



A Study of Consumer Awareness Behaviour among Consumers of North Gujarat

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Abstract:

The study focuses mainly on the rural consumer behaviour towards selected Market products with the prevailing trend, it is necessary to focus on the essence and emergence of vibrant rural marketing efforts from the Market products companies. Thus with more number of companies entering into the rural market, with a variety of products, it is a must for the companies to study the rural consumer behaviour, on Market products. This study will highlight the rural consumer behaviour before purchase, at the time of purchase and post- purchase.

Keywords: *Awarness, Behaviour, Consumer, Market, Product, Purchase*

1. Introduction

The liberalization of the Indian economy had far attainment magnitudes, which led to entry of global brands in the Indian markets. Earlier companies focused their marketing efforts towards the urban markets targeting the educated consumer. However with the saturation of markets in the urban sector, many companies focused their attention towards the fast growing rural sector. And also the rural markets in India are still evolving, and the sector poses a variety of challenges. The consumption patterns, tastes and needs of the rural consumers are entirely different from that of urban consumers. While it is evident that urban Indian has adapted much faster than the rural consumer due to higher exposure of media and changing life style, the rural consumers are not far behind (Vidyavathi 2008). Hence the buying behaviour of rural consumers has become a hot topic for discussion because rural India, in recent days, is enthusiastically consuming everything from shampoo to motor cycles and this "rural predilection" is being considered as one of the significant topics of market analysis (Arpita Khare 2010). Rural India constitutes „the heart of India“, generating more than half of the national income. According to Mckinsey Global Institute's Report, " the bird of gold : the rise of India's consumer market"(may 2007), 63 percent of India's population will still live in rural areas in 2025, but rural consumption will nonetheless accelerate from a compounded annual rate of 3.9 percent over the past two decades to 5.1 percent during the next two. Aggregate rural consumption which had increased from Rs. 4,498 bn in 1985 to Rs. 9,688 bn by 2005 is projected to gallop to a figure of Rs. 26,383 bn by 2025 (Arpita Srivastava 2008).

2. Review of related literature

According to Mouly (1977) *Man is the only animal that does not have to begin new in every generation but can take advantage of the knowledge, which has accumulated through centuries.* This fact is of particular important in research which operates as a continuous function of ever closer approximation to the truth. The investigator can be sure that his problem does not exist in a vacuum and that considerable work has already been done on problems, which are directly related to his proposed investigation.

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3. Scope of the Study

Rural markets offer huge untapped potential to the marketers and academicians alike, and the consumer behaviour demonstrated by the inhabitants of rural India differs significantly from their urban counterparts. But surprisingly, not much research has been done in the area of rural consumer behaviour and the marketers usually try to extend urban marketing programmes to these rural areas, which generally do not produce the desired results. An in-depth knowledge of the rural psyche and rural consumer behaviour patterns is one of the perquisites for making a dent in the rural market. In a highly populated country like India there is a potential market. Hence the researcher has chosen Market products consuming in market for the present research. The commodities chosen for the research are shampoo, bathing soap, toothpaste, biscuits and mosquito coil/liquid like Market products. The commodities selected for the research has been done on the basis of products available for hair care, skin care, oral care, food and beverages care and mosquito repellants.

4. Rural Marketing in India

The rural sector, which encompasses about 70 percent of the total population, has an important role to play in the overall development of the country. Rural India is now undergoing a sea change resulting from the multi-pronged activities undertaken for overall development of villages. There is an indication of increasing prosperity in rural India. Prosperity in the rural areas has opened up new opportunities. It leads to certain definite increase in the demand for durable and non-durable goods. Also significant changes have been noticed in the buying and consumption pattern of the rural consumers, imbibing new ideas, attitude and way of life. As a result of the “green revolution,” there is a socio-economic revolution taking place in Indian villages since the last three decades. Increasing knowledge of fertilizers, water resources, pesticides, better quality seeds, modern farm equipments and methods of farming have made the villages far better. The per capita income of the farmers is on the increase and the manner in which they spend their disposable income has also changed. The rural market is not passive. It is vibrant and growing at a faster pace. It will soon outstrip the urban market if this pace of development continues.

The villages have accepted the modern way of agriculture as a business, but have also accepted modern living. The Farmer is choosy in his buying. Apart from food and consumer able items, he is interested in buying small radios, televisions, two wheelers, mostly bicycles and motorcycles, wrist watches, cooking gas and furniture. Socio-economic changes in villages have led villagers to think of material wellbeing. This change in the attitude of the Indian farmer is sweeping across the countryside. The expanding rural market is important to the growth of the economic development of India. With the change in scenario, the marketing focus is also changing towards villages: „go rural“ is the slogan of marketing gurus. Prosperity in rural areas is very much reflected in the buying and consumption habits of rural folks. Their inclination to spend on the modern gadgets has increased as a result of their increase in their purchasing power. This necessitates an appraisal of the rural marketing environment which is an outgrowth of various socio-economic and cultural forces. For evolving an appropriate marketing strategy, understanding the rural environment is quite essential. Recently attempts were made to define the distinct differences between the urban and rural markets on the basis of the various socio-economic factors (Rajendrn Kumar 2004).

5. Rural Consumers in India

Rural consumers are fundamentally different from their urban counterparts socially, psychologically, physiologically and literally. Rural consumers buy only inexpensive products. There is mass consumption among them regarding a particular product or brand since they are homogeneous at the

village or regional level. In rural market, since the women have very little contact with the market, the male makes the purchase decision. The community decision-making is quite common in a rural market because of strong caste and social structures and low literacy levels. Rural consumers generally feel inhibited and ill-equipped to buy confidently, since they have only lesser exposure to the product quality, service support and company credentials. Rural consumers are illiterate as per the census definition, but he is not unintelligent. The brand awareness, preference and loyalty among the rural consumers are comparatively less than their urban counterparts. The degree of brand loyalty varies among the rural consumer according to the nature of products. If the rural consumers are loyal to one brand, it is very difficult to change. Census 2001 reveals that 74 crore people that is about 70% percent of India's total population lives in villages. However, unlike urban population, rural population is scattered across 6,38,365 villages and the rural market, which is spread over the highly heterogeneous in respect of purchasing power, literacy, electrification, sanitation, culture and so on (Selvaraj A. 2007). Rural consumers are influenced by rationality, personal experience and the level of utility that is derived from the consumption, etc. Their buying behaviour is influenced by experience of their own friends, relatives and family members. Above all, quality of the product and its easy availability are the primary and vital determinants of the consumer buying behaviour. The techniques of bombarding product messages have a limited influence. Rural consumers are very much attached to and influenced by touch and feel aspect of any promotional activity (Shivaraj B. 2006).

6. Importance of the Study

The study focuses mainly on the rural consumer behaviour towards selected Market products with the prevailing trend, it is necessary to focus on the essence and emergence of vibrant rural marketing efforts from the Market products companies. Thus with more number of companies entering into the rural market, with a variety of products, it is a must for the companies to study the rural consumer behaviour, on Market products. This study will highlight the rural consumer behaviour before purchase, at the time of purchase and post- purchase.

7. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the consumer awareness among Rural Consumers of North Gujarat.
2. To ascertain the Evaluation of Alternatives and Brand Awareness and Brand Knowledge of Consumers from North Gujarat.
3. To study the Pre Purchase and Post Purchase perception of Rural Consumers.
4. To analyze the factors influencing Post Purchase Behaviour and Brand Loyalty among the Consumers from North Gujarat population.
5. To examine the influence of Demographic Variables on the factors of Need Recognition, Evaluation of Alternative and Post Purchase Behaviour.

8. Area of the Study

Villages are selected for study because of its heterogeneous characterized nature.

9. Research Methodology

This section describes research design, data collection and interview schedule and development efforts used in this study. The sampling plan used for the final study is discussed in detail along with data collection procedures and data analysis procedures used in pretest, pilot test and the final study.

10. Sampling plan and Data Collection

Rural consumers are selected as a suitable setting to test the proposed research model. Mainly the focus is on buying behaviour of consumer towards Market products. The main reasons for selecting this topic are (i) Availability of a higher number of Market products consumers (ii) Availability of a number of consumers –dealers' contacts in the industry. The methodology of the study is based on the primary, as well as secondary data. The study depends mainly on the primary data collected through a well-framed and structured interview schedule, to elicit the well-considered opinions of the

respondents. Proportionate random sampling is adopted to obtain the responses from the rural consumers of selected villages. This study employs both analytical and descriptive type of methodology. The study is conducted in two stages format, with a preliminary pilot study followed by the main study. The secondary data are collected from journals, magazines, publications, reports, books, dailies, periodicals, articles, research papers, websites, company publications, manuals and booklets.

11. Research Instrument Development

Different constructs were needed to test the proposed conceptual model. Multi item, five point Likert's scales were used to measure all the constructs. Enlisting measures of rural consumer behaviours were used for all its elements and were adapted to the context of the study. Measures for final study were finalized using a Consumer Awareness rating Scale Prepared and standardized by the Investigator. All the possible measurement scales for the constructs were collected and studied in detail for their appropriateness to the present study. The scales were assessed, based on the following criteria.

The five constructs demographics of consumer, attributes, factors influencing the purchaser, need recognition, evaluation of alternatives and post purchase behaviour in the proposed model were investigated extensively in the consumers' behaviour research. Mainly consumers' awareness on attributes, attitude and post purchase behaviour using Likert's scale was used as in the previous studies. The interview schedule was based on the initial research model and propositions. Primary data were collected through the interview schedule survey. An interview schedule with five sections was developed and finalized. The first part of the interview schedule comprises demographic factors with optional questions. The second part contains statements about the information search, level of awareness of consumer on different brands of Market Products and their attitudes. Some optional questions are included along with the rating questions and also yes or no questions. The third part consists of statements relating to influence of consumer, the need recognitions, and evaluation of Market Products with ranking type scale. This section also aims at ascertaining factors relating to purchase of Market Products. The fourth part of the interview schedule relates to the opinion of consumers on complete evaluation of alternatives. Some optional questions are included along with the ranking type and Likert's five point scale questions. The fifth and final part of the interview schedule encounters the statements pertaining to the post-purchase behaviour, satisfaction, brand loyalty and attitude towards Market Products with Likert's 5 point scale. All relevant statements are included to derive responses.

12. Scaling technique in the Interview Schedule

The interview schedule of the research consists of both optional type and statements in Likert's 5 point scale. The responses of these sections were obtained from the selected products of market users in Ahmedabad District which range as follows: 5 – Strongly Agree 4 – Agree 3 – Neutral 2 – Disagree 1 – Strongly Disagree 5 – Very High satisfaction 4 – High satisfaction 3 – Moderate satisfaction 2 – Low satisfaction 1 – Very low satisfaction. This allowed for the standardization of results as well as making it easier for respondents to complete the interview schedule. The author and supervisor discussed the Likert's 5 point scale and decided to assign the numerical value three for undecided or neutral. The numerical value 3 is assigned to neutral after referring the several approaches in statistics. Undecided has a connotation that, the statements in the interview schedule do not have proximity to the respondents. But neutral implies that they are well acquainted with the statements in the interview schedule but they want to remain equidistant from the two extremities of agreement and disagreement.

13. Hypotheses

H₀₁ Consumer perceptions on the attributes of selected products of market do not differ significantly.

Ho₂ There is no relationship between brand awareness and brand knowledge of the rural consumer.

Ho₃ The perceptions of the rural consumer on post purchase behaviour do not differ significantly.

Ho₄ Factors of need recognition do not differ significantly. There is no relationship between post purchase behaviour and brand loyalty of the rural consumer.

14. Analysis of Data

The primary data collected from the consumers were analyzed by using Micro-soft Excel Software to obtain the results concerning the objectives of the study. Mean, SD, t-test, One Way Analysis of Variance and Correspondence are applied for analyzing the responses of Market

15. Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to rural villages only. Due to time constraint and cost, the study is restricted to only one District.
2. The study has been conducted based on the responses of the selected respondents of rural area.
3. The study is limited to the 400 responses of consumers in rural area. More responses would have thrown adequate light on the entire study.
4. The period of the study is confined to 2013-2014.

16. Result & Major findings of the study

16.1 Brand wise distribution of sample units to each type of fast moving consumer goods

Brand association, product knowledge and brand recall make them comfortable to materialize their purchase decision dynamically. It leads to the indispensability of brand wise distribution of Fast moving consumer goods with respect to the research domain North Gujarat District.

16.2 Shampoo

It is found that clinic plus occupies 34.2 percent, Head and shoulder 14.7 percent, Chik 9.8 percent, Meera 11.2 percent and Sunsilk 9.2 percent. The other brands are not popularly used by the rural consumers. The above table exhibits that clinic plus, Meera and Head & shoulder are the three brands considered largely by the respondents followed by Chik.

16.3 Biscuits

It is evident from the table 4.6 that Britannia biscuits occupies first place in priority list 39.8 percent followed by Parle 37.8 percent. These two brands are predominantly used by the rural consumers. Of all the brands of Biscuits, Britannia and Sun feast are the two brands mostly preferred by the sample unit of the study.

16.4 Bathing Soap

It is inferred that 38 percent of the respondents use Hamam, 13.8 percent use cinthol, 12.2 percent use lux and 11.5 percent use lifebuoy soap. The other brands are in similar place with meager differences in their distribution. Medimix 8.8 percent, Margo 6.5 percent and Mysore sandal 5.8 percent. The above figures clearly show that Hamam is the most popular brand in rural areas of North Gujarat District.

16.5 Toothpaste

Oral care products market in India is constrained both in terms of penetration and rate of consumption. It is observed from the table 4.1 that most of the respondents prefer Colgate 52.8 percent followed by Pepsodent 19 percent and close-up 8.7 percent. More than 50 percent of the respondents use Colgate brand that shows its familiarity in rural areas.

16.6 Mosquito Repellent

Mean score on Consumer awareness of different component of personality of College of north Gujarat.”

16.7 Hypothesis related to Gender for Consumer Awareness

1. Mean score of male students of enrolled in College are significantly higher than the mean score of Female students of enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.
2. Mean score of rural male students of enrolled in College are significantly higher than the mean score of rural Female students of enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.
3. Mean score of urban male students of enrolled in College are not significantly higher than the mean score of urban Female students of enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.

16.8 Hypothesis related to Habitat wise Sample for Consumer Awareness

16.8.1 Hypothesis related to Habitat for Consumer awareness

1. Mean score of rural students of enrolled in College are not significantly higher than the mean score of urban students of enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.
2. Mean score of male rural students enrolled in College are not significantly higher than the mean score of male urban students enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.
3. Mean score of Female rural students of enrolled in College are not significantly higher than the mean score of Female urban students of enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.
4. Mean score of urban enrolled in Post-Graduation are not significantly higher than the mean score of rural enrolled in Post-Graduation on Consumer awareness.

16.9 Hypothesis related to enrolled in college for Consumer awareness

Mean score of male students of Post-Graduate are significantly higher than the mean score of male students of enrolled in Graduate on Consumer awareness.

Mean score of Female students enrolled in PG are not significantly higher than the mean score of Female students enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.

Mean score of urban students of enrolled in PG are not significantly higher than the mean score of urban students of enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.

Mean score of rural students of enrolled in PG are not significantly higher than the mean score of rural students of enrolled in College on Consumer awareness.

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