INTRODUCTION

The Indian Retail Industry like any other Industry in India witnessed multifold growth post globalization and liberalization of the Indian Economy. The Retail Industry post opening up of economy showed tremendous growth not only in terms of turnover, number, size, geographical presence but also in formats and product offerings.

The Indian Retail Industry can be broadly viewed in three phases: Pre 1990’s, 1990-2000 and Year 2000 onwards. The Pre 1990’s was the period when Indian consumers were into need based buying with little or no Brand choice as there were few domestic players in a product category. The Period of 1990-2000 witnessed entry of Multinationals in Consumer Durables, Fast moving consumer goods, Apparel, Service and many other sectors. This period in Retail saw Brands flourishing. The Post 2000 era saw new retail formats, International Retailers entering India through various strategic alliances, growth of organized Retailing and activity based buying rather than need based buying from Indian Consumers.

The Indian Apparel Retail, one of the fastest growing sectors of Indian Retail Industry occupied a share of 15% of the total Retail sales for the year 2011. In Apparel, the Pre 1990’s was the period of Tailor made apparels with few Readymade apparel options available to Indian consumers, however it grew in the 1990-2000 and can be called as an era of Readymade apparels with new Brands flourishing during this period. The phase of 2000 onwards brought revolution in the Indian Apparel Industry with the emergence of new Apparel Retail formats, entry of International Apparel Brands and consumers’ awareness towards fashion started growing.
The Growth in Apparel Retail post 2000 was considered as the most significant growth. One of the most important factors which contributed towards this growth was the young Indian Population which is the target customers for the Retailers. These consumers believe in spending, are quality and fashion conscious, do not mind paying extra money but want hassle free and comfortable buying. International travel and Media exposure of the Indian consumers also played important role towards the growth of the Indian Apparel Retail Industry.

While this growth turned out to be in favor to the consumers, as they could choose from wide variety of brands; the retailers, designers and the brands started finding out strong point of differentiation to not only attract customers but also to keep them loyal towards their Brands. This led to the emergence of various concepts in Brands and Labels. A designers’ creation termed as Designer label or a Designer Brand is different from a Retailers’ creation which is termed as Private label or Private Brand. The Manufacturer creating an Apparel Brand is a National Brand or Regional or Local depending on its availability in various or limited geographical location. Some Brands were tagged as International, Luxury or Fashion Brands on the basis of their target customers and price points.

The Private labels, which was created by Retailers to fill gap in product offerings and to provide an economical option to the customers, resulted in huge shopping and buying activity as the customers started getting wide choices under one roof in Multibrand outlets. With the acceptance of Private labels by the Consumers the Retailers started emphasizing on the quality of these labels resulting in National Brand changing its strategy.

With the emergence of different concepts in Apparel Brand and Apparel Label in the present era, it is of academic interest to study in detail about these brands and labels and measure the impact of the two prominent concepts i.e. National Brand and Private Labels in apparel
retail business and on the consumer buying behavior.