

RURAL CONSUMER BEHAVIOR – A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO SHAMPOO SACHETS

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Abstract

Rural markets have great potential today. With increasing rural prosperity, the consumption level of rural people is also on a higher side not only for FMCGs but of other products too. FMCG companies like HLL, Britannia, Colgate Palmolive, ITC, etc. are actively working in rural areas and trying to tap the rural market. This study shall focus on finding the factors related with the purchase of different brands of shampoo. Research findings are based on responses collected from Chaksu Tehsil of Jaipur district with only 120 responses on random and convenience sampling.

Introduction

Consumer behaviour can be defined as the decision-making process and physical activity involved in acquiring, evaluating, using and disposing of goods and services. Consumer behaviour is a complex, dynamic, multidimensional process, and all marketing decisions are based on assumptions about consumer behaviour. It refers to the acts of individuals directly involved in obtaining and using goods and services and includes the decision process, that brings about purchase. Consumer behaviour is not only the study of what people consume but also 'where', 'how often' and 'under what conditions' the product is consumed.

The marketers, therefore, try to understand the needs of different consumers and having understood these different behaviours require an in-depth study of their internal and external environment, in order to formulate their plans for marketing.

Rural markets do have great potential today. With increasing rural prosperity, the consumption level of rural people is also on a higher side. According to Shanthi Kanaan writer for 'The Hindu', rural markets are growing twice as fast as the urban markets (2001). To define rural market, A location is defined as rural

if at least 75 percent of the population is agrarian. Rural population account for 68.84% (Census 2011), 83,30,87,662 persons, of the total population, 1,210,193,422 persons.

FMCG Companies like HLL, Britannia, Colgate Palmolive, ITC, etc. are actively working in rural areas and trying to tap the rural market. According to Francis Kanoi, 2002, FMCG's account for approx. 53% of the overall consumption in rural areas. Cosmetics are endorsed by all people since thousands of years, as products help in beautifying men and women. Shampoo is one of the popular cosmetics. There are various companies marketing shampoo brands. In shampoos, rural demand grew by 10.7% in value terms, while in urban markets, it rose by 6.8%. "Rural demand will continue to beat urban demand in a category like shampoos because penetration levels are low in rural India to start with," says V. Ramesh, ED of Chennai-based Cavinkare, which makes Nyle and Chik shampoos.

Keeping in mind the enormous growth rate in Indian rural markets, this paper tried to study the consumer behavior and decision making pattern of rural people and identified, the sources of information in rural areas with reference to shampoos, the factors

influencing choice and the factors which affect purchase decision for shampoos, as its major objectives. This paper is limited to a selected area and does not prove concrete results for the entire industry or for overall population of the rural areas. At the same time, this paper can serve the base for other similar researches in the relevant field of interest.

METHODOLOGY

120 consumers were selected in Tehsil Chaksu of Jaipur District in Rajasthan, India, using random and convenience method. Sampling includes students, housewives and daily wage workers only.

DATA ANALYSIS

Study is based on certain attributes like rural consumer buying behavior, effectiveness of available channels of communication, their choice of products, product features and the like. Analysis is based on primary information and data collected from different respondents.

Information sources available for product choice and selection

Each consumer was asked personally about information source as to how they came to know about various goods, specifically shampoos. Respondents' answers was in alignment with advertisements shown on television and radio and newspapers as well. Table 1 given below shows the responses.

Table 1 : Information Source For Product Choice

Source	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Television	57	47.5
Radio	24	20
Newspapers	22	18.33
Friends and Family	10	8.33
Others	07	5.84
Total	120	100

Primary Data

Different brands of shampoo visibility on television is highest (47.5%) in the research area. Television advertising has a deep impact on rural consumers' mind. They receive shampoo information and awareness is converted to purchase. Radio and newspaper fall next to television with next highest accessibility. Friends and family also influence rural consumers to purchase and use many brands of shampoo.

Factors influencing choice of shampoo

Consumers in rural areas have preference for good packaging, colour, easy use, product fragrance, etc. Maximum rural consumers give preference to small packets and low value or low price packets of shampoos. Table 2 shows the factors affecting product choice in rural areas.

Table 2 : Factors Which Affect Product Choice

Choice on Factors	Responses	Percentage
Small Packs (Sachets)	30	25
Low Price	42	35
Eye Catching Package	18	15
Product Fragrance	12	10
Quality	12	10
Others	06	5
Total	120	100

Primary Data

Study in the respective area reveals that low price attracts rural consumers a lot (almost 35% responses in the present study). Small packs (sachets) follow low price with 25% of responses, which means small packs also attract rural consumers, next to the feature of low price. 15% of responses preferred attractive packaging and research recorded equal responses for quality and product fragrance. It has observed that rural consumers like small sachets of shampoo with low price affordability as the highest factor.

Brand choice of shampoo

Brand choice and preference is important in product decision. This is the stage where consumer selects the best. Table 3 shows different consumers using shampoo of different brands.

Table 3 : Consumer using different brand of shampoos

Shampoo Brand Name	Responses	Percentage
Chik Shampoo	54	45
Clinic Plus	13	10.83
Sunsilk	5	4.17
Head and Shoulders	5	4.17
Dabur Vatika	12	10
Nyle Shampoo	10	8.33
Nirma Shampoo	21	17.5
Total	120	100

Primary Data

Responses on the brand use by rural consumers depends upon the availability of a type of product in the area of research. Purchase and use of Chik shampoo is recorded highest with 45% of total responses followed by Nirma shampoo with 17.5% of the responses. Clinic plus and Dabur Vatika shampoo ran close to each other prevailing upon the preference of rural consumers with 10.83% and 10% respectively.

Factors affecting purchase decision

Respondents enumerated on factors which influenced their purchase decision. Table 4 shows

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the factors which effect purchase decision for shampoos.

Table 4 : Factors affecting purchase decision

Factors	Response	Percentage
Availability of shampoo	37	30.83
Affordability (Purchasing Power with respect to price of the shampoo)	83	69.17
Total	120	100

Primary Data

Researcher identified only two factors which can lead to purchase decision. There may be other factors also. Affordability with low price is the highest factor which can generate sales for a particular brand of shampoo followed by availability which is almost half than the responses recorded for affordability.

CONCLUSION

Rural market has great potential for selling not only shampoos but other brand of FMCGs too. FMCG companies are targeting untapped rural markets keeping in mind the prosperity and potential of rural markets. In the present study on shampoos it was revealed that television functions as the major source of information in a selected rural area. Chik shampoo stands first with low price, small size, sachet and affordability as the topmost factor in rural areas to boost sales of different brands of shampoos. The study also focused on changing rural behavior with regard to FMCGs depending on availability of the product, low price and small packs.