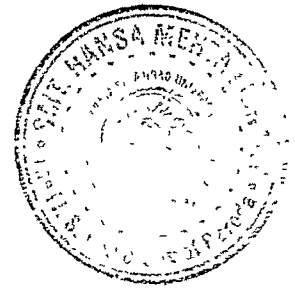


# **ABSTRACT**



**“A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS  
ATTRIBUTES OF FEW SELECTED DURABLE  
VIS-À-VIS NON-DURABLE CONSUMER  
PRODUCTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON BUYING  
DECISIONS.”**

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda  
for  
The Award of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in Business Administration

By

**Gitesh S. Pandya**

Under the guidance of

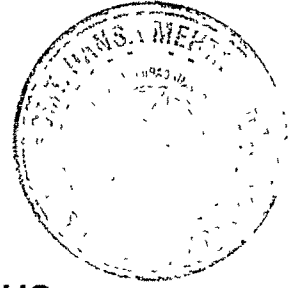
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# CHAPTER – 1

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the age of globalization, the marketplace has become highly competitive, the one that reflects a cutthroat competition in many spheres of consumer product related industries. Marketers are often found engaged in price and non price wars to attract the customers and capture high market shares. The entry of global players in the Indian market because of liberalized Government policies, the financial and other megamarketing skills of these global giants, the socio cultural changes taking place in India, the rising levels of Per Capita Income, the increasing marginal propensity to consume, the strength and weaknesses and competitiveness of the domestic players against the multinationals, increasing levels of literacy rates, decreasing gender discriminations and increasing global strategic alliances are some of the major trends affecting and bothering markets across India in which the world is no longer an exception. It will be interesting to study the various aspects of buying decisions and behaviour of consumers under such global changes in the Indian marketplace.

### 1.2 PRODUCT AND PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION

#### 1.2.1 PRODUCT

'Product means anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use and consumption that might satisfy a need of want.'

#### 1.2.2 PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION

A product can be classified on the basis of Durability and Tangibility.  
A Product can also be classified as Consumer goods and Industrial goods.

### 1.3 CONSUMER DECISION MAKING AND BEHAVIOUR

A decision on the part of an individual represents his or her judgement, a resolution he/she may offer to the conflict of their needs, and it may be a final destination or goal for him/her or a means to reach to a goal. As a matter of fact a decision is a commitment made to action (to choose from available alternatives). These commitments are largely made in face of uncertainty, irrationality and often complexity. A decision may involve individual and social phenomenon and might be based on Factual as well as Value premises. Three aspects of human behaviour are important in decision making namely: a) Cognition, b) Affection and c) Conation. The consumer buying process has been explained with various models.

#### **1.4 CONSUMER DECISION TYPES**

For better understanding of Consumer Decision Making (CDM) models there is a need to differentiate between purchase involvement and product involvement before taking up the different kinds of CDM. Habitual CDM, Limited CDM and Extended CDM have been explained.

#### **1.5 CONSUMER DECISION MAKING MODELS**

Six comprehensive models of consumer behavior have been referred, viz, Nicosia Model, Howard- Sheth Model, EKB Model, Seth family decision- making Model, Bettman Information Processing Model of Consumer Choice, Sheth-Newman-Gross Model of Consumption Values.

## **CHAPTER – 2**

# **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY AND VARIOUS PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES**

### **2.1 A RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Today's world is full of uncertainties. For marketers their historical success no longer remains the benchmark and doesn't even assure the future success. In today's world the most important thing that drives companies success rallies is their ability to keep track of change and their adaptability.

The world has become a small village because of the revolutionary technology and economies have transformed from traditional ones to Knowledge Economies. Because of the borderless markets, glocal strategies of the organizations, global standardizations and keen global competition, the consumers have not only been benefited in terms of vast choice and low prices, but have also become more aware of and highly aspirational as a result of ostentation effect. This can be predominantly attributed to the globalization and technological breakthrough. For instance the Internet enables a round-o-clock access to an endless treasure of information and facilitates the users to buy and sell just by the click of the button or mouse. The time is not far away when we would actually be able not only to see the product and services on screens but also smell the fragrance. It is because of this globalization and technological revolution that the entire world has become a big market space. Today an average consumer in an underdeveloped country like India is highly aware of the products and services that people in developed countries buy, the brands they value, the services they are being offered and the prices they are charged for.

The aspirational level of an average consumer has substantially increased especially after globalization and even in a country like India there is a huge mass of consumers consisting of average and above average class consumers who are ready to pay more for better quality products and services. For marketers it is difficult to define quality perfectly unless they do it with a through consumer perspective. This is very much the fact because quality is a subjective term and differs from person to person, for instance my perception of opinion regarding a good quality Television may be different from my wife. This is the reason why companies try die hard to chalk out customer perceptions of good quality, develop quality conformations and practice Total Quality Management, Just-in-time, Six-sigma and other such quality management approaches to rate themselves as accurate as possible insofar customer satisfaction in terms of quality is concerned.

Somehow quality has become a much-hyped concept among all the market players and in today's consumerism age quality is regarded as the primary

ingredient of a product of service. This is the reason why marketers cannot simply rely on quality alone to derive a competitive advantage and more importantly satisfy consumer needs and wants. Moreover in some non-durables like; soap, toothpaste and eatables as well as durables like household electronic appliances like T. V , Refrigerator, Air conditioners etc , consumer perceptions about quality do not differ significantly. This is because either companies have failed to differentiate their brands effectively or competitors have been able to match the leaders in terms of quality. Moreover Indian market is especially a price sensitive market where often people are ready to forgo the better quality for lower price preference. This is a paradox of generally accepted price quality relationship which states; higher the price, better the quality. On the other hand people are often ready to be consistent with the price-quality relationship and they are largely ready to pay high price for a better quality product or service. Because of all such reasons marketers often give considerable and sometimes full attention to other attributes than quality. Product attributes like, product variety, features, design, price, packaging, size, brand name, colour, retailer's prestige, manufacturer's prestige and returns or satisfaction play a significant role in consumer decisions and their buying behaviour. Moreover it's within the knowledge of marketers that people do not buy product and services but they buy solution to their needs, they buy actually a bundle of benefits.

Each one of these attributes of a product is capable of being perceived as an actual benefit. It then becomes the task and responsibility of marketers to convert these attributes in benefits and communicate the same in an effective manner to the consumers to help them make a better decision and to get competitive advantage. Product attributes also help marketers segment their products as per benefit segmentation in behavioural segmentation. On the basis of this segmentation they can target a market to enter. Moreover product attributes can often be the basis of positioning strategy.

The attempt of this study is to find out the impact of product attributes on buying decisions of consumers and to know their relative importance, with the help of a comparative analysis as far as consumer durable and non-durable products are concerned. Academicians and marketers for formulating product and positioning strategies could better utilize this for the purpose of future research.

## **2.2 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES OF DURABLE AND NON-DURABLE CONSUMER PRODUCTS**

Following Product Attributes have been considered for the study

- Product variety, Quality, Design, Price, Features, Brand Name, Packaging, Service, Size, Returns, Colour, Warranty, Manufacturer's Prestige, Retailer's Prestige.

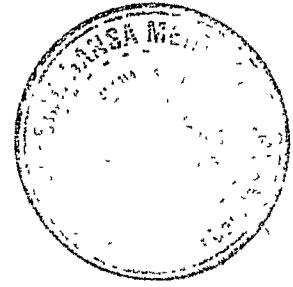
## **CHAPTER – 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter is an endeavour to present a brief idea of some of the relevant studies. These research studies published in some of the most recognized journals in the world do have significance for the present study as they provide meaningful guidance and important insights that were considered in the present study.

# CHAPTER – 4

## METHODOLOGY



### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the basic manner and methodology in which the research was conducted.

#### 4.1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study is a systematic attempt to find out with the help of a comparative analysis, whether and to what extent the various attributes of durable and non-durable consumers products affect and help consumers in making their buying decisions

#### 4.1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To get an insight into various attributes of Durable and Non-durable Consumer products and testing their impact on Buying decisions of consumers.
2. To find out the attributes which are attached to buying decisions for Durable and Non-durable products.
3. To identify the relative weightage of product attributes for the products selected.
4. To identify the relevance of brand in buying decisions.

#### 4.1.3 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no association between the opinions given regarding loyalty to any specific brand and selected Non-durables and Durables.
2. There is no association between responses given for reasons for switching over or otherwise to any other brand from the present one and selected Non-durables and Durables.
3. There is no association between the opinions given regarding belief that brand loyalty increases as a result of presence of product attributes of choice in a brand and selected Non-durable and Durables.
4. There is no association between the responses given for tendency of respondents to compromise with certain attributes if the one most



important to them (except Price) is found in a brand and selected Non-durable and Durables.

- 5 There is no association between the opinions given regarding belief of respondents that a change in the product attributes does affect their decision to buy and selected Non-durable and Durables.
- 6 There is no association between the opinions given regarding the extent of influence of product attributes on buying decision and selected Non-durable and Durables.
7. There is no association between the opinions given regarding the tendency of respondents to compare among product attributes of various brands for making a buying decision and selected Non-durable and Durables.
- 8 There is no association between the opinions given regarding tendency to choose a cheaper product despite of not getting attributes of their choice in a brand and selected Non-durable and Durables
- 9 There is no association between the opinions given regarding belief of respondents that a favourable experience of respondents with a product/ brand results into a repeat purchase of the same and selected Non-durable and Durables
- 10 There is no association between the opinions given regarding belief of respondents regarding whether product performance matches the claims made by the offers and selected Non-durable and Durables.
11. There is no association between the opinions given regarding effect of the extent of belief regarding whether product performance matches the claims made by the offers on their repeat or next purchase and selected Non-durable and Durables.
- 12 There is no association between the responses given for consideration of the Health aspect in making buying decisions and selected Non-durable and Durables.
- 13 There is no association between various sources of generating awareness about the presence of product attributes in a brand and selected Non-durable and Durables.
- 14 There is no association between the opinions given regarding attaching importance or otherwise to various product attributes in buying decisions and selected Non-durable and Durables.
15. There is no association between the opinions given regarding various product attributes helping respondents in Brand comprehension while making buying decisions and selected Non-durable and Durables.

16. There is no association between the opinions given regarding various product attributes helping respondents in Brand recall while making buying decisions and selected Non-durable and Durables.
17. There is no association between the opinions given regarding attaching importance to various product attributes while making buying decisions and selected Non-durable and Durables
18. There is no association between the responses given for loyalty to any specific brand of selected Non-durable and Durables and responses given for importance or otherwise of various Product attributes.
19. There is no association between various Product attributes and responses given concerning reasons for switching over or otherwise to another brand from the present one for selected Non-durables and Durables.
20. There is no association between the responses given for the belief that brand loyalty increases as a result of presence of product attributes of choice in a brand of selected Non-durable and Durables and responses given for importance or otherwise of various Product attributes in buying decisions.
21. There is no association between considering Product attributes important or otherwise in a buying decision and responses given concerning a tendency to choose a cheaper product/brand compromising with the other attributes of choice for selected Non-durable and Durables.
22. There is no association between consideration of Product attributes either important or unimportant in their buying decision for selected Non-durable and Durables and the responses given regarding the consideration of the health aspect for the same
23. There is no association between the opinions given regarding the belief that Product attributes add value to the brand/product and selected Non-durable and Durables.
24. There is no association between the opinions given regarding the attributions assigned by the respondents for buying decision and selected Non-durable and Durables.
25. There is no association between the opinions given regarding the associations that respondents make for their buying decision and selected Non-durable and Durables.

An attempt has also been made to study;

- Whether buying Decisions are independent of the product attributes.

- Whether there is any difference in attributes of Durable and Non- Durable products
- Whether buyers are influenced by the brand or lack brand loyalty.
- Whether buyers always prefer products which are cheaper and do not give weightage to the product attributes other than price
- Whether during selection of brand buyers give weightage to social and ethical dimension of the product.
- Whether all attributes equally influence buying decisions of consumers.

#### **4.1.4 FOCUS OF THE STUDY**

The study mainly focuses on the relationship among the various parameters utilized in the present study namely; age, occupation, frequency of purchase, loyalty with a brand, attitude toward switch over, importance of product attributes in buying decisions, the impact of change in the product attributes on buying decisions, the extent of influence of product attributes on buying decisions, impact of a cheaper product on buying decisions, negative experience with a product and reactions, impact of a favourable experience of a product on repeat purchase, the value the product attributes add to the products, the cognitive, affective and conative aspects of attitude and behaviour and associations of buying decisions with various segments of the society

**4.1.5 PRODUCT SELECTION:** The products selected for the purpose of the study are Durable and Non-Durable Consumer Goods.

**4.2 SAMPLING:** The sampling details are as under:

**4.2.1 SAMPLE FRAME:** The sample frame comprises respondents from various major cities of Gujarat State.

**4.2.2 SAMPLE SIZE:** For the purpose of the analysis, for both the categories of products, responses were collected from 250 respondents aggregating to 500 respondents.

**4.2.3 SAMPLE SELECTION** The sampling units of the study population consisted of both males and females for all six products namely Soap, Toothpaste, Chocolate and Television, Refrigerator, Car. The study population was confined to Gujarat State only.

**4.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT:** Two separate sets of Questionnaires were developed for the purpose of using them as research instrument to collect primary data.

**4.4 DATA COLLECTION:** The primary data have been collected as per the need of the comparative analysis using personal interview and Mail questionnaire methods

**4.5 DATA ANALYSIS:** As per the design of the research, the collection of data is followed by the analysis of primary data, which includes the Frequency distribution and other statistical techniques

**4.6 PARAMETERS IN THE RESEARCH:** The following parameters are considered for the purpose of analysis:

- Age group
- Sex
- Education Category
- Occupation
- Family size
- Monthly family income
- Frequency
- Age of durables
- Intention of replacement of durables
- Loyalty with a brand/company
- Preference for brand/company
- Reasons for switch over
- Attributes importance range
- Reasons for most important attribute
- Belief about increase in loyalty
- Compromise with certain attributes (non-price reason)
- Effect of change in product attributes on buying decisions
- Extent of influence of product attributes on buying decisions
- Source of awareness of presence of attributes in a brand
- Tendency of comparing attributes of various brands
- Compromise with attributes for low price
- Health consciousness
- Brand comprehension
- Brand recall
- Ethical issue
- Impact of the effect of the belief in the claims made by the offers
- Reactions when attributes of expectations are not found in a brand
- Repeat purchase as a result of a favourable experience with a brand
- Belief that product attributes add value to a product
- Cognitive, Affective and Conative decision
- Person / group association while making a buying decision

#### **4.7 STATISTICAL TOOLS / TECHNIQUES USED**

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Test of association – Chi-square test

#### **4.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- A complete analysis of consumer buying decisions of all Durables as well as Non-durable products would require a tremendous amount of time, efforts and money and hence only a few products for of both categories of product are selected for the purpose of study
- As far as the analysis part of the study is concerned, only Chi-square statistics are applied at majority of places because of the fact that most of the questions in the questionnaires are categorical ones
- The results are generated on the basis of the responses given by the respondents.
- The suggestions given are on the basis of analysis performed.

#### **4.9 CHAPTERIZATION**

Chapter – I deals with theoretical framework of the study and includes an introduction of product and its classification, consumer decision-making and consumer behaviour and various consumer decision-making models.

Chapter – II is an attempt to present a rationale of the present study and gives a brief idea about the various product attributes

Chapter – III presents literature review within which an attempt is made to highlight some of the related research studies with respect to the present study.

Chapter – IV highlights the detailed methodology undergone for the purpose of conducting the present study, which includes definition of problem, objectives of the study, hypothesis of the study, focus of the study, product selection, sample frame, size, selection, research instrument, data collection and analysis, parameters in the study, statistical tools, limitations of the study and chapterization.

Chapter – V deals with the tabulation, analysis and interpretations of the tables.

Chapter – VI attempts to draw inferences from the tables dealt with in chapter V which are presented in the form of findings.

Chapter – VII is an attempt to draw concluding remarks and suggestions on the basis of findings obtained from chapter VI

## **CHAPTER – 5**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

This Chapter deals with the tabulation, analysis and interpretations of the tables. Here, Primary data collected with the help of structured Non-disguised Questionnaire; from respondents for consumer durable as well as non-durable products have been tabulated, analyzed with the help of statistical tools and interpreted in meaningful way. An attempt has been made to test the hypotheses of the study. In all, Primary data have been tabulated in 62 Tables for establishing relationship among variables under study.

## CHAPTER – 6

### FINDINGS

Following are the major findings.

- 1) The major reasons for switch over in case of selected Non-durables do not differ significantly from selected Durables. However specifically Trial/change reason were more prominent among respondent for Soap and Chocolate in Non-durables and Car in Durables, whereas Dissatisfaction from the present brand was more prominent among respondents for Toothpaste in Non-durables and TV and Refrigerator in Durables and Extensive promotion of competing brands was more prominent for Soap in Non-durables and TV in Durables.
- 2) There is no difference among selected Non-durables and Durables as far as the belief that brand loyalty increases as a result of presence of product attributes of choice in brand is concerned.
- 3) The most percentage of respondents carry a tendency to compromise with certain product attributes if the one most important to them (except price) is found in a brand in case of Soap and Toothpaste but not in case of Chocolate, whereas in case of selected Durables, most of respondents would carry a same tendency for Television and Refrigerator, but not for Car.
- 4) The majority of respondents across various product categories of selected Non-durables as well as Durables show no difference as far as their belief about the effect of change in product attributes affecting buying decision is concerned
- 5) In case of selected Non-durables most percentage of respondents believe that product attributes carry importance in buying decisions for Soap and Toothpaste, but not in case of Chocolate, whereas in case of selected Durables, most percentage of respondents believe that product attributes carry importance in buying decisions for Television and Refrigerator, but not in case of Car.
- 6) In case of selected Non-durables most percentage of respondents carry a tendency of comparing product attributes of competing brands in buying decisions for Soap and Toothpaste, but not in case of Chocolate, whereas in case of selected Durables, most percentage of respondents carry a tendency of comparing product attributes of competing brands in buying decisions for in buying decisions for Television and Refrigerator, but not in case of Car.
- 7) The majority of respondents do not show any indifference insofar their tendency to choose a cheaper product compromising the other attributes of choice for selected Non-durables as well as Durables is concerned.

- 8) Most of the respondents consider the Health aspect during their buying decisions of selected Non-durables as well as Durables except in case of Television
- 9) It is observed that most of the respondents attach Somewhat importance to Product variety in their buying decision of selected Non-durables as well as Durables except for Television where Product variety is given high importance
- 10) It is observed that most of the respondents unanimously attach the highest importance to Quality in buying decisions of both selected Non-durables as well as Durables
- 11) It is observed that in case of selected Non-durables except for Soap where Design is attached either Somewhat or No importance at all, for Toothpaste and Chocolate it is not important at all, whereas in case of selected Durables, except for Television where it is somewhat important, it is otherwise not important to most of the respondents for Refrigerator and Car.
- 12) It is observed that in case of all selected Non-durables Price is either Most important or somewhat important, however in case of selected Durables except for Television where it is Most important, for Refrigerator and Car it is either Most important or somewhat important.
- 13) Most of the respondents unanimously attach high importance to Features in their buying decisions of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
- 14) Most of the respondents unanimously attach high importance to Brand name in their buying decisions of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
- 15) The Packaging has been attached Somewhat importance in case of Soap and Toothpaste and High importance in case of Chocolate.
- 16) The Size is either Most or somewhat important to most of the respondents in case of both of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
- 17) Most of the respondents unanimously attach high importance to Returns in their buying decisions of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
- 18) Most of the respondents unanimously attach no importance at all to Colour in their buying decisions of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
- 19) Most of the respondents unanimously attach high importance to Manufacturer's prestige in their buying decisions of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
- 20) Most of the respondents attach Somewhat importance to Service in case of Television and Refrigerator, but in case of Car it is Most important to most of them.



- 21) Most of the respondents attach High importance to Warranty in case of Television, but in case of Refrigerator and Car it is Least important to most of them
- 22) Most of the respondents attach Least importance to Other attributes in buying decision for Soap, Toothpaste, Chocolate and Television.
- 23) Most of the respondents believe that Price as a product attribute helps them in Brand comprehension for selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is also studied that most of the respondents believe that Quality as a product attribute helps them in Brand comprehension for selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is also studied that most of the respondents do not believe that Product variety as a Product attribute helps for the same in case of selected Non-durables, whereas in case of selected Durables, except Television, respondents do think positive about Product variety for the same. It is also studied that most of the respondents do believe that Brand name as a Product attribute helps for the same in case of all the selected Non-durables and Television, but not for Refrigerator and in case of Car equal positive and negative responses about the same were found. It is also studied that except for Chocolate where respondents carry equal percentage of positive and negative belief about Packaging helping in Brand comprehension, most others believe that Packaging does not help in the same for Soap and Toothpaste. It is also studied that most of the respondents do believe that Features as a Product attribute helps for the same in case of all the selected Non-durables as well Durables. It is also studied that most of the respondents except for Television, do not believe that Warranty as a Product attribute helps for the same. It is also studied that most of the respondents do believe that Service as an attribute does not help for the same. It is also studied that most of the respondents believe that Other attributes do not help in Brand comprehension of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
- 24) It is revealed that Price as a Product attribute does not help in Brand recall according to most of the respondents for selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is also revealed that most of the respondents believe that Quality as a Product attribute dose help in recalling a brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is also revealed that most of the respondents believe that Product variety as a Product attribute dose not help in recalling a brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is also revealed that most of the respondents believe that Brand name as a Product attribute dose help in recalling a brand of selected Non-durables, whereas in case of selected Durables, except for Television, most of the respondents do not think the same for Refrigerator and Car. It is also revealed that most of the respondents believe that Packaging as a Product attribute dose not help in recalling a brand of selected Non-durables. It is also revealed that most of the respondents believe that Features as a Product attribute dose help in recalling a brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is also revealed that most of the respondents believe that Service as a Product attribute except for Television dose help in recalling a brand of selected Durables. It is also

revealed that most of the respondents believe that Other Product attributes do not help in recalling a brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is also revealed that most of the respondents believe that Warranty as a Product attribute does not help in recalling a brand of selected Durables.

- 25) It is observed that in case of selected Non-durables most of the respondents attach highest importance to Quality. The other important attributes for the same are Returns, Features and Packaging (especially for Chocolate). In case of selected Durables for Television most of the respondents find Features most important, while most of the respondents find Quality most important for Refrigerator and Car. The other important attributes are Product variety (especially for TV), Returns and Features.
- 26) While studying the relationship between the importance attached to various product attributes and being loyal to any specific brand of selected Non-durable as well as Durable products following observations are generated:
  - a) It can specifically be observed that there is nothing to choose from respondents who attach importance to Quality in their buying decisions for Non-durables as well as Durables as far as being loyal to any specific brand of Non-durables is concerned, however surprisingly most of the respondents who consider Quality unimportant in buying decisions, are loyal to any specific brand of Non-durables as well as Durables.
  - b) In case of Features for Non-durables it can be seen that irrespective of the importance attached, most of the respondents show loyalty to any specific brand, whereas for Durables, there is not much to choose in importance or otherwise to Features for being loyal to any specific brand.
  - c) In case of Returns for Non-durables it can be seen that except the respondents who consider it somewhat important, most of others who either consider it most important or otherwise are loyal to any specific brand, whereas in case of Durables, except the respondents who consider it least important, most of the others who either take it as most important or otherwise are not loyal to any specific brand.
  - d) In case of Product variety, it can be observed that there is not much to choose between attaching importance or otherwise and being loyal or otherwise to any specific brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
  - e) In case of Design, it can be observed that there is not much to choose between attaching importance or otherwise and being loyal or otherwise to any specific brand of selected Non-durables, whereas irrespective of the importance or otherwise to Design, most of the respondents show no loyalty to any specific brand of selected Durables.
  - f) In case of Brand name, irrespective of the importance or otherwise to it, most of the respondents show no loyalty to any specific brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.

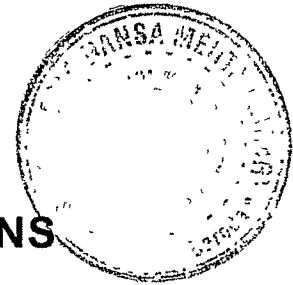
- g) In case of Size, most of the respondents attaching least or no importance to it, are loyal to any specific brand of selected Non-durables, whereas there is not much to choose between importance or otherwise and being loyal to any specific brand of selected Durables
  - h) In case of Colour, there is not much to choose between importance or otherwise and being loyal to any specific brand of selected Non-durables, whereas irrespective of the importance or otherwise to Colour, most of the respondents show no loyalty to any specific brand of selected Durables.
  - i) In case of Others i.e. Retailer's prestige/Store image, Most of the respondents irrespective of the importance or otherwise show loyalty to any specific brand of selected Non-durables, whereas irrespective of the importance or otherwise most of the respondents show loyalty to any specific brand of selected Durables.
  - j) In case of Price and Manufacture's prestige, irrespective of the importance or otherwise, most of the respondents show loyalty to any specific brand of selected Non-durables, whereas there is not much to choose between importance or otherwise to Price in buying decisions and being loyal to any specific brand of selected Durables.
  - k) In case of Packaging, there is not much to choose between importance or otherwise to Packaging in buying decisions and being loyal to any specific brand of selected Non-durables
  - l) In case of Service and Warranty, there is not much to choose between importance or otherwise to it in buying decisions and being loyal to any specific brand of selected Durables.
- 27) While studying the relationship between the importance attached to various product attributes and the reasons for switch over to another brand of selected Non-durable as well as Durable products following observations are generated:
- a) Most of the respondents who find Product variety important or somewhat important in their buying decisions, would switch over to any other brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables for Change or because of Extensive promotion of competing brands, whereas most of the respondents who find Product variety least or not important in their buying decisions would not switch over to any other brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
  - b) In case of Quality, irrespective of the importance or otherwise, most of the respondents would either switch over to any other brand of Non-durables because of Trial/change reasons or Dissatisfaction from the present brand, whereas in case of selected Durables most of the respondents would either switch over because of Change or Dissatisfaction reasons, however respondents who take Quality unimportant, would not switch over at all.
  - c) In case of Design, irrespective of the importance or otherwise, most of the respondents would either switch over to any other brand of Non-durables

because of Trial/ change reasons or would not switch over, whereas in case of Durables, most of the respondents would switch over because of Change reasons

- d) Most of the respondents irrespective of the importance or otherwise given to Price in the buying decisions, would either switch over to other brands of selected Non-durables as well as Durables for Change or Dissatisfaction reasons or would not switch over at all.
- e) Most of the respondents who consider Features most - important, somewhat important or least important would switch over for Change reasons in case of selected Non-durables as well as Durables, however respondents who take Features unimportant, would not switch over at all.
- f) In case of selected Non-durables, most of the respondents who consider Brand name somewhat important or not important would switch over for Trial/change reasons, whereas those who consider it most important would not switch over at all. However irrespective of the importance given to Brand name, in case of selected Durables, most of the respondents would switch over for Change reasons.
- g) In case of Packaging, most of the respondents who find it most, somewhat or least important would switch over for Trial/change reason, however those who find it unimportant would not switch over at all. In case of Service, most of the respondents who find it important in their buying decisions for selected Durables, would either switch over for Change or Dissatisfaction from the present one, whereas those who feel the otherwise, would not switch over largely. In case of Warranty, most of the respondents who find it important in their buying decisions for selected Durables, would either switch over for Change or for other reasons, whereas those who feel otherwise would switch over for Change reasons and better and new models and technology.
- h) Irrespective of the importance or otherwise attached to Size, most of the respondents would switch over to any other brand of selected Non-durable as well as Durable for Trial/Change reasons.
- i) Most of the respondents who find Returns Most important or somewhat important in buying decisions would switch over to any other brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables for Trial/change reasons, whereas those who consider it least or not important at all would not switch over at all.
- j) Largely Irrespective of the importance or otherwise attached to Colour, most of the respondents would switch over to any other brand of selected Non-durable as well as Durable for Trial/ Change reasons.
- k) Most of the respondents who find Manufacturer's prestige most or somewhat important in buying decisions, would switch over to any other brand of selected Non-durables as well as Durables for Trial/Change reasons, whereas those who consider it least or not important would not switch over at all.

- l) Those who find Other attributes like, Store image and/or retailer's prestige most important in buying decisions, would switch over to any other brand of selected Non-durable for Dissatisfaction from the current one, whereas others irrespective of the importance or otherwise would change over for Trial reasons. In case of selected Durables, most of the respondents who consider other attributes most or somewhat important, would switch over for Extensive promotion of the competing brands, whereas those who consider it least or not important at all would switch over for Change reasons largely.
- 28) Largely irrespective of the importance or otherwise given to various product attributes in buying decision for selected Non-durables as well as Durables most of the respondents believe that brand loyalty increases as a result of presence of product attributes of their choice in a brand
- 28) Largely irrespective of the importance or otherwise given to various product attributes in buying decision for selected Non-durables as well as Durables most of the respondents carried a tendency to a cheaper product compromising the other attributes of choice in case of both selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
- 29) Largely irrespective of the importance or otherwise given to various product attributes in buying decision for selected Non-durables as well as Durables most of the respondents carried a tendency to consider the Health aspect during their buying decision for selected Non-durables as well as Durables except for Returns where unlike selected Non-durables most of the respondents who considered Returns somewhat important or unimportant as an attribute while deciding to buy also did not consider the Health aspect for the same.
- 30) While studying the beliefs regarding whether product attributes add value to a brand of products under study, following observations are generated:
- a) Most of the respondents believed that product attributes add Functional value to the brand in case of all the product categories of both selected Non-durables as well as Durables.
  - b) Most of the respondents believed that product attributes do not add Social value to the brand in case of all the product categories of both selected Non-durables as well as Durables, except for Television where respondents did carry a positive belief for the same.
  - c) Most of the respondents believed that product attributes do not add Emotional value to the brand in case of all the product categories of both selected Non-durables as well as Durables, except for Chocolate in Non-durables and Car in Durables where respondents did carry a positive belief for the same.
  - d) Most of the respondents believed that product attributes add Epistemic value to the brand in case of all the product categories of both selected Non-durables as well as Durables except for Chocolate in Non-durables and Car for Durables.

- e) Most of the respondents believed that product attributes add Conditional value to the brand in case the product categories Soap and Toothpaste and Refrigerator in case of selected Non-durables as well as Durables respectively, however most of the respondents carried an opposite belief for the same in case of Chocolate in Non-durables and TV and Car in Durables.
- 31) While studying the attributions of the consumers for the decision attitude and behaviour, following observations are made.
- a) Most of the respondents reckon their decision to buy Soap and Toothpaste and TV and Refrigerator as Cognitive in selected Non-durables and Durables respectively, whereas most of the respondents did not reckon the same for Chocolate in Non-durables and Car in Durables.
  - b) Most of the respondents did not consider their decision to buy Soap and Toothpaste and TV and Refrigerator as Affective in selected Non-durables and Durables respectively, whereas most of the respondents did reckon their decision to buy Chocolate in Non-durables and Car in Durables as Affective.
  - c) Most of the respondents reckon their decision to buy Conative for both selected Non-durables and Durables
- 32) Most of the respondents did not associate their decisions to buy selected Non-durables as well as Durables with any group except Family members.



## CHAPTER – 7

# CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Following are the Conclusions and Suggestions drawn on the basis of analysis and interpretation of the data.

### 7.1 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Because of overall low loyalty for product categories like Soap and Television, it is required on the part of marketers to improve on the same ground to find out the reasons for low loyalty and consequently to improve the same.
2. Giving importance or otherwise to Product attributes like; Product variety, Quality, Design, Price, Features, Brand name, Returns, Colour, Manufacturer's prestige and Retailer's prestige/Store image in buying decisions for selected Non-durables as well Durables does not significantly affect consumers' being loyal to any specific brand of the same.
3. Size is the one product attribute, which is not considered important in buying decisions for selected Non-durables as far as being loyal to any specific brand is concerned.
4. Giving importance or otherwise to Packaging in buying decisions for selected Non-durables and Service and Warranty in buying decisions for selected Durables does not significantly affect consumers' being loyal to any specific brand of the same.
5. Product variety as an attribute is important to marketers extensively promoting their brands because it helps consumers make a better decision by choosing from a variety of the available brands and it simultaneously helps marketers provide a flanker protection to their mainstream brands and reduces the risk of losing the customers to competitors.
6. Providing just a quality product to the customers is not the only key to satisfying and retaining customers any longer, because mostly they would not hesitate to switch over if they are dissatisfied or they get to try something new in Non-durables and something technologically better in Durables. What is more important to consider is not one shot selling especially in case of Durables, where the focus should be to develop long lasting relationship with the customers to retain them and in case of Non-durables on the other hand the focus should be to deliver satisfaction and delight consumers at every encounter through a strong value delivery network.

- 7 Changing product designs and sizes, playing with the prices, features and even colour do generate a lot of consumer interest and help them to decide to switch over to any other brand of Non-durables as well as Durables. However in no case one can clearly say that giving importance to attributes namely, Price, Design and Features make consumers remain loyal to any specific brand and therefore it is suggested that marketers can and should use these attributes for both Non-durables as well as Durables for generating customer awareness, interest and getting a competitive advantage over others who are reluctant to change quickly and consequently fail to offer customers something new and yet better
- 8 Brand name is one such attribute that is not to be played with frequently and carelessly because mostly consumers who take it most important in their buying decisions remain loyal to any specific brand of selected Non-durables at least This is where Durables differ because those who consider brand name most important in their buying decisions may, may not remain loyal to any specific brand, therefore in case of selected Non-durables it is suggested for marketers to strive to create and retain strong brands that customers value, whereas for Durables, more than a strong Manufacturer's image is sufficient to generate and retain trust in a brand.
- 9 Returns derived from the post purchase experience from selected Non-durables as well as Durables do not guarantee customer satisfaction, retention and loyalty any more any easily and therefore marketers should undoubtedly aim for crossing the levels of satisfactions and aim for delighting them at every encounter as suggested already.
10. Developing and maintaining a strong store image through respecting customer time, convenience and cost and a back up of strong value delivery network, is probably the reason for the success of giants like Adani's and perhaps the key for the success of the Retailing industry. It is therefore suggested for the marketers of selected Non-durables to act carefully in selecting the distributors and retailers in terms of the aforesaid customer criteria. On the other hand marketers of the selected Durables can and should use store image and retailer's prestige for getting a competitive advantage over others.
11. Packaging, After sales service and Warranty as product attributes would not help retaining customers for sure in case of selected Non-durables as well as Durables but a reckless attempt at this directions would definitely lead to dissatisfaction and ultimately act as a driving force for switch over to other brand of the same. Some shocking yet interesting responses have been received about for importance of Packaging where respondents have quoted Cadbury incidences for Chocolate. On the other hand in response to the question of reactions in case of dissatisfaction many preferred to resort to warranties, because they think that most durables are not meant to be really durables these days. It is therefore suggested that marketers of selected Non-durables as well as Durables not to take them for granted.



12. Most of the consumers believed that brand loyalty increases as a result of presence of product attributes of their choice in a brand and this belief is largely independent from the importance that they assign to various product attributes in buying decisions for selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is therefore suggested that marketers must devise attempts first of all to find out which product attributes consumers desire in a brand, secondly to get those identified consumer product attributes converted into engineering and then actual product attributes, thirdly to effectively communicate to target audience about possession of these attributes of their choice through Mass media sources, fourthly to make the product available in the market and lastly getting continuous feedback from the consumers that will help track their satisfaction or otherwise and improve upon the same.
13. Most of the consumers did not carry a tendency to buy a cheaper product compromising the other attributes of choice in case of both selected Non-durables as well as Durables and this belief is largely independent from the importance that they assign to various product attributes in buying decisions for selected Non-durables as well as Durables. This clearly indicates that Price no longer remains the sole criterion to motivate customers to switch over. This is in support of the suggestion No. 8. Therefore it is mandatory to use a combination of several attributes clubbed with the price to make an exciting and valuable offer that help prospects switch over to your brand from the one they currently use.
14. Largely irrespective of the importance given to various product attributes, most of the consumers considered the Health aspect in buying decisions for both selected Non-durables as well as Durables. It is therefore suggested to the marketers of selected Non-durables as well as Durables to take competitive advantage by cashing on the health aspect consciousness. It becomes necessary for them to identify as to how can their product be improved to continuously meet the health demand of customers. The word continuously is important here because just as other aspects of human desires like Food and Fashion change, their wants for health and hygiene also would change. For Non-durables for instance the Herbal trend is quite in here to stay and the same is not restricted to India, but has spread throughout the world. For Durables, however the product category Refrigerator may find it directly linked and easy to cash on, for categories like; Television and Car it is a difficult play. In any case just as companies like LG initiated with 'Golden Eye' for eye protection in Television, innovations would help marketers in both these categories to come with better ideas to satisfy the health needs of customers.
15. Across various categories of selected Non-durables and Durables consumers unanimously accept that product attributes add Functional value to the brand/ products. However the same belief does not prevail for most of the product categories in case of Social, Emotional, Epistemic and Conditional values. Adding Functional value and making consumers

realize the same is nothing different from the basic marketing practices. Instead of concentrating on that attempt should be focused on to adding and making consumers realize the other values in the brand/product to gain a competitive advantage. Consumers showed positive belief for Social value in case of Television, Emotional value in case of Chocolate and Car and Conditional value in case of Soap, Toothpaste and Refrigerator. Most of them also accepted that attributes add Epistemic value in products except Chocolate. Following the same findings attempts on the part of marketers for these products should be focused on to not only adding Social, Emotional, Epistemic and Conditional value in a brand/product but also to communicate the same to the target audience using appeals on the same ground in product advertisements.

16. Over and above considering their decisions to buy Conative, most of the consumers also reckoned them as Cognitive except Chocolate and Car, which according to most are Affective. The same beliefs can be utilized for the product categories aforesaid. It is exciting for the marketers to find that consumers buy convenience products like Soap and Toothpaste after a careful consideration of various aspects taking the time they need for the same, whereas a Shopping or Specialty product like Car is bought sometimes only on the basis of feelings, affection and emotions. Nonetheless they can use the consumer psyche to better off their offers and win the market.
17. As most of the consumers associate their buying decisions with their family members, hence it is suggested that marketers should base and if necessary modify their offers in consideration of the reference group Family.
18. Attempts are needed to weaken the post purchase dissonance of consumers in case of Soap and Toothpaste in selected Non-durables and Television and Refrigerator in case of selected Durables, as they believe that the performance of these products matches the claims only to a medium extent and this subsequently affect their next purchase/repeat purchase. This dissonance can prove fatal not only for the particular brand, but also for the company as a whole. For avoiding this attempts are needed to Integrate Product Manufacturing and Quality. Customers have been expressing increasing concerns in issues pertaining to the nature of products they buy: how and where they are made; their durability and technological obsolescence, their safety and suitability for certain consumer classes such as children, the elderly people and the impact of their products on environment in terms of its use and disposal. Another factor to concern these days is related to a product's purpose and intention, that is, whether it has a useful function in society and whether its manufacturer is responsible for any problems it may cause, even if used properly. All these issues should be taken care of in order to achieve the long term well being of the consumers, company and the society as a whole.

19. The overall impact of Mass Media for generating awareness about the presence of product attributes in a brand is very high, but the impact of other sources like; Word-of-mouth communication, Articles published in Magazines, Product literature and Others is not as expected. Therefore the communication budgets should be reviewed and revised and attempts are needed to make customers generate awareness through non-conventional sources like Point-of-Purchase.
20. Consumers largely attach the same degree of importance or otherwise to various product attributes in buying decisions for selected Non-durables as well as Durables. This makes it easy for the marketers who operate in both the Product line to take their marketing decisions based on this ground.
21. Attributes helping consumers in Brand comprehension and Brand recall in case of selected Non-durables do not significantly vary except a few cases from selected Durables. Accordingly it is suggested for marketers to use attributes like; Quality, Price, Features, Brand name (especially for TV) and Packaging especially for Chocolate and Warranty especially for Television for the purpose of enabling consumers Comprehend a brand and to use attributes like, Quality, Features, Brand name (especially for TV) and Service especially for Refrigerator and Car for the purpose of helping consumers Recall a brand. Differentiating Brand from Competitors help companies better make customers comprehend and recall a brand. In addition to classic models of differentiation – such as providing higher quality, lower prices or faster service – many companies are turning to marketplace issues associated with corporate social responsibility. Examples include strategies based on the safety or environmental friendliness of a product itself; transparent pricing or no-pressure sales tactics; fair and nondiscriminatory product pricing and accessibility (e.g. Onida) etc. Another means of differentiation is through the use of Cause related marketing, in which sales of a product or service are linked to company charitable donations or to causes favored by consumers (HLL). Both these can be practiced effectively in case of Non-durables and Durables.

It is followed by the Direction for Further study, Summary of the study, Bibliography and Appendices.