CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reviewing the existing research studies is an important aspect which guides the researcher in identifying the gap in the related field of knowledge. The researcher has conducted an extensive literature review which has enabled to understand the research problem and develop the focus point of the research. The findings of the significant studies are also helpful in developing factors for the study.

This chapter therefore tries to bring out the salient findings of earlier studies which throw light on various concepts in the related field. Since the present study is related to the rural consumer buying behaviour of the FMCG, the review of literature refers to rural shoppers behaviour in general, factors determining the buying behaviour of the rural shoppers, rural marketing and consumer decision making process. The researcher has made an attempt to bring out the reviews in four different sections.

2.1 Rural shopper’s behaviour / brand preference in rural areas

Jagwinder Singh (2008) made a comparative study on the attitudes of rural and urban Indian consumers towards foreign products against Indian products in the aspects of cars, TV, refrigerators, washing machine and microwave ovens. The study was carried out in the Ludhiana district of Punjab. Hundred households were selected based on convenience sampling. The findings of the study revealed that rural consumers were found to be more impressed than their urban counter parts in terms of maintenance services, technical advancement, prestige, durability, quality/performance and wide choice of size and model. It was interesting to note that rural consumers of Punjab were very prosperous as compared to rural consumers of other states as large number of the people have their family members residing abroad, they wanted to increase their status by using prestigious products. Urban consumers gave more importance to style and appearance than other attributes due to the tendency to relate their product with other personalities.

Another study was by done Cullen and Frank (2009) on the consumer behaviour of the rural and urban people in United States towards new food products using FRL instrument. When the attributes of both geographic regions’ consumer...
choice and attitudes towards selection and purchase of new food products were explored, it revealed that urban consumers were more responsive towards new food products and the modes of influence had a greater impact on the urban market segment. On considering the issues such as price, quality, taste, health issues, and nutritional composition, it was found that both rural and urban consumers showed their preferences when selecting their new food products. It provides a consumer profile for rural and urban market segments using the labels as uninvolved food consumers, hedonistic food consumers, adventurous food consumers and rational food consumers.

Another study on Chinese consumer behaviour was done by Shirodkar where it was found that aesthetic and social values were given importance.

Shirodkar (2005) made an insights into the Chinese consumer behaviour by highlighting the importance given by consumers to various attributes such as price, quality etc. leading to buying decision making. He pointed out that Chinese consumers were looking for aesthetic and social value instead of just focussing on the basic needs. They do not want to be among the first to try a new product, but the discomfort of being behind the times made them think that if the neighbours had tried it, they had better follow suit soon. It stressed the need for informal channels of communication in the Chinese society. Brand loyalty was found to be more among them. Finally, it was concluded that, success could be ensured if products are adjusted to the peculiarities of Chinese tastes and habits.

Shanthakumari and Kannan (2010) examined the dissimilarity of customer perception and expectation among rural and urban markets and identified the gap between rural and urban consumer perception and expectation based on their cultural, social, personal and behavioural factors. The study was exploratory in nature making use of only secondary data. The results showed that differences exist in the rural and urban consumers due to literacy level, investor awareness on financial products, consumption level etc. The main difference was, urban people consider aspiration and it was all about brand, life style and show of value as the key issue and rural consumers considered price followed by aspiration and then quality as the key issue. The dissimilarity was also observed in the case of packaging providing more impact on urban consumers than rural consumers.
The implications have drawn from these three reviews shows that dissimilarity is observed in the case of factors influencing the buying behaviour of rural and urban consumers.

Manmeet Kumar Siras (2012) conducted a study to find out the opinion of the rural consumers about the consumer durable goods. For this purpose, 200 respondents were selected on the basis of convenience sampling from Ghaziabad district in Uttar Pradesh. The findings of the study showed that the demand for the durable products were growing but at the same time, the demand for other products similar to these standard branded products was also very high due to the difference in price. Rural consumers were influenced by information received especially through opinions of family members, advice of friends and neighbours, and shopkeepers’ advice. Self-experience was not a major influencer, because consumer durables are not purchased repeatedly. The implications of the study revealed that there was certainly a place for premium products, but consumers in rural market for those products were scattered and difficult to reach.

A study had been conducted by Safia begum et al (2010), to determine the food consumption pattern in rural area of Nowshere. The major objective was to investigate the influence of family size and income level on the food consumption patterns in the rural areas. Sixty six households were chosen randomly for the survey and was analysed through least square method. The empirical results revealed that wheat flour, milk, rice, vegetables, sugar, edible fats and tea were positively correlated with house hold size, but meat, pulses, eggs and fruits were not significantly influenced by it. The results of ‘r’ test indicated that monthly income of the consumers had an influence on the consumption of food items like meat, milk, rice, pulses, fruit, sugar, tea and edible fats. Hence it was suggested that the policy makers must plan to improve food availability and to increase family income to enhance quality of rural life.

Pooja Jain (2009) attempted to study the consumption patterns of rural consumers and analysed the factors influencing the brand choice and the strategies followed by companies to tap the rural markets. It discussed about the peculiar features of the Indian rural market such as life style changes, creating the capacity to consume, develop new products for the rural market and adopting effective
communication. This study explored the consumption scenario of rural India and analysed some of the marketing strategies followed by the corporate in order to capture large pie in the rural market. While highlighting the quality of markets in rural India, it is a cause of concern, even though the aggregate potential is impressive. Most of the rural purchase requires collective social sanction which is unheard in urban areas.

Analysis of rural consumers’ attitude towards khadi product was a study undertaken by Padmasani et al (2008) and it threw light on the influence of demographic factors and purchase preference on rural consumer’s attitude towards khadi products. The study was carried out in Gobichettipalayam taluk and a sample size of 100 was selected randomly from six rural based khadi shops in Gobi block. The results of ANOVA revealed that the attitudes of rural consumers were significantly different based on demographic factors. The Pearson correlation coefficient showed that the attitude had significant positive relationship with the consumer’s satisfaction. This leads to the implication that the majority of young and educated consumers had positive attitude towards khadi products, more number of outlets can be opened at commercial areas/ bazaars etc. The study suggested that advertising campaigns can be carried out to create awareness to all classes of people and to project it as a fashion statement for the youth.

Amit Sharma (2010), in his study assessed the changes in the rural consumption pattern “, pointed out the prediction made by NCAER that by 2015, more than 42 % of rural households would shift from agriculture to non-farm sources like construction, retail, trading etc. It also highlighted that 44% of households in the country currently have 93 % of the consumer surplus income, even at the bottom of the pyramid 60% of households have 40% of total household expenditure, indicating the consumption power at the bottom of the pyramid. Reporting on the size of the under-educated work force, hardly 14% of the rural households have graduates and above all, chief bread winner account for 28% of the total household income. It also pointed out that 81% of the rural households save a part of their income for future, even as more than 50% of the households were confident about the stability.

Hundal (2001), analysed the rural buying behaviour in Amritsar district of Punjab investigated the role of family members in making purchase decisions for
durables including refrigerator, television, air coolers and washing machines. His findings revealed that product selection decisions in rural families were mostly made by spouses together but they were highly influenced by children. Brand selection decision were also made jointly by the couple but were significantly influenced by children and elders in the family. Except for air coolers, the choice of store for the purchase of durables was also decided jointly or husband individually for the other three durables. However, children also accompany while buying television, washing machine and refrigerator while distant relatives accompany while purchasing air coolers. The product choice was significantly guided by the durability followed by after sales service/size/model, availability and guaranty / warranty.

Saroj Kumar Mohanta (2012) examined the rural consumers buying behaviour and usage of mobile services and explained how this differs from urban counterparts. Participatory research appraisal method was adopted and the study was focussed on village men between 20 and 45 years of age. Results and implications revealed that not all service providers had good signal in the village and they prefer to buy in bigger towns. Their buying decision was mainly initiated by the family members. PRA method was adopted for the study as it was considered better than focussed group discussion as it allows the consumer to think and discuss in their natural setting, which was very important for the rural dweller.

This coincides with the study of Hundal presented in the previous review, where family decision making dominates the purchase decision.

Yet another study by Purohit H C corresponds with the previous findings that family decision making is prevalent in rural areas with regard to consumer durable products.

A study was conducted by Purohit (2011), on the buying pattern of the rural consumer with regard to consumer durables such as (T.V., Scooter, Bi-Cycle, Bike and Tractor). For this purpose, 50 respondents were selected from Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh state. The sources of information for their purchase were their friends (61%). Also majority of the respondents consulted their family members (90%) before making purchase and sometimes they switch over to other brands due to the attraction of the packaging (67%). As the trend is changing, the rural durables market
has great potential and companies find a way of tapping it successfully. It pointed out that in the next five years; nearly 70 million of rural households will have TV, mobile, two wheelers as compared to 48 million household of urban India.

Ratna Kishore (2013) observed the pre purchase behaviour of rural people, their usage rate and the role of various factors influencing consumer durable goods in Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh. A sample size of 600 was collected from six villages in Guntur district. On examining the pre purchase behaviour of the rural people, 75% of the respondents took more than two months to be engaged in actual purchase which shows that they were very cautious in their purchasing. Assessing the importance of different sources of information, 76% of the respondents depended on personal sources of information and 20% were influenced by the market dominated sources. Nearly three fourth of the respondents do not enquire much about the products as they believe they buy only branded products and felt that more skeptic a person is, the more he enquires about the product. They considered price and quality as the important factor in buying the durable products.

Another analogous study by Arul Rajan also ascertains that information search was present among rural people in the purchase of consumer durables.

Arul Rajan (2012), made an attempt to study the buying behaviour of rural families towards the purchase of durable goods in Tamil Nadu. To obtain this objective, a sample size of 600 households was selected through purposive sampling from seventy villages in Tamil Nadu. The outcomes of the study indicated that family members influenced a lot in the purchase of durable goods and the information sources they use are opinion leaders, friends, neighbours and past experience. The criteria in selecting the durable goods were price, dealer reputation and advertisement. It suggested that while framing a marketing plan for the rural areas, it was the rural family that should be considered and not the individual as unit.

M K Durgamani in her review also affirms that rural consumer behaviour exhibit pre purchase behaviour before entering into actual purchase.

In an article by Durgamani (2009) on “Consumer behaviour in rural marketing” analysis was made on the buying characteristics of the rural people which presented that age, life cycle stage and occupation have influence on the purchase of
convenience goods by the rural consumers. Small unit purchasing is convenient to rural consumers as they are mostly daily wage earners. The information gathering and processing style are simple since their sources and skill are limited. Similar to the urban consumer, the rural consumers followed the same buying decision process in sequence which includes need recognition, information search, and evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour.

The following research done by Tauseef Ahmad also supports the previous study that consumers in Jodhpur exhibit planned shopping behaviour.

An attempt to find out the consumer impulse buying behaviour towards FMCG products in Jodhpur was studied by Tauseef Ahmad (2011). A total of 160 respondents were selected based on random sampling and the results indicated that there exists a weak association between consumer lifestyle, fashion involvement and post-decision stage of consumer’s with the impulse buying behaviour. It also illustrated that Jodhpur consumers plan their purchases and have planned shopping life styles. But the pre-decision stage of buying was associated with impulsive buying because these days, stores were full of variety of products which create appealing effect on the buyers.

An article by S. L Gupta and Arun Mittal (2008) focussed on the various aspects of consumer behaviour and the brand preferences in the rural market. For this purpose, five villages were selected from the states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and 20 respondents were chosen from each state. Regarding the purchase behaviour, majority of the respondents (46%) preferred to purchase from nearest shops and maximum number of consumers purchase for one month. They chose to pay in cash rather than in credit and the home maker was the decision maker in the family. About 50% of the people stay brand loyal to their products. With reference to the brand preference in FMCG categories, Colgate stood first in paste, Rin was ranked number one in the detergent and Denim was in the first place in shaving cream. Convenience of the retail store carries highest weightage in affecting the purchase decision. On the whole it was observed that, about 50% of the sample respondents were satisfied with the FMCG products in the markets.
The following study by Chandra Sekhar also proved that brand loyalty existed among the rural consumers.

A study was conducted by Chandra Sekhar (2012) on the role of brand in the purchase behaviour of consumers in rural markets. An exploratory cum descriptive study was conducted in the rural areas of Telengana region with a sample size of 90 selected from 3 villages namely Badangpet, Nadergul and Chintula. The findings of the study showed that branded products usage was more in the case of categories like soaps, hair oil, washing powder, washing soaps, face powder, fairness cream and cold cream. In the case of biscuits, coffee and tea, the products were purchased in loose. In all the three villages, there were differences in the consumption of branded products in all these categories. Brand awareness and brand loyalty was more in the Badangpet and Nadergul villages when compared to chintula.

Another empirical study was done by Kshitiz Yadav (2013) to identify the brand preference and level of satisfaction of the rural consumers in Ramnagar, Nainital. For this purpose, fifty respondents were taken randomly from the outskirts of Nainital and the results showed that brand and quality of the product were the features that influence the consumers to purchase the product. Regarding the brand stickiness, 12 % of the respondents remained loyal to the brand for a very long time and 78% stick on to a brand for an average period of time. On the whole it was observed that, around 96% of the respondents were satisfied with the brands they were using. Hence it was suggested that, organisations should work on brand retention since majority of the people show loyalty only for an average period of time.

The above literature also affirms the existence of brand loyalty among the rural consumers.

An interesting finding by Sandipprajapati and Mittal Thakor presented in the subsequent study shows that in spite of providing promotional offers, rural people remain brand loyal.

A study had been conducted by Sandipprajapati and Mittal Thakor (2008) on the impact of promotional tools adopted by the tooth paste companies on the consumer buying behaviour. The study was descriptive in nature and a sample size of 116 was chosen on convenient basis from the rural areas of Gujarat region. The
results showed that 80% of the respondents were brand loyal and do not switch to other brands in spite of promotional offers. Price, promotional schemes, colour and availability of the product were the influencing factors in purchasing the tooth paste. Among the promotional schemes, price off schemes were the most influencing scheme to them. The results of the ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference between the monthly income of the customers and their purchasing behaviour when promotional offers were granted.

Anil Kalotra (2013) conducted a study to assess the paradigm shift from urban to rural market. A preliminary study in the form of informal interviews with 107 persons was conducted in the border areas of Hyderabad and Bidar. The findings of the study revealed that rural customers are progressively becoming brand conscious as well as price conscious. It was also found that advertisements through electronic media were preferred over other media and communication in regional languages are playing vital role in the rural marketing.

Manish Agarwal (2009), attempted to study the brand preferences of the rural customers, their mode of communication in rural markets and penetration rates of various consumer durables and non-durables. Based on the data collected from secondary sources, the brands which had the highest penetration in rural areas are Life buoy, Wheel, Lipton tea, Nirma, Tata salt and Parle G. Even though there was high reach of mass media, word of mouth, publicity and touch and feel are important channels in rural communication. This leads to the implication that marketing strategy for rural consumers should relate to the needs and wants of the target group and must have a clear understanding of the various forces influencing purchasing decision and choice behaviour.

This shows that rural consumers also show brand preferences towards national brands.

The following review agrees with the observations of Manish Agarwal that rural consumers purchase national branded products also.

Another empirical study conducted by the JyothiRana (2012) dealt with the awareness level of rural consumers and their purchase intention towards premium FMCG brands. The research was conducted in two villages of Faridabad district with
a sample size of 200. Five categories of FMCG brands namely shampoos, soaps, washing powder, face cream and hair colours were selected for the study. The outcomes of the study were majority (60%) of the people use premium brands on special occasion and these consumers prefer quality over price and package. Youth were the messengers carrying information about these premium FMCG brands. The selection of premium brands was not affected with the discounts available on them and it depended more on brand personality (68%). This leads to the suggestion that for building premium brand base, the companies have to build recognition, positive word of mouth, access, empathy and customization of products.

A Study by Bhatia and Bawa showed that rural consumers were not only premium brand users but were also multi brand users.

A comparative study of rural and urban consumer behaviour in Punjab and Chandigarh was carried out by Bhatia and Bawa (2002). From a sample of 300 households equally divided between rural and urban segments, data was collected on 32 brands of detergents and packaged tea each, 42 brands of toilet soap and 21 brands of tooth paste. The implications of the study that negated a general belief of the rural market was that, local brands were not successful and there were many multi- brand users even in the rural markets. Also a notion that rural markets were price sensitive or they prefer low priced products was rejected. Rural consumers were not averse to sales promotion schemes. Rather sales promotion schemes influenced their buying behaviour.

A study by Sanal Kumar Velayudhan observed that, there exists difference between the rural and urban consumers due to their expectations.

Sanal Kumar Velayudhan (2009) in his study observed the variations in customer satisfaction between rural and urban consumers as a result of influence of expectations. This study was part of a large study carried out in four states in India. A sample of 188 users was taken for the study to identify their level of expectations on the solar lantern product. The results revealed that the product solar lantern had more positive assessment from rural consumers on its performance than urban consumers. The support for the conclusions that why rural consumers have higher satisfaction found that the expectations of the rural consumers were also possibly
lower. The study implied that success in rural market is easier than in urban markets which was contrary to the view that rural markets were difficult to serve than urban markets.

Yet, another study by Baig, identified the differences between rural and urban consumers only in their buying behaviour.

The misconception of treating urban and rural marketing is questioned through a study conducted by Baig (1974). He pointed out that difference was there only in terms of buyer behaviour, while the aspects of marketing from the point of product development, pricing policies, distribution, after sale services remains the same. Certain guidelines were presented for rural and urban consumers and the rural buyer in India provides a tremendous range of contradictions and paradoxes in their life styles. It was shown through examples that poor people spend lavishly for wedding, being cheerful amidst poverty and the existence of rigid caste system etc. It quoted some of the handicaps in rural areas like huge distance and inadequate outlets and existence of barter system etc. He concluded that the rural buyer was dominated by the needs of status, stimulation and security as much as food, clothing and shelter and was more or less on par with the urban buyers.

In another comparative study by Anand Thakur, it is observed that differences in buying behaviour exist in the case of marketing influences only.

A comparative study on the similarities and differences among buying behaviour displayed by the rural and urban consumers with regard to durables (AC purchase motivators) was done by Anand Thakur (2011). To attain this objective, 600 households, 300 each from rural and urban areas of Punjab was selected and the items taken for the study were necessity, symbol of social status, marketing influence, brand reputation and luxurious items. Both rural and urban respondents hold similar opinion on symbol of social status, brand reputation and luxurious items and difference of opinion was present in the case of marketing influence and item of necessity only.

Sanjeev Kumar and Bishnoi (2007) in their study investigated how marketers’ efforts had influenced the rural mind set regarding the consumer durable product, their own self and society. An exploratory study was carried out on a sample size of
500 respondents chosen from 32 villages in entire rural Haryana. The major findings of the study were 70% of the respondents who were influenced by advertisements actually purchased the products which proved very high on success ratio of advertisement in that area. There was a high level of positive impact of modern consumer durables on the life of people with a very little exception. Nearly 32% of the respondents had a perception of negative impact of modern marketing on the lives of rural people. Hence it was suggested that marketers need to understand the needs and latent feelings of the rural people and then act accordingly.

This contradicts the study conducted by Muhammad Sajid Rasool that advertisement does not affect the consumer behaviour but it just helps to create awareness about the product.

The effects of advertisements on user behaviour in Lahore city was studied by Muhammad Sajid Rasool (2012). A total of 150 respondents were selected from different areas of Lahore and five brands of tooth paste were chosen. The results of the study showed that consumer behaviour was not changed by advertisement but it helped to create awareness about the product. Similarly consumer behaviour was not affected by the income. But the influence of modes of advertisement had a significant difference on the male and female. The implications of the study lead to the conclusion that consumers were more quality conscious and aspire for healthier tooth rather than other aspects. Many consumers used specific brands and stayed loyal to it as it was recommended by their dentist.

Yet, another study on brand awareness through advertisement was established by Malini and Venugopal Rao in the rural areas of Meghalaya.

Malini and Venugopal Rao (2009) aimed to study the brand aspirations of the rural people in Meghalaya towards consumer durables such as television, watches, mobiles, gas stoves and two wheelers. The study revealed that a considerable number of respondents were aware about the established brands like Motorola, Samsung, Nokia, and BPL. Advertisement played a great role in creating brand awareness for watches, television and mobiles. In the case of two wheelers, the purchase decision was highly influenced by friends and relatives. The results of chi square test revealed that different sources had different impact on the buying behaviour of the consumer for durables.
A specific focus on the TV advertisement only, is carried out by Appala Raju which shows that more awareness is created through television compared to other media.

A study on consumer buying behaviour towards health drinks and their preferences towards various modes of advertisements was done by Appala Raju (2012). For this purpose, a sample of 100 respondents was chosen randomly from Kuppam, Chittoor district. The results of the study showed that a majority of 50% of people in the age group of 30 to 40 were influenced by TV and print media highly affects the age group of 40 to 50. More awareness was created through television followed by newspaper. Housewives and retired people are highly predisposed to TV ads. It was also found that working youth had no time to spend for advertisements. It concluded that mass media is the powerful media to create awareness about the availability of the product in the market.

In the following literature, as pointed out by Shukla Pritesh Kumar, the role of advertisement varies as it enables consumers to understand the difference between spurious and original products.

Shukla Pritesh Kumar (2013) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of rural marketing strategy implemented by HUL in rural markets of India. A sample of 120 respondents was selected based on convenience sampling and three categories of products namely toilet soap, detergent soap and toothpaste were chosen. The major findings of the study were ‘extra quantity’ was the most preferred promotional activity followed by discount offers. It was found that the prevalence of spurious products was there and advertisement helps them to understand the difference between spurious product and original products.

Vasanthi Kumari K et al., (2012) in their study titled “Impact of rural consumers’ purchase behaviour towards ready to eat food”, focussed on ready to eat food potentials in rural markets, reasons for improvement of business in rural areas, rural RTE market contribution to all India market, factors influencing buying behaviour of rural market, rural marketing strategy thus high lighting the faith, belief and buying behaviour of rural market. Packaged foods in India have grown at approximately 7% per annum between 2000 and 2005, while Ready-to-eat foods
(RTE) being the fastest growing category at CAGR 73%. There was an expansion of ready to eat foods in the rural markets due to the increased involvement of the villagers in the economic and political world. Packaging in sachets was perceived to be value for money as it promised to convert first time customers to repeated customers.

Likewise, the subsequent study by Lakshmi Priya pointed out the preference of small packs in rural market.

Lakshmi Priya (2009), made an insight into the buying behaviour of rural India. It was found that rural consumers buy products more often (mostly weekly) and prefer to buy small packs with low unit priced products. In rural India, brands rarely fight with each other; they just have to be present at the right place. Many brands were building strong rural base without much advertising support such as Chik shampoo and Ghadi detergent. A right mix of conventional and non-conventional media is required to create increased demand for products. It suggested that marketer should try to determine the underlying need and motive of consumer as well as various factors which influence the formation of the need and satisfaction of the people. Marketer were also trying to understand the “learning Process” adopted by rural consumers.

Influence of packaging in the rural market is also asserted by Rina Dev which is presented in the next study.

Rina Dev et al (2009) in their study pointed out that demand for consumer durables such as biscuits, edible oils, snacks, hair oils and shampoos had increased over the last few years. In the personal care products such as toilet soaps, shampoos and households products stagnated but food & beverages witnessed a healthy growth. It also indicated that food & beverage products like noodles, macroni and soft drinks have made rapid inroads into the rural markets driving up growth in the fast moving consumer goods industry by 10% by volume and 12% by value in 2011. Low unit packs (LUP) markets form 35% of the total Indian FMCG market. Finally, the growth in expenses outpaced the 57.6% rise in consumer prices over the same period, pointing to improved standard of living.
Rural buying behaviour is more rational than emotional in the case of the study conducted by ByshiPanikar.

A study was conducted by ByshiPanikar (2010) to find out whether the purchase decision of the rural consumer was influenced through emotional approach or rational approach. The respondents were selected based on convenience sampling and the survey was conducted in the rural areas of Mumbai. The results of the chi square test revealed that in the case of tooth paste and bathing soaps, the rural consumers have specific preference towards a particular brand and they don’t take decision instantly but come to the shop well prepared. The factors brand name and quality influence the tooth paste purchase whereas brand loyalty and advertisement effects the buying of bathing soaps. This lead to the conclusion that in both the cases, the buying behaviour was rational as there was always some logic behind emotions expressed by the consumers.

Besides, specific preference towards particular brand is also established in a study by Amarnath and Vijayudu.

In a study by Amarnath andVijayudu (2009) on brand awareness towards FMCG in rural areas of Chittoor district in Andra Pradesh, analysed the impact of electronic media in popularizing branded products in rural areas. The study was confined to Mandanapalle revenue division in Chittoor district. For this purpose, 240 respondents from 10 villages were chosen on the basis of purposive sampling and the products taken for the study were health and beauty care products. The findings of the study revealed that 85% of people in the age group of below 40 years preferred branded products with the belief that quality is assured as they are the manufactures of reputed companies and also it was believed that usage of such products would elevate their status of the people.

Kulkarni Preeti (2011), made a study to understand the rural markets and the consumption of rural consumers in Maharashtra. Seventy villages having population less than 5000 were selected based on stratified random sampling. Based on the survey, it was found that companies need to position the products in the markets with the help of socio cultural factors. The price based on value was needed in the rural areas. It was concluded that though a set of rural risk factors exists, the companies
should work on the controllable factors to minimize the risk. Understanding value perceptions of the rural consumers and develop optimally functioning marketing mix were some of the steps to be followed to be successful in the rural market.

Anshu Jain in the following study, stressed on the adoption of local media as one of the promotional tool to get success in rural market.

A study conducted by Anshu Jain (2013), on the dynamics of diverse rural marketing strategies on consumer behaviour reveals that marketing strategies aimed at rural are totally different from that of urban markets in the sense that rural marketing involves more intensive personnel selling compared to urban marketing. It suggested a few strategies for the distribution of the goods such as usage of company vans, organizing melas, mandis or agri markets where people preferred to go to buy their durable commodities. Promotional strategies include traditional media forms like folk dances, puppet shows etc., could be used for high product campaigns with which the rural consumer were familiar and comfortable.

The impact of socio economic influences on rural consumer behaviour in kavalimandel was studied by Nagaraja (2004) in terms of their buying practices. Six villages of kavali town of Nellore district with a sample size of 110 were chosen for the study. Purposive random sampling was adopted and the data was collected through interview method. The findings of the study showed that quality, easy availability and the price of the products were dominantly influencing the buying behaviour. Regarding the behaviour influential, younger generation were very much influenced by the education combined with entertainment and the older generation by personal experience.

The above literature agrees with the study done by Sarwade that rural consumers are quality conscious and price conscious.

Sarwade (2002) studied the buying behaviour of rural consumers in Marathawada region by randomly selecting 70 families. It was found that 65% respondents in Adul, 60% in Paithan and 50% households in Sangvi owned television in those villages. The findings of the study revealed that quality and price formed a very important consideration in purchase decision which was attributed to their low literacy and low purchasing power. The buying decision particularly for consumer
durables was taken by head of the family in 38% households, by wife in 20% households, and by all members in 12% households.

Further, in the research work done by Shiva Kumar and Arun, it was demonstrated that rural consumers are brand conscious and price conscious.

Shiva Kumar and Arun (2002) in their empirical study analysed the buying behaviour of the rural people with respect to wrist watches and footwear in Pondicherry region. The study pointed out that rural consumers considered one brand and visited only one shop before making a purchase decision. Unlike urban areas, watches had become a gift item in rural areas and they considered brand name and price as important elements in buying wrist watches. Nearly 45% of the rural consumers make their own decision while buying the products.

A research conducted by SnehaGhai (2012) on consumer buying behaviour towards FMCG products analysed the awareness and attitude of consumers towards processed foods. This study was purely based on secondary data and from the various references mentioned, the first challenge in rural marketing was to ensure availability of the product or service. In the case of soft drinks, good quality and availability were the main factors which influenced the rural consumers to purchase a particular brand of a product. It was observed that rural consumers in general were influenced by packaging of the product whereas urban consumers were influenced by promotion and product features.

The previous study stressed on the availability of the product in the rural areas but in reality it was shown in the research work of Pravin Kumar Boyar and Asha Nagendra, that rural consumers expressed dissatisfaction in the case of availability of the products.

Pravin Kumar Boyar and Asha Nagendra (2011) had done a study to identify the level of satisfaction of consumers with regard to FMCG distribution system in rural markets. A survey was conducted with 100 respondents consisting of distributors/stockist, wholesalers and retailers who were selected from two rural districts of Maharashtra. The results indicated that, more than 60% of the consumers were dissatisfied with the availability of the products as they expressed that in case of non-availability of products, they have to travel to bigger towns or villages for
purchase where they could not go regularly. The results of spearman’s correlation co-efficient were found to be negative in the case of range of products, regularity of supply and availability of products.

A study had been conducted by Yuvarani (2013), to examine the rural consumer’s behaviour towards FMCG in Salem district. To attain this objective, 600 respondents from 60 villages were chosen randomly to study the motives behind the purchase of FMCG products. The reasons identified were shampoos were preferred for its anti-dandruff property, bathing soaps for its fragrance and refreshing nature, tooth paste for its germ killing and strengthening effect.

A Socio-economic influence of rural consumer behaviour studied by Sayulu and Reddy (2002) concluded that frequency of purchase of commodities by rural consumers was highly influenced by the type and nature of the products. Products like groceries (40.35%) and others which included vegetables, milk etc (48.25%) purchased on daily basis and 42.98 per cent of them purchased these products on weekly basis. Cash purchase was highest in case of products like groceries (44.74%) and others (54.82%) followed by credit purchase with 38.60 per cent and 21.06 per cent respectively. Price of the goods was considered to be the most important factor by more than 88 per cent of the respondents followed by easy availability (66.66%) and neighbours (54%).

In a study conducted by Rajput et al (2012) on the dynamics of female buying behaviour examined the key factors which influence the female consumer’s involvement towards stylish branded clothing. It was found from the study that there was a complete awareness of the branded apparels among females and their shopping behaviour reflects that they buy these products occasionally. Females have particular perspectives and motives behind their purchase. Their culture is shifting towards buying from a mall because of the shopping experience the consumers get. The most important source of purchase was found to be family and friends followed by internet and advertisement. The results of ANOVA shows that price, fitting of the apparel, income level of consumers are found to be highly significant factors and status, durability and celebrity endorsement are seen to be insignificant factors.
Pughazhendi (2011) examined the consumer shopping behaviour towards organized retailer, so as to have a better insight of consumers buying behaviour. A sample of 150 respondents was taken for the study based on convenience sampling from the potential customers of big bazaar retail outlet in Coimbatore. The findings of the study revealed that different occupational habitants were influenced by different medium/media of advertisement that in due course influenced their impulsive buying behaviour. Also, majority of the impulsive buyers prefer to spend between Rs.501-Rs.1000 on their shopping and 40 per cent of items bought were household items. The results of correlation co-efficient showed that overall satisfaction with store ambience, variety of products offered, economical prices and store cleanliness was found to be negative.

Another study on the shopping behaviour of the rural migrants to urban areas was observed by AnuradhaDevadas and Hansa Lysander Manohar.

AnuradhaDevadas and Hansa Lysander Manohar (2010) attempted to study the shopping behaviour of the rural consumer migrated to urban area in the Indian context. 135 college students were chosen from Chennai city who were the migrants from rural to urban area. The findings of the study revealed that seven factors had been identified in the study such as recreational and shopping conscious, favourable attitude towards urban shopping environment; enjoy shopping, price conscious, comparison shopping / complainer, perfectionist, high quality conscious. It pointed out that according to NSSO report, the share of migrants in the case of rural population is 22.74 % where as in the case of urban population is 30.65%. On analysing the brand loyalty it was observed that band switch behaviour was high in the case of tooth paste and less in the case of detergent in the rural migrants.

Lumpkin et al (1986) had done a study on examining the shopping orientation profiles of rural consumers. The study aimed to find out whether there exist unique shopping orientations among different segments of rural consumer’s. The study revealed that there were three shopping orientation segments such as in active shoppers, who have high level loyalty towards local merchants, active shoppers who have favourable attitude towards large city shopping and thrifty innovators who were called as economic shoppers. These shopping segments are relatively unique with respect to shopping area attributes and patronage behaviour. It was found that
the factor cleanliness plays a major role in deciding where to shop, followed by convenience related attributes, attractive décor and entertainment facilities.

Zain-Ul-Abideen (2012) carried out a similar study to examine the relationship between independent variables which are environmental response and emotional response with attitudinal and behavioural aspect of consumer buying behaviour in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Lahore in Pakistan. A sample of 200 consumers’ was selected on convenience basis for the study. The results of multiple regression shows that there exists a positive association between emotional response and attitudinal and behavioural aspects of consumer buying and environmental response is negatively associated with the overall consumer buying behaviour. Therefore, it was concluded that consumers purchase products mostly by emotional response, rather than environmental response.

Ryan Maria (2009) in her research on “Mixed methodology approach to place attachment and consumption behaviour: a rural town perspective” discussed the concept of place attachment, its relationship with community attachment and the subsequent perceived value ascribed to living in the regional town of Narrogin, Western Australia. The interviews was conducted using photo elicitation technique in which residents were given a camera and required to take photographs of important places, people and their aspects of life. The second phase of the data collection was through telephonic survey of residents. Value was seen as a mediating construct between place and community attachment and consumption decision. Shopping decision includes shopping for every day grocery items, white goods, farm equipment and machinery and various services including educational and medical care. The results suggested different types of management strategies for businesses providing the needs of town and for shire residents based on different attachment weightings.

Ziauddin Khariroowala and Sait Siddiqui (2000) conducted a study to find the buying behaviour of rural consumers in haats. For this purpose, a survey was done among 200 respondents chosen from five weekly haats in the villages of Uttar Pradesh. The survey revealed that the consumers with lesser income mostly prefer to buy from haats whereas consumers from higher income group avoid purchasing from small haats for the reason that they look for branded and quality products.
The implications of the study lead to the conclusion that haats have lot of potential which needs to be exploited. Furthermore, haats could come out to be an answer to all marketing problems faced in rural India.

The following study by Smitha, observed a shift in the buying behaviour of rural consumers towards organised retail outlets.

Smitha (2012) in her study on the buying behaviour of rural customers with respect to food items and general stores examined the shift of consumers from unorganised retailers to organised retailers. A sample of 200 respondents was selected from 5 constituencies in Visakhapatnam district. The results of the study showed that there are equal spaces for both organised and unorganised retailers in Visakhapatnam and though they utilize the services of unorganised retailer in their neighbourhood for fulfilling their basic needs, they were also aware and conscious of the benefits and advantages associated with an organised retail outlet.

A study on the impact of economic development on the rural consumer lifestyle was done by Sun et al (2004). The objective of the study was to understand the Chinese rural and urban consumer’s attitude towards the whole marketing mix. The findings of the study showed that there exist big differences in terms of ideal material possessions between rural and urban consumers. It was observed that rural consumers were more price conscious, less product innovative, fewer brands conscious and suspicious about mass marketing when compared to urban consumers. The rural and urban consumers use different products due to their difference in their attitudes to reflect the improvement of their living standards. It was inferred from the study that the differences in the life style between rural and urban consumers were due to the impact of economic development on consumer behaviour. On the whole, it was observed that there is huge marketing potential in china’s rural markets for MNC’s and other investors.

**Post purchase assessment**

Sarangapani and Mamata (2008) conducted an in-depth study on the buying behaviour of rural consumers with regard to selected packaged consumer non-durables. Samples of 500 consumer households were selected from 5 districts, on the basis of stratified random sampling to represent the whole of Andhra Pradesh.
Three categories of products were included in the study: food items, toiletries, and cosmetics. The findings of the data showed that the major complaints with regard to the food items was the high price followed by duplicate brands while it was vice versa in the case of toiletries. Prevalence of duplicate brands and higher prices were the major complaints for the cosmetics products. Regarding the awareness of the consumer movements, 50% of the respondents revealed that they were not aware of these acts either ‘fully’ or to ‘some extent’. Nearly 55% of the consumers responded that they would not take any action even when they were upset with the product which showed the indifferent attitude of the consumers.

A similar study on post purchase assessment of toilet soap category is carried out by Ganesan P and the type of action people engaged was discussed below.

Ganesan, Rama Krishnan Venkatesa Kumar (2010) had done a study on the post purchase actions of the rural consumers towards their purchase of toilet soaps. Data was collected from 686 respondents from Kanchipuram district using a structured interview schedule. The results revealed that as a part of post purchase action, stop buying the brand, engaging in negative word of mouth and complaining were found in a higher level among rural consumers. Also it was found that consumers with lower income group showed higher intentions to complain than other income group people. Hence it was recommended that firms should take measures to resolve the issues. Moreover, the firms have to depend upon the shopkeepers to know the real situations in the rural markets. For this purpose, retailer-training programmes on complaints handling can be adopted which are emerging as strategic importance for the firms.

Jyothsna Priyadharsni (2009) conducted a study on the use of cosmetics among men in the rural areas. It was found that many rural men feel delicate to use cosmetics. Rural men have a feeling that cosmetics are mainly meant for females. The social stigmas against male grooming products persists a lot and they consider this use as feminine. The implications of the study showed that a majority of the consumers were unaware of the importance of male grooming brands. Hence it was suggested that marketers should attempt to create product awareness and drive the customers through brand awareness.
Shakthivel Rani (2010) offered a framework to study the consumer behaviour in rural market and to apply this framework and examine its consequences. The framework consisted of four stages namely access, buying behaviour, consumer characteristics and disposal. The study stressed that ‘access’ which refers to the physical as well as economic access must be ensured properly in rural areas. The three critical issues in buying behaviour such as brand equity, brand loyalty and store loyalty should be considered the most important. It highlighted on the need of structuring the Indian market according to the consumption and not on the income basis. Customization of products is vital preferably in product or communication or in both. In the case of disposal, products should be designed for maximum resale value to avoid quick discarding.

2.2 Factors influencing the buying behaviour of rural shoppers.

Influence of Personal / social / psychological and cultural factors

Hemanth and Shruthi (2013), in their study entitled “Determinants of consumer buying behaviour: a theoretical framework, attempted to understand the rural consumers buying behaviour by analysing the consumer behaviour theories. These theories include economic factors, sociological factors, behavioural factors and psychological factors. The economic theories emphasized the short run and long run consumption function of consumers based on their income, savings, wealth and life cycle. Social factors emphasized the influence of family members, reference groups, opinion leaders, social class, caste and culture on the consumer behaviour. It highlighted that personal factors such as age & life cycle stage, life style, personality and self-influence the buying behaviour of the consumers. Buying choice was further determined by psychological factors like motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes.

This study emphasised on the social, personal and psychological factors where as in the subsequent study conducted by Naveen Kumar, found out the influence of culture on the purchase decision towards FMCG.

A study was conducted by Naveen Kumar et al (2011) on the consumer preference towards FMCG and the motives of the purchase of FMCG products in India. A sample of 200 people was taken for this purpose based on convenient
sampling in the rural areas of Agra district. While analysing the reason for the purchase, it was found that skin care and fragrance were the prime reason for using bathing soaps. In the case of detergent, removal of stains plays an important role in buying decision. Oral care is preferred for cleanliness, hair oil for hair care and good look. Convenient location of the shop and attractive product display are the other factors that influence the buying decision. The results showed that soaps and detergent brands of HUL are more popular in rural markets. It was advocated that rural mind set accepts the brand easily which are close to their culture and this point must be reflected in ads for rural markets.

Influence of personality on the purchase of durables was identified by Malarmathi and Saraswati in the following study.

Malarmathi and Saraswati (2009) attempted to analyse the major factors that influenced the respondents towards the purchase of durable goods in Erode district. For this purpose, a sample size of 150 respondents was taken for the study on a random basis. The results of Friedman test revealed that income of the consumer influences the frequency of replacing the products. The major findings of the study were that distinct personality influences his or her own buying behaviour. The study recommended the marketers to adopt unique promotional tool which should be identified with the potential of consumers in segment wise.

Geeta Sonkusare (2013) had done a study on impact of TV advertising on the buying behaviour of women consumers in Chandrapur city. A sample size of thirty respondents was selected from this place and the results revealed that maximum number of consumers spend more than Rs 2000 per month for purchasing FMCG products. The major information source was advertisement and personal and social factors were also said to influence their purchasing decision. Specifically, majority of women consumers were said to be influenced by word of mouth.

A study conducted by Miller & Nancy (1997) on “factors contributing to in shopping behaviour in rural trade areas: An implication for local retailers”, examined why consumers shop beyond or outside their local community. The following factors were considered for measuring the degree of influence on contemporary consumers in shopping behaviour (1) demographic and life style variables (2) socio economic
attitudes and (3) attitudes about local retail facilities. An additional construct—
consumer satisfaction with community wide reciprocity was predicted to explain
consumer in shopping behaviour in the rural retail environment. Reciprocity had little
empirical investigations as to its influence on small community in shopping versus out
shopping were not necessarily inversely related. Suggestions were offered for
strengthening the rural retailer’s competitive strategy and for meeting the local
consumer expenditure.

Shahid Bashir et al (2013) conducted a study on the impact of cultural values
and life styles on impulse buying behaviour of Pakistani customers. The data was
collected from the 400 students of two different universities aged (18-30 years) and
convenient sampling technique was used. The results of t-test indicated that
significant difference exists between male and female customers while making
impulse buying behaviour. This is because male and female have different psyche to
do things, hence, they make decisions in different styles. The study also found that
constructs of the cultural values and lifestyles (life satisfaction, financial satisfaction,
life style, in group contact, gender role and security) had significant impact on the
impulsive buying behaviour of Pakistani consumers.

Keshav Sharma (2002) the study showed that rural customers in the similar
villages want to acquire the urban life style but when it comes to buying, decision
making is entirely different from its urban counterpart. It was found that Culture has
a great influence on their buying decisions. The characteristics of the rural markets is
that equal status of female in buying decision making holding up of traditions and
customs in high esteem. They hate the way their culture is being diluted through ads.
Only a very small proportion of the younger segments are willing to change and keep
only the good that their culture has in store.

Arul Rajan (2011) conducted a study to test the hypothetical model on
purchase intention of durable goods with special reference to rural customers.
Six hundred samples from four districts were taken from Tamil Nadu.
The implications of the study are social norms and family orientation has a strong
influence on positive attitude in decision making. The study showed that perceived
utility and perceived risk has a moderate influence in creating a positive attitude,
though it’s significant. The model proposed a direct influence of cultural values in
purchase of durable products and thus provides new avenues for creating constructs in rural behaviour.

**Influence of family size**

Mridanish Jha (2013), observed the factors responsible for rural consumers buying decision making process. The factors taken for the study includes price, family size, product packaging, age, culture and advertising. Analytical hierarchy process (AHP) technique was applied to study the factors that have impact on the rural consumer buying behaviour. A survey was conducted among 300 persons in the rural areas of Bihar. The study revealed that size of the family influences the buying behaviour of the people to the maximum (0.327), followed by product packaging as the second most (0.238), and followed by culture (0.188) and age (0.133) while advertisement (0.054) was rated at the lowest.

**Brand awareness / quality**

Ratika Rastogi and Sonia Chaudhary (2012) in their study,” Psychology and buying behaviour of rural consumers with special reference to television, washing machine and refrigerator in the rural areas of Meerut region’, examined the purchase motivators of rural consumers viz; item of necessity, symbol of social status, marketing influence, brand reputation for durable products such as television, washing machine and refrigerator in the rural areas of Meerut region. A sample of 160 households was selected based on convenience sampling and the results of chi square showed that income and the reasons for buying the consumer durables were associated. The major findings of the study were brand awareness was more in male than females and quality was considered more important than price. The results also showed that rural consumers prefer to buy new products of the same brand keeping in mind the quality of the product they were already using of the same brand.

The following review discusses the various attributes determining the buying behaviour of the rural people.

Determinants of buying behaviour of rural consumers with reference to food & beverages was analysed by Lalitha, Panchanatham (2013). Sixty respondents from two villages were chosen from the rural areas of Coimbatore and the findings of the study showed that majority of the respondents were aware of more than six brands in the case of biscuits and snack foods. It was also observed that brand switching
behaviour occurs due to quality and price of the products. The other outcomes of the study was adult consumers prefer to buy those products that have more nutrient values whereas young prefer food & beverages which has good flavour. Young consumers are willing to buy snack foods and biscuits which has taste and crispiness whereas adults do not mind these factors.

**Promotional factor / life style factor**

A study conducted by Abbas Ali (2012) identified the factors that affect the rural purchase of FMCG in South India. A sample size of 1080 was selected from a region called Telengana in South India. The results of factor analysis show that promotions and advertisements emerged as key influencing variable in the promotion factor with a factor loading of 0.951. Life style factor stood in the second positions which include brand awareness, packaging, dignity, brand visibility and lifestyle. Third influencing variable was trust factor which includes friend’s recommendations, brand loyalty, Govt. promotions, shop keepers recommendation and availability. The fourth variable was the value factor which talks about the benefits of the products. And the last was the product factor where the features, size, quality influenced the buying behaviour of the rural consumers.

This leads to the implications that promotional factors influences the buying behaviour to a higher level and the product related factors influence the least. Hence marketers have to give more importance to the promotional media to boost up their sales.

**Value consciousness / price consciousness**

In a study on effect of sales promotion on consumer preferences with the moderating role of price perceptions and deal proneness Venu Gopal Rao (2009) attempted to analyse whether the three dimensions value consciousness, deal proneness and price consciousness had any impact on store preferences, brand preferences and buying intentions. The study was conducted on a sample size of 200 respondents selected from Hyderabad city. Results of the study indicated that the three dimensions had an impact on buying intentions, brand and store preferences. Differences were observed among consumers on value consciousness and deal proneness but not on price consciousness. Demographic variables and their association with the dimensions have been mixed and not very significant
implying that the dimensions under study have a universality of application. Consumers differed on the three dimensions when compared with their preferences for monetary and non-monetary promotions.

**Influence of income:**

A research conducted Pawan Garga and Vinod Negi (2012) identified the impact of socio economic and cultural factors on the consumers purchasing behaviour towards television brand selection in kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh. Samples of 250 households that have television were selected randomly and chi square test was used to identify the impact of various factors. The major findings of the study were income of the respondents had the highest impact on television brand selection among the various factors taken for the study the reason being, people do not want to buy durable products on credit. Hence it was suggested that product designing and pricing should be done based on affordability of the consumers. It was also recommended that better finance schemes should be provided in order to meet the rural consumer demands.

**Influence of Opinion leader**

Sunitha Chakravarthy (2011) analysed how marketers had used relationship marketing through opinion leaders in their marketing techniques in order to reach consumers in a short period of time to build customer relationship and retain customer loyalty. Opinion leaders played a very important role in consumer decision making process by encouraging communication among them, where the choice to purchase something is the input there by establishing consumption set. The style of consuming was based on the consumer’s perspective and experiences which depends on their moods, emotions, etc. To this end group, it was very important that marketers must learn to use relationship marketing through opinion leaders in their marketing techniques in order to reach consumers in a short period of time to build customer relationship and retain customer loyalty.

**Influence of advertisements**

Mohammad Naquibur Rahman (2012) conducted a study to investigate the impact of advertisement on buying behaviour of university students towards FMCG. For this purpose, a sample size of 150 was chosen on convenience basis from
Makkah. Results revealed that there was no significant relationship between effective appeal and purchasing pattern of consumers. Opinion leaders (models) work as the informative agent, so advertisement becomes a reliable source. The keyword caption used in commercials also had great influence on consumers. From these results, it can be concluded that people used active learning process in changing their attitudes towards a particular brand.

Muhammad Ehsan Malik et al., (2013) examined the impact of brand image and advertisement on consumer buying behaviour in Gujranwala city. A sample of 200 respondents was surveyed and the responses were collected from educational institutions and general public. Findings showed that brand image and advertisement had strong positive influence and significant relationship with Consumer buying behaviour. This was due to the reason that people were so conscious about the purchase decision regarding the branded products. Advertisement also played a dynamic role in the case of young teenagers.

The influence of TV advertisement in particular, is studied by Vinod Kumar Bishnoi, Ruchi Sharma and Lalitha, Panchanatham in the subsequent reviews.

Lalitha, Panchanatham (2013), aimed to study the impact of television advertisements on buying behaviour of rural people with respect to FMCG. For this purpose, sixty respondents chosen from Annur village in Coimbatore district. The results of the study reveals that age of the respondents is associated with the influence of the advertisements where as it is not so in the case of educational qualification family income of the respondents. The findings of the study showed that they came to know about different brands only through advertisements and they feel advertised products are reasonably priced. This concludes that marketers need to understand that advertisement has been able to change the way how consumers look upon the products and they should take utmost care in framing the advertisements.

An empirical study conducted by Vinod Kumar Bishnoi and Ruchi Sharma (2009) established whether the residential background of consumers (urban or rural) had a varying influence on their buying decisions due to the impact of TV advertising. The study was conducted on 866 teenagers selected randomly from four districts of Haryana of which 440 were chosen from rural areas and 426 were from
urban areas. The findings of the study showed that rural teenagers liked television advertising more than their urban counterparts and they collectively decide with their family members while making the purchase while it is not so with their urban counterparts. Also there was a considerable variation in the perception of both rural and urban teenagers on the issue that demand for product purchase was influenced by TV advertisements. Further, the study also revealed that the buying behaviour of male teenagers was highly influenced by television advertisements than their female counterparts.

Another study on the influence of Television advertising is done by Kara Chan and Xiao Cai in rural China.

Kara Chan and Xiao Cai (2009), examined the effects of TV advertising viewing, on the personal affluence in society and the materialistic value orientations among adolescents in urban and rural China. A survey was done on 646 adolescents aged 11 to 17 in a rural country of Henan province. The findings of the study showed that heavy television advertising viewers were more materialistic than light television advertising viewers. When television advertising viewing was controlled, urban respondents had a higher perceived affluence, while rural respondents had a higher level of materialism. The lead to the influence that rural adolescents did not hold strong beliefs about prevalence of affluence in society. Popularity appeal may be a fruitful marketing communication strategy which could be adopted for the rural and urban adolescents as target audience.

Influence of celebrities in the advertisements was observed by Muhammad Shoaib et al on the consumer purchasing behaviour.

Muhammad Shoaib et al (2012) conducted a study to understand the individual’s exposure towards multinational products advertisement by Indian film stars and its effect on consumer purchasing behaviour in Lahore city. A sample of 185 family members was selected through multistage random sampling. The findings showed that their attention towards advertisement was more among respondents (70%) and their changing interest towards commodities take place due to advertisement. Nearly 65 % of respondents opined that it helped in inculcating confidence at the time of purchasing. The Kendall’s tau-b statistical test revealed that
there was moderate relationship between multinational product advertisement by Indian stars and consumer purchasing behaviour.

**Influence of Brand image/ advertisement**

G Vani et al., (2010) conducted a study to find out the consumer preferences towards personal care products using a sample size of 200 respondents chosen randomly from Bangalore city. The findings of the study suggested that usage of tooth paste was more compared to tooth powder and mouth wash. Brand image, advertising and offers played a great role in purchasing tooth paste. Factors such as advertisements, brand name, packaging, availability and price rise were found to be reasons for the brand switching behaviour of the consumers. It concluded that market pace was triggered by sharp changes in the life style pattern of the past and present and hence the companies offering product or services would need to understand this new face of the consumers.

Among the various promotional mix, there is a prominent influence of public relations which was identified in the following study carried out by Sukhmani and Hundal.

Sukhmani and HundalB (2012) intended to examine the various elements of promotion mix which influence the sales of FMCG and identified the factors responsible for determining the optimum promotion mix. The study was conducted in the rural areas of Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana districts of Punjab with a sample size of 400. The analysis was carried out using Friedman ANOVA and ‘t’ test. It was found that among the various promotion mix elements, public relations was adjudged the most important element in making the final purchase decision as it adds to the value of the product and builds up the confidence during purchase. This was followed by sales promotion, direct marketing, advertising and personnel selling. The most optimal promotion mix was decided based on the factor such as available budget, complexity of product and promotional message.

**Influence of sales promotion**

Another element of promotional mix (i.e.) influence of sales promotion on the personal care products is discussed in the following study.
Paragi Kuntal Shah and Bijal Nishant Mehta (2012), in their study investigated the consumer reflections on various promotion schemes in the Indian personal care market in accordance with important factors like availability, consistency in schemes, packaging and so on. For this purpose, a sample size of 150 was collected from Ahmadabad city based on convenience sampling. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the females (74%) were influenced by sales promotion than males. Packaging was not an influencer but was considered as a hygienic factor by the consumer. Nearly 54 % of the respondents felt that frequent changes in the sales promotion scheme would create a bad impression of the brand. The study recommended that rural markets should have a well-organized distribution system and a better estimation of increased sales to avoid stock out situations especially during the time of sales promotion campaigns.

Sanddepchaitanya (2009) in his study identified the defects of the existing advertising strategies and thereby attempted to design new advertising strategies with low investment. A sample of 123 respondents was drawn from two villages in Prakasam district. Based on the study, the implications were to adopt various strategies at low cost in these villages. Mouth to mouth advertising was found to be more effective than media advertising. The study had come out with certain recommendations such as painting the ad on the pots used for carrying water, milk cans, use of paper kites by embossing the brand name on the kite are a few to be quoted.

Mander Naresh Dhumal (2008) investigated the factors to be considered while buying FMCG products by the rural buyers. The study was conducted in three villages of Satara district in Maharashtra based on the multi stage sampling. The findings of the study lead to the conclusion that rural marketing had shifted its promotion mix strategies from conventional methods to modern promotional strategies of mass media and TV advertisement which influences the buying decision of the consumers. The perception of improved social status due to the use of branded products was also one of the major influences on the buying process. Very less people were brand conscious and it was very easy for them to choose from different brands. It leads to the suggestion that rural market company should plan considering the factors of buying decision like buying style, buying capacity of the buyer, brand conscious etc., as they try different products as suggested by peers, neighbours and others.
Influence of Packaging

EbrahimVariawa (2010) investigated the influence of product packaging on the consumers’ brand experience which threw light on whether preferences in packaging yield a more positive brand experience. The study is descriptive in nature and a survey was done on 208 respondents selected through non-probability sampling technique. The results of the correlation showed that there is a mild correlation (0.117) between brand experience and packaging. On comparing the mean packaging scores through ANOVA, it was found that there was no significant difference in the packaging ratings for all the products. It concluded that the lower income consumers derive more value, not just from the ‘premium’ product brands, but also from the use of the packaging for other needs after consuming the product.

A similar study by Mitul Delia also discusses the utilitarian value of packaging in the case of FMCG products.

Mitul Delia (2010) had done a study on the influence of attributes on consumer behaviour towards the purchase of FMCG. A sample size of 150 was selected randomly from retail outlets in Ahmedabad city. The results of Z test showed that package and brand name affects the consumer buying behaviour whereas aesthetic and information it conveys do not affect them. The reasons for preferring packaging were that the contents remain long lasting and fresh. The study showed that 26% of the respondents switched over to other brands due to the attractiveness of packaging. Recommendations of the study include that packages used should be of re-saleable nature and more emphasis should be given on visual packaging element.

Maithili Ganjoo (2000) of OCRN examined in his study that the size of the pack helps the rural consumers pick the product at a price that they could afford. Certain products like detergent and paste were bought in larger quantities whereas shampoos, toilet soaps and eatables were bought in smaller packs; the products that were common to family members were bought in large pack sizes, whereas individual preferred smaller packs. The storage life of a product also has a bearing on the decision. The affordability, storability and availability along with usage were reasons for rural consumers to look towards smaller pack sizes.
Another study on the importance of Packaging in the case of food products was identified by Estiri in the following literature.

Estiri (2010) conducted a study on analysing the effectiveness of packaging elements on consumer behaviour in the pre purchase stages. The questionnaires were filled by participants (n=175) which was analysed qualitatively to examine the importance of different packaging elements on consumer behaviour in the three stages of purchase decision. Results showed that all packaging elements were highly important for food products buyers and these elements could highly influence their purchasing decision.

Besides highlighting the positive aspects of packaging, Sehrawat and Mahavir identified that packaging leads to misleading which proves to be contradictory to the previous reviews.

Sehrawat and Mahavir (2007) in their study on “Buying behaviour of rural and urban consumers in India: the impact of packaging” aimed to establish whether the residential background of consumers had a varying influence on their buying decision. A survey of 1090 urban and rural respondents was carried out of which 523 were rural and 567 were urban. Analysis of data shows that rural residents found that packaging contains a better product and they were more influenced by the ease of storing than their urban counterparts. Ease of carriage, package weight, simplicity, transparency and similarity of packaging had comparatively less impact on purchase decision of rural consumers than urban ones. However rural consumer were more critical about packaging as they strongly consider that it contributes to misleading buyers and is also an environmental hazard.

**Influence of product:**

In an empirical study conducted by Suresh Rajan and Selvachandra (2011) examined the rural consumers preference attributes in the purchase of cell phone and identified customer experience would be helpful to the marketers to improve their sales volume against the rural market and purchase. A survey was conducted on 375 consumers residing in Nagapattinam district. The results of the factor analysis showed that price, after sales and service, model, brand and product durability, quality had accounted for high level of influence in the buying behaviour.
Influence of Store choice

Home, Niilo (2002), attempted to study the factors that have an impact on the store choice of rural consumers and to identify different buyer groups on the basis of consumers’ shopping orientation. The data was collected in 1994 using a drop off survey and a sample of 600 respondents was chosen randomly from ten rural areas in the province of Hame. Store choice was a major decision making process whereby consumers evaluate relevant attributes of store alternatives. The study identified three homogeneous buyer groups with different shopping orientation namely supermarket customers, rural store loyalists and price conscious consumers. Factor analysis revealed the dimensions which were crucial for evaluation of grocery shopping namely social interaction with store personnel, positive attitude towards rural stores, the attachment to the village community and rational purchasing.

The previous study discussed the factors determining the store choice decision of the consumers while the following study emphasized that store choice is based on the availability of differentiating and unique offers.

In a study conducted by Broad bridge and Calderwood (2002) the factors that influence the customers store choice decision and their attitudes towards their local shops was examined. On analysing the grocery shopping behaviour of rural inhabitants in Scotland, majority of small shoppers opined that local shops were used only on supplementary basis and hence it was suggested that local shops should provide a differentiating and unique offer than super markets which might increase the customers visit to local shops. Therefore it was concluded from the study that local shops should provide differentiating and unique offer than super markets which will increase the customers visit to local shops. Therefore local shops should cater to the needs and wants of the community.

Another study by PalaniSwami emphasized on the influence of the store ambience on the impulse purchasing behaviour.

Palani Swami R.et al., (2012) in their study found out whether the size of a store influences impulse purchasing behaviour of the consumers. The study was descriptive and analytical in nature and a sample of 225 customers was selected from Coimbatore city. The statistical tool used for the study included ANOVA, rank
correlation, Z-test, Garrett’s ranking. The most important factor that influences the impulse purchasing decision was the need of the hour, store ambience and price which played a vital role in influencing the impulse buying. Cosmetics, sport goods and toiletries were the items purchased more in number by the customers where they exhibit impulse buying behaviour.

**Store Patronage**

A study was conducted by Sullivan and Savitt (1997) on the store patronage (grocery shoppers) of rural shoppers. The objective of the study was to determine the proportion of out shopping for groceries and to know the store patronage behaviour of the rural consumers. Nine store factors were identified such as shopping environment, (location, assortment, breadth and services), price (advertising), leisure activities, convenience, shop around work, family shopping, good shopping, credit and brands. Results indicated that each group had different store patronage practices, psychographic profiles suggesting that grocery retailers should work with communities to organize retail mix that appeal to different shopping groups.

Rama Krishnan Venkatesakumar, Ganesan (2010) conducted a study on the retail industry to understand how the consumers from rural and urban places of the subcontinent made search efforts, particularly retail search efforts. Two hundred consumers each from the rural and urban places were taken for the study in the Kanchipuram district and the findings revealed that rural consumers’ store search efforts were significantly influenced by the information search efforts. On the other hand, urban consumers’ store search efforts are influenced by consideration set size as well as the information search efforts. The urban consumers seek to achieve higher utility for their search efforts by visiting more number of outlets.

The influence of retail display and retailer suggestion on the buying behaviour is identified by Moslehuddin Khaled in the following study.

Moslehuddin Khaled (2010) analysed the different ways of communicating the brands to the urban and rural areas. For this purpose, a sample of 200 retailers was surveyed from small cities and rural areas of Bangladesh. It was found from the
results that in order to enhance brand visibility and communication, the products/brands should be sorted properly in the specific brand label seat for the shop keepers, dedicated company displays, shelf space were some of the communication techniques to be adopted for better visibility. The findings of the study showed that rural retailer influences 35% of the purchase occasions. It indicated the study of Dhumal (2008) that rural consumer was different from the urban consumer in terms of interest, priorities, attitudes and they had to be dealt in different way.

A similar study on the influence of retailer suggestion is discussed in the following review.

Prialatha and Malar mathi (2012) in their study entitled “A study on retailer influence of rural consumers of Coimbatore district”, observed the purchase pattern of rural consumers and analysed the retailers influence on buying behaviour towards personal care products. A sample of 100 respondents was selected based on stratified random sampling. The results showed that rural consumers made purchases on monthly basis and the place where they purchase was found to be spread evenly with respect to local shops and shops in town/city (42.6%) which suggested the need for organised retail outlets in rural areas. Moreover, retailer as a media of communication was underutilized in rural markets. The result of ANOVA on the influence of educational level reveals that respondents with no formal education are found to be more influenced by retailer’s suggestions.

Rajesh Pande (2011) in his study explored the consumer decision process in retail by understanding the different triggers for shopper buying behaviour. A sample size of 352 was taken from Pune city. The analysis of the study indicated that five factors that influence shopper buying behaviour. These factors include merchandising, status/shopper image, location/convenience, service and availability. The results bring out that retailers can no longer assume that all shoppers are the same. Rather different and unique retailing strategy should be used to appease different clusters of shoppers.

Influence of impulse buying

Muruganantham and Ravi Shankar Bhakat (2013) studied extensively on the factors influencing impulse buying due to recent developments in retailing and huge cultural differences when compared to developed economies. It has classified the factors influencing into 4 categories namely external stimuli, internal stimuli,
situational and product related factors and demographic and socio cultural factors. External stimuli like store atmosphere, perceived crowding, internal stimuli like emotions and fashion, situational and product related features like availability of time and money, demographic and cultural factors like gender and socio economic factors influence impulse buying behaviour. Among these four categories, the most perplexing inference of this research was the effect of the external stimuli (market and store related factors) on the consumer behaviour. It concluded that the proper combination and synergistic effect of the various factors could lead to more sales turn over.

Another study highlighting the factor affecting impulse behaviour in rural shoppers is discussed below:

Lalitha, Panchanatham (2013) had conducted a study on impulsive buying behaviour of rural consumers with respect to FMCG products. Fifty respondents from sulur taluk in Coimbatore district was selected based on convenience sampling. It was found through weighted arithmetic mean that was visual merchandising was given rank 1 followed by the emotional attachment of the product assigned with rank 2, special occasion impulsive purchase was assigned rank 3, price off and discounts with the was assigned rank 4, advertisement and sales promotion was assigned rank 5. Finally the criteria companionship was assigned the 6th rank. It was further proved through measure of regression that the nature of family of rural consumers' setup directly influences their impulsive buying behaviour.

Another study highlighting the factors affecting impulse behaviour in rural shoppers is discussed below.

A very similar study carried out by Alireza Karbasivar and Hasti Yarahm identified the influence of store related factors on impulsive buying behaviour.

Alireza Karbasivar and Hasti Yarahmadi (2011) in their research examined the effect of four external cues (window display, credit card, promotional activities (cash discount, free product) on consumer impulse buying behaviour. The sample size was 275 and the data was collected in Abadan, Iran. Data analysis methods like SEM and LISREL were used which illustrates that there is a positive relationship between consumer’s apparel impulse buying behaviour and the external
factors. Results of Fried man test indicated that in-store form display has strongest effect on consumer’s impulse buying behaviour than others. This leads to the implications that dealers and marketers can have ATM in their shop for urgent cash use and can gift complimentary products. To enhance window display, decorating in modern style using attractive lights and colours should be done.

However, a study by Shu ling Liao et al has identified the influence of utilitarian value of the product on the reminder impulse buying behaviour.

Shu ling Liao et al (2009), investigated the factors that induce reminder impulse buying behaviour. For this purpose, an experiment was conducted using 224 women participants who were asked to recall their experiences on reminder and pure impulse buying. The results of the study showed that reminder impulse buying is more universal and exist in the daily life of most consumers. Moreover, consumers who engage in reminder impulse buying have more rational motivation, more utilitarian goals and less regret response than those who participate in pure impulse buying. It was recommended for the marketers that before deciding the promotional strategy, they should know whether the product value is utilitarian or hedonic in the market place.

Lalit Kr., Sharma (2009) analysed the impact of rural children in purchase of FMCG and determine the age (children) relation with parents buying habits. An exploratory study was conducted with a sample size of 180 in the rural parts of Aligarh district in Uttar Pradesh using a multi stage random sampling. The findings of the study revealed that 92.78 % of respondents clearly indicated that children have high brand awareness of various companies and in turn it is resulted in the final selection of a brand. 86.11% of the respondents opined that role of children was more in the purchase of FMCG. The study concluded rural children were more media savvy, so the role of television and other advertising media is very much prominent in their day to day life and parents are considering the usage pattern of a product of their children while making the purchase decision.

2.3 Rural Marketing

Pankaj Priya (2004) in the article “Challenges for marketing in Indian hinterland” discussed the present scenario in the rural sector and identifies various challenges for the marketer. An understanding of the rural consumer reveals that rural
folk focussing only on price factor is a myth, but the reality is, they go for branded products also. What constitutes value for money for an urban customer may not be the same for a rural customer. For this purpose rural markets can be offered a basic product or build a separate brand like Sampoorna TV from LG on the usage of promotional media. Marketers have to think of innovative ways to reach the consumers as the traditional medias used in urban areas do not convey the same message effectively in rural areas. Distribution decision is such that villagers do their bulk buying in the nearest towns where they go on weekly or monthly basis to buy agricultural inputs. Finally it concluded that a combination of education, access and adaptability should be the approach of any marketer for effectively facing the challenges in the rural markets.

The following study focussed on the adoption of appropriate advertising and personnel selling in the rural markets.

Adithya Prakash Tripathi (2008) in his study observed that the Indian market has a tremendous potential that is yet to be tapped. A small increase in rural income results in an exponential increase in buying power. However the marketing strategy for rural market has to be different from that adopted for the urban market because of different social environment. Appropriate advertising and personnel selling to meet the demand and integrated outlets have become the essential elements of marketing strategy for the rural market, the success of marketing in rural areas depends on how effectively the marketing skills are applied in the number of complex activities of marketing, beginning with the assessment of the need of the rural consumers, organising the production to match the demand, pricing, advertising and publicity culminating in the sale of the product at a profit.

Sunil Shukla and NeenaTandon (2011) in their study focussed on the retail revolution that has encouraged a few corporates to venture into the rural sector. It also stated that non consumers comprising the rural poor would enter the market as the first time buyer in large numbers. It discussed some of the big companies’ project such as HLL’s project Shakthi, ITC’s e-Choupal, Airtel’s joint venture with IFFCO are a few to be highlighted. Emphasizing on some of the challenges of the rural markets, it outlined the threats and opportunities of the market. The rural marketing environment is complex and changing continuously. To foresee this, the marketing organisation has to adopt strategies for the changing requirements of the market.
A study by Ramanathan emphasized on the importance of retail channel enhancement strategies to be adopted by the FMCG companies.

Ramanathan (2007) has undertaken a study to find out the retail channel enhancement strategies adopted by FMCG companies in South India. FMCG’s began to rely on heavy promotional budget through suitable promotional mix campaigns. Strategies such as co-partnering retailing strategies, exclusive dealerships for FMCG products, direct marketing, relationship marketing, granting of loans to the rural retailers, tie ups with rural NGO’s are some to be adopted to improve the retailing channels in the rural areas. Direct rural distribution begins with the coverage of villages adjacent to small towns. The company stockist in these places is made to use their infrastructure to distribute products to outlets in these villages.

The study by Ashfaque Ahmed focussed on the customized way of communication to the rural markets.

Ashfaque Ahmed (2013) discussed about rural marketing and its strategies for selling products & services. The study revealed that the demand in the rural areas is highly price elastic. It emphasized on the existence of the division between urban India and rural India. In order to get success in the rural markets, some of the strategies to be adopted by the companies such as easy way of communication, patriotism with product and services, promoting Indian sports team, developing specific products for specific segment etc. are a few to be highlighted.

Malini Reddy (2004), in her study pointed out that, while marketing in rural areas and urban areas, a marketer had to face an entirely different set of conditions and problems. Rural marketers need to have an open mind and sensitize themselves to understand the rural consumer. Apart from understanding the consumer, communicating in the language that the rural consumer comprehends was a challenge for the marketer. In order to achieve success in the rural market, creative approaches should be adopted to provide satisfactory offering, in terms of adaptation to consumer needs of the rural market, which should be reflected in product offerings as well as message used, were absolutely essential.

The following article discusses the paradigm shift from 4P’s to 4A’s in the rural marketing.
Abhisek Kumar Tripathi (2012) discussed the challenges, opportunities and strategies of rural marketing. The urban consumer’s buys products based on wants and desires in addition to need based products. Whereas due to income limitation, the rural counterparts prefer to go for products on need based platform. It was observed that there had been a paradigm shift from 4P to 4A approach via, affordability, acceptability, awareness and availability. Urban consumers usually do some secondary research before buying (like in consumer durables), like visiting different discount stores, check out website etc. whereas, the rural consumer sought to get opinion from the key opinion leader of the village who may be a Sarpanch, retired army officer, foreign return personality etc. Hence it was important for marketers to understand how a customer behaves, interprets and analyses a product, communication, pricing and purchase action.

Another study by Udayakumar identified the factors 4A’s which determines the demand of the product in the rural market.

Udayakumar (2010) in his article on, recent strategies and issues in rural market examined the various rural marketing strategies adopted in India. It was found that factors such as geographical location, population density, gender, age, occupation, income levels, cultural considerations, language and literacy level, life styles, benefits sought were considered to be important in determining the different market segment. It was identified that access, attitude, awareness and affluence were the factors determining the demand of rural areas. Some of the strategies discussed were low price strategy, use of company owned vans to facilitate distribution, introducing DTH facility for further enhancement of TV penetration, adopting personnel selling method were a few to be quoted.

Among the 4P’s, a study by Behura and Panda focussed on the specific designing of the product for the rural market.

Behura and Panda (2012) cover the attraction of the FMCG marketers going rural, the challenges, the differences between the rural and urban market and the suitable marketing strategy to be adopted. The growth rate of lot of FMCG was higher in rural markets than urban markets. The impact of globalization was felt in rural India as much as in urban and it would have its effect on target groups like farmers/ youth/ women. It was also felt necessary to design specific products for the rural
economy considering the needs and the latent feelings of the rural people before launching products in rural segments.

Ashish Kumar (2013) studied the potentiality of Indian rural markets and found out various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of rural markets. The most relevant thing was that the rural segment is extremely fragmented & spread out over a large geographical base. It highlighted the strength as rising spending power of rural consumers, socio-economic changes (lifestyle, habits and tastes, economic status) and the weakness stated were least developed infrastructure, heterogeneity in rural consumers. The opportunities available in the rural areas are development of rural infrastructure and increase in the services provided. Threats include complex marketing environment, unique consumer behaviour and increase in grey market size.

Another study on SWOT analysis done by Devi Prasad Kotni suggested solutions to the weakness areas in rural marketing which is discussed below.

Devi Prasad Kotni (2012) in her study observed the potentiality of Indian rural markets and found out various problems faced by the rural markets. For this purpose, SWOT analysis matrix had been developed. It discussed that rural consumers were cautious in buying and they make slow and delayed decision. They like to give a trial and only after being personally satisfied, do they buy the product. The study suggested the adoption of effective supply chain management practices to bring down the various cost associated with rural markets like distribution cost, cost of communication, customer cost and cost of sale etc. It proposed that educating rural consumers in all aspects like usage of the products, gathering product information, customer rights and regulations, getting the right product at right place at right cost in right time are the key to successful rural marketing.

To overcome the draw backs in the rural marketing, some unique strategies were discussed by Rachna in the following study.

Rachna (2011) discussed in the article “Changing trends in rural marketing” explored the challenges in rural marketing and the strategies that a marketer can incorporate while approaching the rural consumer. It pointed out the establishment of distribution strategy of “hub and Spoke “adopted by Coke and Pepsi which made a
huge success in the rural market. Thus it proved that it was not right pricing and packaging, but it was the ability to establish the right connectivity with the consumers which helps a brand to make it big in rural India. It discussed some of the strategies like application of value engineering, promotion and service strategy, using re-usable/refill packages, low cost products are a few to be noted.

Avinash Pareek and Satyam Pincha (2013) made a study to find the way’s how rural market can be explored to understand the use of marketing strategy as separate from urban. It discussed some of the live examples of companies going rural. It pointed out that Escorts did not rely on television or press advertisements, rather focussed on market parameters like fares, melas etc. It also said that rural India buys small packs, as they are perceived as value for money. There is brand stickiness, where a consumer buys a brand out of habit and not really by choice. Brands rarely fight for market share and they just have to be visible in the right place. Even expensive brands, such as Close-Up, Marie biscuits and Clinic shampoo are doing well because of deep distribution, many brands are doing well without much advertising support _ Ghadi, a big detergent brand in North India, is an example.

Phanindra Kumar and Swamy (2013) studied the rural market status and the rural marketing strategies adopted by different marketing houses. Describing about the rural market status, the way they define value is similar to the urban consumers. Rural consumers have sufficient disposable income and are appreciating brands, customer service, aesthetics and products. Unfolding the strategies of companies, it mentioned LG Company setting up central office areas in B class cities and C class cities to feel the pulse of the consumer and being able to respond rapidly to their needs. Realizing the importance of opinion leaders, companies such as Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai Motor India and General Motors India run special panchayat schemes in these markets. P& G’s adoption of brand personality to push tide and head & shoulders made a great success in the rural markets. The study suggested that marketing research should be undertaken involving focus groups and marketers should also build prototypes while strategizing for marketing.

As one of the problem in rural marketing, Lokhande has identified illiteracy as a major hindrance in rural marketing which is discussed below.
Lokhande (2004) observed illiteracy to be major hindrance in rural marketing and the use of audio-visual aids could be adopted by the marketers to take their message effectively to rural areas. It was found that brand does not matter to the rural consumers; they just want their needs to be fulfilled. Some consumers were brand loyal also and didn’t make brand shifts. Thus marketers should focus on brand value. Distribution channel must be made effective so that rural retailers are not deficient of necessary goods. Although barter system was found to be prevalent particularly in the rural areas, daily wage earners were purchasing commodities on payments basis only.

Sathya Narayan and Raman iGanesh (2008) analysed the characteristics of the rural retail system and the existing channel distribution for different product categories. It highlighted some of the rural distribution strategies such as effective utilisation of wholesalers and retailers focus on haats, bazaars and shandies, proper use of retail outlets for effective communication, NGO’s etc. It also highlighted some of the challenges in the rural market such as incurrences of higher expenditure for market development, channel management, inability of the small rural retailer to carry stock without adequate credit facility, promotion and marketing communication were a few to be mentioned.

Differences in the rural and urban consumer behaviour are identified by Sunil V Chaudhary which is discussed in the study given below.

Sunil V Chaudhary (2010) in his article, “Understanding the rural and urban consumers”, found that rural markets are growing faster than urban counterparts in several products like packaged tea, detergent powder, washing soaps and detergent cakes. Rural areas exhibit several distinctive characteristics that are different from urban counterparts. In terms of literacy levels, family structure, occupational patterns, social customs and norms and several features are unique to rural India. Traditions and customs are strictly followed in rural areas compared to urban counterparts; rural consumers have different interpretations of colours, symbols and social activities which is different from their urban areas.

A study by Saleem Abid identified the differences in the saving pattern of the rural and urban consumers in Pakistan.
Saleem Abid (2010) analysed the savings behaviour of household in urban and rural areas of District Muzaffarabad, Pakistan. For this purpose, an econometric model was constructed to study the effect of income, family size, locality and education on saving behaviour of households. A sample of 120 respondents was taken randomly for the survey. The results indicated that income and locality have positive effect on saving behaviour of household whereas, education and family size have negative effect on saving behaviour of the household. The findings of the study showed that people in rural areas save more when compared to urban areas. It was suggested that Government can increase saving by creating job opportunities to individuals of the rural areas as well as the educated persons and by subsidizing the general price level at its optimal level.

The subsequent article talks about the robust growth of FMCG in rural areas due to the disposable income of the rural consumers.

Kavitha (2012) discussed about the growth of FMCG industry in rural market of India and examined the challenges, opportunities for the FMCG’s with growing awareness and brand consciousness among people across different socio-economic classes. The shift in the rural economy in the last few years is due to the reducing dependence on the farm income. The contribution of non-farm income to total rural income has increased. It was found from the study that increase in demand of edible oil and packed biscuits were more in urban areas as compared to the rural areas whereas in items like health beverages, shampoos, toilet soaps, washing cakes and washing powder, the increase in demand is more in rural areas than in urban areas. The consumption of such products in rural areas is growing at a higher pace. Rural consumers want products that carry the best of traditional wisdom and modern science, providing convenience and individualism in one go which means product and brand strategies that respond to these demands are more likely to succeed.

Ajith Paninchukunnat (2010) in his paper focussed on the urban myopia and presented a framework for rural marketing in India. The 3P Framework of rural marketing proposed by the author was push marketing, pull marketing and pull up marketing. The 3P Frameworks of rural marketing has to be adopted in totality for achieving sustainable success in rural marketing. It could strengthen the organization in the domestic market and make them a stronger contender for international markets.
It stressed on the need of adopting a holistic approach with long term commitment which will give sustainable returns, strong presence and leadership in rural markets of India which has the difficult to assess and heterogeneous in nature.

The following article deals with the case analysis of HLL and Coco Cola on the basis of frame work of customer brand structure.

Kaushik Mukherjee (2007) established a research structure on the basis of brand building established by Kevin Keller. The frame work of customer brand structure consists of dimensions such as salience (category identification), performance, imagery, judgements, feelings and resonance. The cases on HLL and Coco Cola were analysed with regard to the research frame work which reveals that HLL and Coco Cola have identified the need of their products and improved their positioning through advertising by making use of local parlance. Usage of suitable channels likes *Shakti Amma’s* by HLL and rickshaws by Coca cola ensured wide spread reach. Both the companies enhanced resonance by laying efforts to improve the lives of the rural people through information and services.

Sheela Singh and Javed Alam Sheikh (2012) threw light on the challenges of rural market and discussed the practices of HUL on integrating itself with the life of rural customers. This article discussed about the premium brands for the affluent, value-for-money brands for middle-income consumers and affordable quality products for low-income consumers. It discussed some of the strategies such as modified utility oriented products by reinventing and developing the distinctive new products with proven consumer benefits that people want, winning in the market place with affordable innovations and responsible communication, low units packaging, winning with the people by reinventing the selling business partners.

Shamni Pande (2010), explained about the opportunities available to rural retailers as there is a rapid income expansion in small towns and villages. Today the rural India act and behave like urban counterparts and they are turning out to be voracious consumers of packaged food/ hair dyes and fairness creams, among other products. Future groups which runs India’s biggest organized retailing business, attributes its success to treating small villages and towns differently based on their specific needs. Moreover, the CEO of MART had challenged that the success of retail outlet is on sheer convenience and availability of genuine products and confronted
retailers to open stores near haats or village markets where villagers come from afar to shop.

Anil Kumar Yadav and Preeti Singh (2012) discussed the robust market potentiality of rural India and pointed out that major domestic retailers like AV Birla, Godrej, Reliance and many others have set up farm linkages and have undertaken the process of improving the business model of the rural retail chain of the company, in order to strengthen the company's system of product sourcing. In various surveys, it was revealed that men play an important role in decision-making and purchase of most of the household products in rural areas. But the initiative by HUL breaks that mind set and shows the increasing participation of women in household decision making. Language and regional behaviour variation should be given more consideration in developing rural communication and strategies. It suggested that effort should be made to bridge the supposed digital divide between rural and urban areas in one great leap.

John Mano Raj and Selvaraj (2007) uncovered the attractions of the FMCG marketers going rural, the adoption of suitable marketing strategy by the companies in going rural. Thus the rural marketing has been growing steadily over the years. And is now bigger than the urban market for FMCG. Globally, the FMCG sector has been successful in selling products to the lower and middle income groups and the same is true in India. Over 70% of the sales are made to middle class households and over 50% of the middle class is in rural India. But the rural penetration rates are low. This presents a tremendous opportunity for makers of branded products who can convert consumers to buy branded products. The marketers need to develop different strategies to treat the rural consumers since they are economically, socially and psycho graphically different from each other.

The above three reviews discussed the growth and opportunities available in the rural market.

KalyaniVemuri (2004) had done a case study on the rural marketing experiences, the study highlighted views of many experts which includes that product features should be designed especially for the rural consumers. Moreover, rural consumer’s decision to buy was largely influenced by what his neighbour had purchased and experienced regarding the product. The study found that
melas and haats provide a viable medium in increasing brand awareness. Regarding the influence of advertisements, in the case of television advertising, fast-paced, ambiguous ads failed to convey the marketer’s message to rural viewers. This leads to the implications that marketers should take utmost care in designing the advertisement targeted for the rural consumers.

Sumitha Achar and Rowena Wright (2014) made a study on the competitive strategies of corporates in rural markets. The study indicated that convergence seems to be key word in the rural areas. The behaviour of the rural consumer is converging with that of their urban counterparts due to the impact of urban orientation, changes in socio-economic and cultural environment, increase in the average income earned, steady rise in the literacy level etc. Therefore the major concern faced by the corporate is to develop outcome based competitive strategies to surpass their competitors. On the other hand, rural markets create an opportunity for the corporates to increase profits successfully as there is a converging rural market within the urban market.

According to Suresh, Sathya Narayana (2008) in their study on communication strategies in rural areas presented a detailed description of each type of communication strategies to effectively reach the rural audiences. It classified the non-conventional media based on the AIDA model where puppet shows, dramas, message on moving objects are categorized under attention, wall painting and direct mail classified under interest, tableau, audio visual vans, pop, demos, contest included under desire and Haats and melas classified under action. It concluded that integration of three components, communication, trial or demonstration and final sale is required for effective communication to rural markets.

2.4 Consumer Decision Making Process

SardharGugloth and Margani Soma Sekhara (2012) had done a research on the decision making process of rural consumers with reference to two wheelers in Chittoor district with a sample size of 96 consumers using interview method. The results of chi square test showed that there is association between sources of information and their purchase decision of the two wheelers. Analysis of influencing factors shows that family member (58.34%) and friends / relatives (32.29%) plays a great role in making the final choice. Features like mileage and quality were viewed
important from customer point of view. The implication of the study was that there is good demand for two wheelers in rural areas, but availability of factual and comparative information is limited. Hence marketers should focus on developing a strategy to provide information to reach rural consumers.

Another study by Burns and Granbois shows that decision making by family members depends upon the level of engagement of members in the use of product.

Burns and Granbois (1977) had conducted a behavioural lab study comprising of 101 couples for the purchase of an automobile hypothesized that joint participation in the process of deciding purchases” will vary directly with the degree in which the family members directly engage in use of the product” and is more likely “the more equal the contribution of resources such as, income, education and social participation by husbands and wives”. The study illustrated that husbands exhibited high involvement and low empathy for this product class. Husbands influenced the decision to an extent that it could be termed as autonomous decision, but participation by wife made it a joint decision. The wife’s sphere was one of influence, while the husbands sphere was that of influence and right.

A very similar study on the joint decision making is identified by Ruth and Commuri in the case of FMCG products

Ruth and Commuri (1998) in a qualitative research conducted in two large metropolitan cities in India tried to estimate the effect of social and economic changes on family decision making and by using critical incident method of recalling purchase decision, they tried to study the changes in the roles of husbands and wives vis a vis purchase decisions in product categories like household products, personal care products and other purchase decisions. The findings showed that, most of the decisions involved collaboration of partners instead of being solo decisions. Decision regarding furniture and school for child had moved from being solo husband in the past to joint decisions. The decisions for snacks and cooking oil were wife dominated while decision for husbands clothing was husband dominated.

Vinay Sharma, Piyush Seth (2010), made a study on rural consumers’ behaviour and decision making process for acquiring health care services analysed the health care services with a marketer’s perspective and examined the rural and poor’s
consumer behaviour towards the health care services. To attain this objective, a qualitative research using focussed group was observed and the factors leading to the consumers decision making process were identified which includes degree of emergency, past experiences, cost, availability, approach, reference, awareness level and availability of alternatives.

This article discussed about the rural consumers decision making done on the basis of service features in health care field.

In the following article Surabhi Koul pointed out the difficulty faced by the people at the BoP in decision making.

Surabhi Koul (2014) examined the nature of family purchase decision making at the Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP). This research was conducted in urban and rural poor communities in the Jammu and Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. Mixed research methods were used to collect data between the period 2010-2012 and a total of 80 semi-structured personal interviews were conducted with BOP consumers to establish how they made purchases. Due to lack of literacy, many BOP customers lack confidence or skills needed to make good decisions and are also unaware of their rights as consumers. Such factors discourage them from planning purchases, checking prices, switching shops to obtain a better deal or evaluating product quality by reading the product details before purchase. It was also found that environmental constraints can influence family purchase decision making which may vary between markets, particularly between urban and rural markets where most BOP families are to be found.

The following study by Balasubramaniam discusses the role of media in the decision making aspect of the rural consumers.

Balasubramaniam (2011) carried out a study in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu using a sample size of 660 using probability proportional to size. This study lead to the implication that internet plays a major role in the decision making process for consumers below 30 years of age. Male prefer newspaper and word of mouth as source of product information for purchase decisions while female prefer word of mouth and television. The purchase decision of single consumer is complex, mainly because of influence from external factors like media and friends, while the married consumers are influenced most by internal factors like family. Irrespective of their
qualification, consumers are satisfied with the usage of the product they decide upon. Esteem feeling is high amongst consumers with lower qualification. The lower income groups go by the consistency of the brands while the higher income consumers go by consistency and the elite feeling as the reasons for selecting a brand.

Sudharani Ravindran et al., (2010), studied on the decision making styles of the consumer in shopping malls in Chennai. A total of 128 respondents were taken for the study and the study shows that an average Indian shopper were not very brand conscious, but were quite price and quality conscious. It was found from the study that single consumers are more price conscious than married consumers. Young consumers in the age group of 11 to 20 years are more recreational in their shopping. Above all, Indian consumers are confused by over choice and they were novelty conscious and variety seekers.

A study by Durvasula on consumer decision making of college students is found using CSI and eight decision making styles are observed.

Durvasula et al. (1993) used the consumer style inventory to a group of 210 under-graduate business students at a university in New Zealand. The findings of the study showed that eight consumer making styles were identified. They were perfectionist, brand conscious, novelty fashion conscious, recreational shopping conscious, price value conscious, impulsive, confused by over choice and habitual/brand loyal characters.

A similar study is carried out by Canabal in 2002 and only five decision making styles are observed.

M E Canabal (2002) investigated the decision making styles of South Indian consumers utilizing customer style inventory. Using the data collected from 173 college students from two institutions of higher education in the city of Coimbatore, South India. The study identified five decision making styles of south Indians. These styles are brand consciousness, high quality consciousness, confused by over choice style, impulsive, brand indifferent style and recreational shopper style.

The influence of children in purchase decision making is identified by Singh in the case of durable and nondurable goods.

Singh (1998), in a study of children as consumers, considered five cities in
India, found that children influenced the purchase decision for nondurables in 76% and for durables in 22% of the cases. For children, the most reliable sources for discussion, before buying products, were the family and the child also used his own intelligence and experience to solve the purchase problem. Although, retention of advertisements was high amongst them (for age group 5-15 years), the final purchases, prompted due to exposure to advertisements, was low at 30%.

The following study Bronnenberg emphasizes that decision making for low involvement products skips some of the stages in the final purchase.

Bronnenbergetal., (1996) in their article observed that it is becoming increasingly evident that a consumer’s brand choice decision in low involvement categories does not involve full search, evaluation and comparison of price of all brands available at the point of purchase. The author proposed a two stage choice in which consumer first identifies a subset of brands within the universal set of brands called the choice set and then evaluates only those brands that are in the choice set relative to one another to select a single brand.

The following study by Gupta and Varma pointed out the men and women were concerned about different aspects in decision making of households.

Gupta and Varma (2000) examined the influence of husband, wife and children and the interaction between them in the purchase decision process. The study also focussed on the influence of socio economic variables like age, education, income and employment in the decision dimensions and found that income of the family and women employment is the major factor influencing family decision making. In the purchase decisions, husbands tend to concern themselves with relatively important and functional product attributes like price while wives concentrate on relatively minor aesthetic attributes like colour. He also pointed out those financial resources that husband or wife brings to the household also influence household decisions.

In the light of the studies reviewed above, the importance and need for in depth and comprehensive research on rural shopper’s behaviour in Coimbatore was felt essential. The studies in Indian context on the above issues addressed were exclusively on either one or two elements of consumer behaviour in rural areas.
However the present study aims to bridge the existing gap and to bring out a comprehensive idea on shoppers behaviour in the rural areas of Coimbatore. The socio economic variables, sources of information, personal and marketing factors influencing their purchase, decision making styles and shopping behaviour will be brought out into lime light in this study.