafted by humans embed many things, such as art, scientific theories, moral norms and values. Each culture has its own unwritten moral code, which prescribes people as to how to deal with each other. Habermas theory also identified that human race could not survive if human beings did not communicate and interact with one other (Carthy, 1978). In contrast, objective ethnicity includes socio-cultural features like religion, language and cultural tradition (Burton, 2000).

Leach (1954) described that social units are developed by subjective processes of categorical ascriptions. Both types of ethnicity, i.e., instrumentalist and primordialist, predict that objective grounding is required for subjective identity claims (Weber, 1978). Weber (1922) describes that ethnic groups entertain subjective beliefs. Bourdieu (1977) suggests that objective conditions mediate symbolic representations, and make persons to develop themselves in different ways. He describes that the phenomenon of ethnicity is
also influenced by theory of practice, which states that “the structure builds a specific environment which produces habitus, an organization of durables, transposable dispositions… The habitus is the creation of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary to understand collective history, the objective structures to succeed in reproducing themselves”. The habitus of the individual develops generative schemes that enhance his practices and representation; with its incorporation in itself one does not require to remember any overt rules and behaviours with consciousness, to mastery over these methods. The rational interest seeking behavior of individual is habitual in nature and remains in his unconscious mind, and person easily knows what is reasonable and what is not reasonable for him. In early life people come to know about objective constraints, which is mediated by family relations and the developed habitus in individual’s mind defines perception and appreciation of all the experiences which individual observes. The habitus is developed in individual psychology as a pattern recognition through which persons achieve mastery to handle the problems in their daily life. The skills are embodied in person’s psychology which is beyond the clutches of consciousness, and make him free from transformation and become imitable, and all the skills and knowledge build up in hidden persuasion in implicit pedagogy. The ethnic groups can be seen as influenced by symbolic meanings and reproduction of these meanings depends on unconscious nature of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977).

**Subjectivity with products:**

The consumers identify a product with a subjective meaning that supplements the concrete attributes it possesses (Hirschman 1980a, 1981b). This process may be reinforced by exposure to evaluative (as opposed to factual) advertising content (Holbrook 1978). For some products such as aesthetic objects, these intangible and symbolic attributes can be key determinants of brand selection. Indeed perceptions of the product as a subjective symbol rather than a concrete object can account for the selection of brands that are clearly inferior in terms of their tangible features but are viewed as subjectively superior symbols (Levy 1959). Given this premise, recent research has begun to investigate difference in emotions between various subcultures. For example, six ethnic groups (Chinese, English, Greek, Irish, Italian, Jewish) were found to differ
greatly in their emotional motives for pursuing consumption activities, towards fantasy and altered states of consciousness and their projection into consumption experiences (Hirschman 1982a). This sub-cultural approach to individual differences helps in enriching research results by focusing attention on the social origins of variation in hedonic response. Further, it helps to identify and understand the cultural sources of images, both of real and fantasy nature, which guide consumers in their adoption and usage of products.

**Ethnic reflexivity and consumption:**

In today’s era societies turn into multi-cultural ethnicities and understanding consumer behavior as per ethnicity becomes important. Ethnicity can affect consumer taste and consumption practices (Bocock, 1993). The socio-cultural differences cause variation between groups (Fitzgerald, 1991; Meijer, 1998). Williams (1995) described the importance of studies on ethnic groups in consumer behavior journal in last twenty years and even US marketing papers highlight the importance of shopping behavior of Hispanics (Shim and Gerht, 1996; Deshpande, et. al., 1986; Donthu and Cherian, 1994; Mulhen and Williams 1995).

Consumption is a complex mixture of economic, social and cultural set of practices (Sassatelli, 2000). In today’s consuming society consumption has cultural and practical implications which go beyond satisfying our daily needs or symbolical meanings. The consumer culture embeds in the fabrication of identities and creates consumers in a number of ways. The contemporary sociology of consumption is aware of the ambivalence of consumption and of the normative character of its link to the pursuit of identity. Looking at consumption and identity from the perspective of an active but socially bounded and culturally normalised identity, we may certainly appreciate that consumers are not always able to complete their rituals of consumption by appropriating commodities successfully (Simmel, 1990).

Habitus is a deep rooted unconscious mechanism for normative and strategic dimension of identity constitution. In the phenomena of consumption, reflexive individualization focuses on individual stylisation of oneself through consumer choices, when an individual focuses more on individualization, the self becomes reflexive and this process involves self-monitoring, self-scrutiny, planning and ordering of elements and
choices in a coherent narrative of identity (Beck, 1992). When the consumer chooses self in a pluralized world, he has to take care of risk and advantages attached to it, and the solution lies in one’s culture (Bauman, 1992). The choices which accumulate over period of time define the core of individual’s identity, his mobility and reflexivity, which reflects in decision which a consumer takes (Giddens, 1991).

**Indian Ethnosociology:**

Marriott (1989) described that Western science is not equipped to deal with social science issues of Indian people. Indian categories should be learned and interpreted by Indian ethnography. Interpretation uncovered by Indian ethnographers helps to build new hypotheses formation and leads to positive theoretical growth. All ethno social sciences developed are based on particular cultures. The world is full of different origins of social science thoughts, so one has to think of ethno social science beyond the Western thought which is particular to a certain culture and these cannot be applied universally. Study of Indian society in terms of its own realities helps to build Indian ethnosociology. Horton (1982) described that human experiences originate uniformly in different cultures. The Indian ancestors have their own possession of divine status (Parson and Shils, 1952). By understanding the culture on these foundations, the researchers have to look at culture in a natural, social ontological (metaphysics dealing with nature) and epistemological (the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion) way. Indian ethnosociology has its own social tertiary theory and its elements have been embedded in customs and norms which individual has to handle in everyday life (Melinda Moore, 1989).

**Logic of relations**

Langer (1967) described humanised way of relationship by relating it to mathematical fundamental relational properties, which consider that an individual has a relation of reflexivity to himself and when two persons relate it to each other, it is called as symmetry and when it relates to three then it will become a chain, which is called as transitivity. When all the individuals follow these relations they are considered as
equivalent and when only a few follow these relationships they are called as anti-equivalent and when no one follows them, it is called as non-equivalent (Carnap, 1958). Larson and Sharma (1990) described that Indian culture should be understood through the natives of the place, and not by immigrants in Western culture and there should not be a single theory of relations which applies everywhere.

Marriott (1989a) considered that the world has un-identical relations which have properties like nonreflexive, nonsymmetric and nontransitive. Like, the Arab culture is composite in nature (Greetz, et. al., 1979; Marriott, 1990) and has its own divine thoughts than Western cultures (Combs-Schilling, 1989). But the most understandable tertiary theory is of India (Larson, 1990), and it might be possible that Indian divine thoughts have been neglected over the years (Sharma, 1990). So, it is required to develop Indian ethnosophistry by connecting all relevant Indian ethnometaphor and ethnopsychology to understand Indian social property spaces (Marriott, 1987). Dumont (1957, 1970) described that South Asians do not have any single value or social configuration and any single normative analysis towards all relations. It is found that Indian culture is a mix of many layered and many dimensional contexts. The interesting fact explored about Indian culture is that it has its own castes and kins, and has its own specialized domestic spaces, and has its calculation of surrounding cognitive components. To understand these uncovered facts, researchers have to do more Indian ethnography studies (Marriott, 1990). In India Hindu concept regards nothing as non-materialistic and also considers actions, words, and thoughts with relational properties (Ramanujan, 1967).

**Development of Indian ethnosocial science:**

By understanding ethnosocial science one can realise that Indians acquired knowledge about thoughts, perceptions and cognition categories which they have learned and practiced for years together in their daily life, because Western perceptions and cognitions can not fit well with Indian perceptions and meanings (Mukerji, 1986). By doing ethnography research on Indians we can understand their local social concepts very well, which may not relate with pre-existing Western jargons, but instead systematically add to culture studies (Geertz, 1983).
Marriott (1990) described that in building a culture theory in social science, the researcher has to take care that the cultural natural categories evolve from the local cultural account and have words and measures which can have explanation and analysis related to studied culture. These measures have the capability to draw deductive strategies to generate hypotheses for empirical understanding at micro level and open the field for future criticism, so that the researcher performs his work without destroying cultural epistemology. Motwani (1934) criticised Indian sociologists who restricted themselves to existing *dharmasastra*. Indian Hindu thoughts have plenty of pre-defined words and meanings which are quite different from Western thinking (Pugh, 1984; Rajesh, 1976). These various layers of Indian culture include sheaths, bodies and spheres which have been left uncovered by many ethnographers till date (Marriott, 1990), and only few have focused on small parts of it (Ramanujan, 1989). The Indian culture gives a thought that the subjects come together with consciousness and materialistic mind (Larson, 1987). Iden (1976) described that substance and code have been derived from one source, from which it originated and changed in its effect from time to time. Indian culture is like a flower which has a core part and its subjects move to various angles in open spaces. Indians are materialistic substance and they have transformed the meaning of substance from context to object and apply it in their regular daily life practices or activities (Marriott, 1976, 1980, 1990). Alan Roland (1979) stated that Indians always carry their familial learning wherever they go and have a very strong sense of judging others and knowing what is appropriate to a particular person and context.

**Ethnoconsumerism:**

The term ethnoconsumerism is divided into two parts, first is “Ethnos” which represents people or nation and second part is “Consumerism” which represents consumption as a cultural practice. It is considered as a conceptual framework which uses theoretical categories to understand consumer behaviour in a particular culture (Venkatesh, 1995). Culture is a combination of social life, which includes religion, individual’s everyday practices, institutions and ideologies, ideas and activities, social formations and meaning systems (McCracken, 1988). It is an alternative to Western embodied cultural and cross-cultural studies, because it gives importance to local culture.
before developing its cultural framework. Ethnoconsumerism research first understands the basic categories of culture, and explores their relation and uncovers facts through “actions, practices, words, thoughts, language, and institution of culture as they relate to consumption” (Venkatesh, 1995, cited in Venkatesh, et. al., 2000). The ethnoconsumerism research is way beyond the Emic and Etic approaches of research which consider subjective or researcher’s view in defining the culture of target group, instead it focuses on cultural systems, social systems, and subjective knowledge and considers all these in a combined form to understand the individual culture in which it dwells. Ethnoconsumerism approach supports the researcher’s philosophy that American understanding of culture and its universalism should not be practiced for theoretical formulation (McMarriott, 1991, 1992; Sandra Hardings, 1999; Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, 1999).

Venkatesh (1995) described ethnoconsumerism as an approach to study consumer behavior through the medium of theoretical categories originating in a given culture and also from an angle of social or cultural group. This approach studied consumption from the perspective of culture, by understanding behavioural and cognition factors which belong to local culture. It also considers that consumer behaviour is primarily a socio-cultural phenomenon, and also that all identities emerge through interaction within a socio-cultural environment (McCracken, 1988). Ethnoconsumerism considers consumer behavior as a cultural phenomenon. Consumerism does not resemble factors like consumer rights and activism. The individual and social aspects are considered as sub-part of the culture. The researchers always focus to study consumer at individualist level, but the behavior of consumer cannot be judged at that level because its behavior is a combination of socio-cultural norms (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979; McCracken, 1988). The consumer should be researched at its cultural group level, because at that level it makes sense to understand consumer not at individualistic level, and collective approach give us more insights than individualistic approach. No doubt that our data collection approach is individualistic, but the analysis approach should be collective. The main aspects which affect consumer behavior are culture, family and group norms, and then psychology of individuals also comes into existence. Most of the consumer behaviour is influenced by socio-cultural norms. The many aspects of different cultures are developed
internally or externally through certain evolutions or impositions. The culture determines human community, social organization and its individuals.

Ethnicity is a collective term which replaces other terms like “race, religion, language group, nationality, religion”. Ethnoconsumerism not only illustrates the native viewpoint but also determines the knowledge from culture viewpoint. Ethnicity is also considered as a combination of blood and genes shared among group members. Barth (1969) considers ethnicity as maintenance of ethnic boundaries and differentiation from other ethnic groups. Some researchers consider ethnic background on the basis of race, like, whites and blacks and some consider religion, like, Judaism and Islam (Venkatesh, 1995). The ethnicity is defined by understanding self-identification of group members. Ethnicity has two principles which are explained as follows: (a) inclusionary-exclusionary principle, under which exclusion explains difference of one ethnic group from the others, and inclusion explains ethnic identity. Ethnicity is a powerful indicator of identity, and is a combination of subjectivity and social norms. Ethnicity could be considered for understanding theoretically social distinction and differentiation. Deshpande (1989), and Zmud and Arce (1992) considered ethnicity for studying consumer behaviour as a social psychological demographic construct. The target of these studies is to consider ethnicity as an independent variable and consumption as a dependent variable, and treat ethnicity as a construct. There is little attempt by researchers to understand ethnicity from the perspective of an ethnic group. Various researchers are confused in undertaking ethnicity research with objectivity (where consumption is objectified) or subjectivity (where subject consumption is experienced). Ethnicity works as a cultural state where differences in cultural patterns of different ethnic groups are understood. Ethnicity researches are generally cross-cultural or comparative who try to understand the consumption pattern of different ethnic groups. Ethnicity always has two approaches to study ethnic groups; one can study it either as intra-cultural (within ethnic group) or inter-cultural (between ethnic groups). For doing comparative research some researchers use positivist approach, while others use subjectivist-interpretivist approach. The subjective approach focuses on the differences in culture and not on the similarities, but cultural differences are based on theoretical framework, which can be modified for conducting cross-cultural research. The research
can be done for achieving three goals: (a) descriptive: it gathers detailed factors from respondents, like, the work of thick descriptive ethnographic study on Balinese cock fight (Geertz, 1973); (b) comparative research: it is an extension of descriptive research, which happens between at least two cultures, and (c) generalization research: where cross-cultural similarities are found to make the finding generalized. The focus of ethnoconsumerism is on socio-cultural-historical analysis, which was done by Nobert Elias (1982) in his work ‘The History of Manners’. He highlighted the importance of ‘I-We’ interpretation from the individual end and their importance for the individual. Durkheim (1965) also supports the concept of collective identity for individuals in shared environments. Ethnoconsumerism supports researchers to view an individual as a creature made of culture, or subpart of a culture, having certain group affiliations. Ethnoconsumerism focuses on individual “personality, cognition, mental constructs, value systems, symbolic belief systems, rituals, and everyday practices all interwoven into a holistic view of the consumer.

Ethnoconsumerism Examples:

Ethnoconsumerism is described by Yau (1988) in which the Chinese values are studied from Confucian to Buddhist period, and the situation which predicts the customer satisfaction are different from Western satisfaction parameters. Howe, L. (1987) described that the caste system in India and Bali are different. No matter, the Bali culture is based on Sanskrit culture of India, but its social structure is similar to that of Indonesia. Arnold (1989) described the Nigerian culture through socio-cultural historical analysis of consumption pattern of Zinder and determined the psychology of Zinder society, by understanding its macro and micro (everyday transaction) theories, and also its economic order.

Another study is of Pyssler’s (1992) cultural analysis of scooter culture in India in which he described the role of political and cultural economy and importance of ethnoconsumerist approach in studying subjects. He worked on three cross cultures, namely, Italy, England and India depicting that motor scooter was considered as an aesthetic object in Italy, a symbol of rebellion in England, and family utility transportation in India. Vinketash (1994) describes that there is culture variation within
Indian culture and he uses “ethnoconsumerism” approach to study cross-cultural differences. The development in India can not be considered on the same pattern as in Western societies. We can not use the model of West to understand the psychology of consumer in India.

**Assumptions of Ethnoconsumerist research:**

The consumer behaviour exists in culture and this idea is also supported by Douglas and Isherwood (1979) and McCracken (1988) further described that cultural categories are combination of subject practices, its historical and social forces, and that they continuously undergo a process of fusion and fission. So, consumer behaviour is a combined form of visual, texts and symbols, and these schemes represent the consumer’s understanding of their environment. Symbols are social images of culture, which constitute, interpret and negotiate the sense-making process adopted by individuals. So, consumers should be treated as objects in order to understand their symbolic and narrative cultural consumption patterns (Venkatesh, 1995). Sometimes, even cultures which look similar in terms of language have different historical backgrounds, and every culture has different meanings attached to similar things and even in a collective society there is ample space for an individual to identify with individualist identity (Venkatesh, et. al., 2000). The ethnoconsumerist methodology steps are taken from Venkatesh, et. al., (2000) study which defines ethnoconsumerism approach into nine steps. This approach is mix of text and field work. The text defines the historical-socio-cultural themes while the cultural categories give in-depth direction to data analysis and theoretical sources. The relationship of these categories exposes many layers of meanings (Spiggle, 1994). The main aim of the ethnoconsumerism is development of theory for the target culture. The text and field provide basis of cultural framework, which leads to the formation of cultural categories, and finally the interpretation and relation of these categories.

**Goal of research:**

In the present study we have followed the concept of Holy (1987) who describes the research process in three ways: description, comparison, and generalization. Description simply talks about facts which are observed and gathered by researchers and
it includes interpretation. Comparison is a logical extension of description, which makes comparison between two or more cultures. Finally, generalization happens when the researcher has valid generalization across cultures.

**For similarities and differences in groups:**

Positivism has two approaches: (a) scientific generalization, and (b) structuralism-functionalism. In the present study, we have applied the second approach which says that world is an organized system having various parts with different functional capabilities but have common systemic goals. Subjectivist-interpretivist lays emphasis on cultures and not on similarities and emphasises that theoretical categories are applied in cross-cultural research but these concepts do not stand for generalization.

**Ethnic group differences:**

Okagaki and Sternberg (1993) conducted a study in San Jose and California and asked immigrant parents from Cambodia, Mexico, Philippines, Vietnam, and native born Anglo-American and Mexican Americans about their perception of child rearing, appropriate teaching, and children’s intelligence. Heath (1983) predicted that different ethnic groups in North Carolina have different conceptions of intelligence. Serpell (1979) interviewed Zambian and English children to reproduce patterns through wire models, pencil and paper, or clay. The English children were best with pencil and paper, Zambian children performed well through wire medium and both the ethnic groups gave equivalent results with clay.

**Ethnoconsumerism and culture:**

Ethnoconsumerism can be used as a theory and methodological approach to study consumption which itself represents cultural behaviour. It incorporates ethnography not only from the perspective of data collection but also includes methods like visual and textual analysis, which is more superior approach to study culture (Meamber and Venkatesh, 2000). “Ethnoconsumerism considers individual not as an individual but as a part of culture, subculture and other group affiliations. It is the study of individual consumer (personality, cognition and mental constructs), his values systems (symbolic
belief systems, rituals, norms), his social environment influencers (social organization, social institutions) and everyday practices all interwoven into a holistic view of the consumer” (Venkatesh, 1995).

When we relate consumption to culture one has to understand diverse cultural practices (Burton, 2009). The ethnic configurations can also be considered as cultural groups and ultimately referred to as “ethnic sub-group cultures”. Every cultural has its own practices and value systems that undergo change and influence other cultures because the culture is dynamic. The steps involved in ethnoconsumerism approach are:

i. Describe consumer environments and pertinent socio-economic trends;
ii. Describe the cultural framework and relevant cultural categories;
iii. Interpret and provide meanings for cultural categories;
iv. Establish relationships between cultural categories;
v. Describe specific behaviors and/or patterns;
vi. Describe and interpret the findings. (Venkatesh, et. al., 2013)

Ethnoconsumerism focuses on cross-cultural studies but it does not mean to lead to comparisons for generalisations because every cultural practice is unique and should not be put under universalism. Venkatesh, et. al., (2013) described the ethnoconsumerist methodological approach for NANO car in India through the use of research publications, public sourcing and press clippings.

**Guidelines in ethnoconsumerism:**

Appadurai (1990) described that companies try to homogenise the world but culture tries towards heterogeneity of the world, so it is better to do comparative description of intra-cultures instead of discussing generalization. A cultural framework represents theoretical concepts which are based on cultural categories derived from field and texts. The field description represents the subject view of culture in real terms while texts take support of historical socio-cultural themes. Ethnoconsumerism relies on both of the perspectives to validate the finding of research in cross-cultural context (Venkatesh, 1995).
Cross-cultural studies:

It requires at least two different cultures and is a method of generating and testing hypotheses derived from the positivistic paradigms (Hofstede, 1980). Cross-cultural research studies cultural, societal, social structural and individual behaviours. Various researchers have worked on cross-cultural psychological studies, like, Whiting and Whiting (1975), Triandis and Lambert (1980), Berry, et. al., (1992), and Hofstede (1980). In psychology studies the main criteria is to understand individual psychological behaviour which is influenced by its cultural factors. Ralph Linton (1945) described the concept of model personality in cross cultural studies which depicts social interaction of an individual and predicts that his identity gets depicted by his culture. Durkheim (1965) described that individuals are collective conscious and share environment of experiences, events and meanings.

Ethnographic approach to cultural understanding:

The ethnographic approach allows us to see beneath the world composed of complex living things. It also helps to generalize the theory and reject the idea that all people are in some fundamental way the same. The ethnographic approach helps to see and read culture (Labaree, 2003). The ethnographic sociological approach to cultural studies was generated from social anthropology and sociology. The methodological constructions of ethnographic studies could be tested with the help of cultural observations of facts grounded on empirical studies. Such studies focus on the observation of cultural practices, values, beliefs and cultural artefacts within a community or ethnic group, in both objective and subjective forms. It is mainly inductive-inferential in approach and builds cross-cultural comparisons which are focused on fundamental values and patterns in the cultural system of community. Moreover, more the study is grounded into the observations of ethno-sociological patterns of culture of a single community or of communities, the more its findings confirm and predict the presence of composite culture. In macro anthropological survey of India, it was found that communities in India shared cultural traits among various cultural communities (Singh, 2007).
Middle class:

Gupta (2000) determined that Indian consumers are like predators and have complete insensitivity to social concern. Middle class consumers are also considered as newly rich consumers (Hutchinson and Brown, 2001). The homogenization of middle class is very difficult to establish in cultures such as India, Indonesia and China (Hofstede, 2001). The heterogeneity spread in the society through different social sub-groups and cultural frameworks like its religion and political and country structure. The middle class consumers have their own subjective factors which explain their values, attitudes and preferences (Lang and Meier, 2009).

These consumers lack taste and style as a means of social distinction. In other words one can say that these consumers have financial capital but no cultural capital. They have no concern for social and environmental issues. But middle class are considered as the main drivers of hope in emerging markets, and their strength also drives economic and social progress, and such scenarios are seen mostly in China and India. The new middle class consumers are also considered as the main drivers of cultural homogenization, diversification and hybridization, and this leads to intercultural hybrids (Albrow, 1996; Guillen, 2001; Martinelli, 2005). Hybridization is the fusion of identities and cultures which happens while in contact with other cultures (Hall and du Gay, 1996). In developing countries, like, India, inter-relatedness of social relationships and cultural interaction is a new trend in middle class strata (Kuhn, 2009).

The middle class in India is estimated as 350 million in public communication, which makes them a lucrative market for marketers, whether from India or multinational business groups. The Indian middle class occupies 55% (and growing) of India’s household income and is placed at almost US$ 4000 per capita (Bijapurkar, 2014). The recent studies on middle class are focused on their consumption and role of advertising in modifying their identities (Juluri, 2003; Mankekar, 1999; Mazzarella, 2003). The studies are also focused on the impact of media which analyzes the public culture and identity awareness of middle class (Appadurai, 1996; Breckenridge, 1995). The studies in Indian culture on middle class focused on their public culture, and linked public culture with middle class practices which are further linked with their consumption practices and their
everyday practices (Donner, 2004; van Wessel, 2004). The consumption of middle class might be individually based on subjective set of practices (Fernandes, 2009).

**Multi ethnic-integrated marketing:**

Firms are now integrating ethnic consumers into their strategic planning. In today’s world the number of people with different ethnicities is increasing very sharply, and advertising by companies includes all of them in their advertisements (Stern, 1993). Now a days consumers deal with lot of data from a variety of channels. Nordstrom (1999) described that individual has desire of recognition. In post modern era, the consumer is largely fragmented and joins that group of people who resemble his psyche. In such an environment, the emotions, sensitivity and values of individual are most important criteria.

The area of research undertaken in present study opens a new field of thinking for retailers and marketers to understand the importance of ethnicity in their consumer attraction strategies. India is a multicultural country with numerous ethnic groups, having their own traditions, rituals, values and norms. Therefore, the consumer strategists have to understand and imbibe these facets in the marketing strategies to capture more consumer base.

We have used mixed method research approach in this study that consists of qualitative as well as quantitative methods for finding answers to the research question. On the qualitative aspect, we have used ethnographic interviews and grounded theory for finding answers to research the question followed by partial least square based structural equation modeling as the quantitative method to empirically justify the answers at large scale. We have taken interviews form six different ethnic groups including Brahmins, Rajputs, Mahajans, Muslims, Sikhs, and Kashmiri Pandits to gather information related to their store choice behaviour and factors affecting it.

**1.1 Structure of the research study**

The present study will be the first one to study subjective ethnicity as a multi dimensional construct in multicultural society. The study tests subjective ethnicity by including five
constructs (cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, practical intelligence, culture self, and ethnic identity). Specifically, the study explores the impact of subjective ethnicity on store choice and considering shopping behaviour as mediator. The study involved a thorough literature review, identification of gap, and multiple model testings on the data collected from six ethnic groups (Sikh, Dogra Brahmin, Dogra Rajput, Dogra Sunni Muslim, Punchi Sikh, Kashmiri Pandit, Mahajan). A total of 783 data points were collected from all ethnic groups. The subjective ethnicity, store choice and shopping behaviour relationship, was tested on this data (using six ethnic groups) using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Given that this is the first instance of this study, multiple models - both first, second order, third and fourth order models - were tested to find the most optimum and best fitting model structure; this helped compare the several possible theoretical explanations possible for the phenomenon under study. Finally, by arguing with support from the findings, the distinctness and importance of the “Subjective ethnicity, Store choice and shopping behaviour” component was established and discussed.

1.2 Organization of report

The remaining body of this thesis is organized as follows. Section 1 gives an introduction to this body of work. Section 2 presents the literature reviewed for developing and guiding this study. Section 3 presents the development of the conceptual model, built out of hypotheses between the various constructs, on which the data was tested upon. Section 4 presents the need for study, objective and research questions, research design, sampling structure, preliminary data analysis, checking of multivariate assumptions and multiple model testings. Section 5 presents the analysis of the results and mediation tests. Section 6 presents the general discussion of the results, theoretical contribution, recommendations, limitations and future research. Section 7 presents the concluding remarks.