RM60-03-016

Awareness and Consumption Pattern of Rural Consumers towards Home and Personal Care Products

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Introduction

In recent years, consumer India is at such a point where there is a multiplicative effect in income growth, aspirations and changed consumption pattern across the income level segments (Bijapurkar, 2000). Therefore, the buying behaviour of rural consumers has acquired significant attention of the corporate biggies as they have started consuming everything from shampoo to motor cycles (Pani, 2000). The size of rural market is bigger than the urban for both FMCG and durables as it accounts 53 and 59 percent of the market share respectively (Kashyap, 2003). The recent thrust of marketers into rural market is triggered by the saturated urban market and the huge rural potential which is reflected in growing demand, has created uproar in this market (Kumar and Bishnoi, 2007). The rural India has been witnessing a sea change in all sphere of life, be it enhance standard of living or adoption of new lifestyle.

The entire credit goes to the revolution in technology and media as the private satellite channels have brought the world to the courtyards of many village houses (Sakkthivel and Mishra, 2005).

The concept of rural market in India is still evolving and poses numerous challenges like understanding rural consumers, reaching products and services to remote locations, and communicating with heterogeneous rural audience (Kashyap, 2003). The unique consumption pattern, tastes, different rural geographies and vast sub-cultural differences display numerous heterogeneity, calling for better understanding and pin-pointed strategies.

Literature review

Sayulu and Ramana Reddy (1996) suggest that the rural market offers a very promising future. But this market has certain characteristics that hinder marketers from exploiting the opportunities. These include low literacy level, ignorance of right consumers, indifference to quality standards and lack of cooperative spirit. Ramana Rao (1997) observes that the boom in rural areas is caused by such factors as increased discretionary income, rural development schemes, improved infrastructure, increased awareness, expanding private TV channel coverage and emphasis on rural market by companies.

Sakkthivel (2006) has gauged that companies intended to attract the rural consumers ought to very courteous in their approach and should try to develop the personal rapport by offering better products and supportive services. Once this is done, they don't have to worry about promotion as word of mouth will take care of it. The rural consumers will act as brand ambassadors. The study further observes that survival of brands in rural markets would purely be based on their performance. Mahapatra (2006) claims that once the marketer creates a positive attitude for the brand/ service, then it is very difficult to deviate the rural consumers. They not only seek comfort in their brand but also from the person who is selling them the brand. The study also describes that the growing literacy rate and the high penetration of conventional media has changed the perception of rural consumers. The television has been found the biggest source of information followed by the radio and their friend circle also plays a vital role in this regard. Kumar & Madhavi (2006) brings out that rural consumers are quality conscious but with reasonable price offers. People understand the local dialect and prefer to be informed in their local language and dialect. Therefore it can be useful for promotion of brands in rural markets by major players (Patel & Prasad, 2005).

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Research objectives

The main objective of this research is to make a study of rural consumers' behaviour towards select Home and Personal care products. To achieve the main objective, the following sub objectives of the study have been designed:

1. To know the brand consumption pattern of ruralites.
2. To study the brand awareness of rural consumers.
3. To find out the motives behind the purchase and the factors affecting purchase decision.
4. To identify the sources of information.
5. To measure an association between demographic variables and brand choice.

Research Methodology

The present research being exploratory-cum-descriptive in nature mainly depends upon primary sources of information, which have been collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. The study has been conducted in all four administrative divisions of Haryana as divided by Government of Haryana. Two districts from each division have been selected at random and further two villages have been chosen randomly from each of the district and from each village 5-10% of households have been surveyed. In the entire survey, 16 villages have been covered from 8 districts of 4 administrative divisions. A total of 500 questionnaires were administered among the respondents. Out of these collected questionnaires, 415 questionnaires were considered fit for analysis. The results have been obtained primarily with the help of frequency and percentage techniques. The chi-square test has also been applied to observe the association between certain demographic factors and other variables under study.

Results and discussions
Brand Awareness and Usage

In case of detergents, it has been found that respondents have high awareness level with regard to Nirma, Ariel, Wheel, Tide, Fena and Rin. It shows that they are fully aware of leading national brands but when it comes to use, Nirma is far ahead than other brands (tableI). In washing soaps, respondents are adequately aware about the leading brands but as far as usage is concerned, locally made Nirol has been found as the sole leader in this market. It is pertinent to mention here that various local brands of Nirol are available in the market and also being sold in loose form. The few respondents have also been found using some leading national brands like Rin, Nirma and Rin Surf Excel (table II).

Table I: Awareness and usage regarding detergent brands

Detergents	Awareness		Usage	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Ariel	310	74.7	17	4.1
Nirma	334	80.5	227	54.7
Wheel	257	61.9	36	8.7
Rin	222	53.5	37	8.9
Surf Excel	107	25.9	50	12.0
Tide	251	60.5	14	3.4
Fena	225	54.2	0	0
Mr. White	49	11.8	0	0
Henko	61	14.7	0	0
Ghari	181	43.6	0	0
Any other	--	--	12	2.9
Non users	--	--	22	5.3
Total	--	--	415	100

Source: Primary data
Frequencies regarding awareness are more than the actual because of multiple responses.

Table II: Awareness and usage regarding washing soap brands

Washing Soaps	Awareness		Usage	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Nirma	300	72.3	36	8.7
Rin	320	77.1	48	11.6
Wheel	281	67.7	8	1.9
Henko	78	18.8	13	3.1
Rin Surf Excel	172	41.4	42	10.1
Tide	200	48.2	8	1.9
Ariel	229	55.2	0	0
Fena	242	58.3	0	0
Nirol	--	--	256	61.7
Any other	04	1.0	4	1.0
Total	--	--	415	100.0

Source: Primary data
Frequencies regarding awareness are more than the actual because of multiple responses.

It can be gauged from the table III that respondents posses high awareness regarding Lux, Lifebuoy, Dettol, Hamam and Nirma and it is moderate in case of Breeze, Pears and Rexona as far as bathing soaps are concerned. But regarding usage, Lux is the most peferred brand followed by Lifebuoy.

Table III: Awareness and usage regarding bathing soap brands

Bathing Soaps	Awareness		Usage	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lux	343	82.7	237	57.1
Lifebuoy	335	80.7	103	24.8
Cinthol	161	38.8	17	4.1
Dettol	279	67.2	26	6.3
Breeze	115	27.7	8	1.9
Nirma	189	45.5	4	1.0
Godrej No. 1	92	22.2	8	1.9
Medimix	29	6.9	4	1.0
Hamam	221	53.3	0	0
Pears	87	20.9	0	0
Rexona	69	16.6	0	0
Dove	25	6.0	0	0
Santoor	48	11.6	0	0
Pamolive	9	2.2	0	0
Neem	25	6.0	0	0
Any other	--	--	--	--
Non users	--	--	8	1.9
Total	--	--	415	100.0

Source: Primary data
Frequencies regarding awareness are more than the actual because of multiple responses.

In toothpaste, consumers are much aware about almost all the leading brands available in the market but in case of use, Colgate has been found as the front runner followed by Pepsodent and Close-up(table IV). The other national brands are still struggling to convert themselves into the sales. Clinic Plus, Sunsilk, Pentene, Clinic All Clear, Chik and Head & Shoulder are able to make a dent in the mind of rural consumers so far as awareness level of the shampoo brands are concerned but when usage part comes, it is the Clinic Plus which has been found as the most preferred brand (table V). The other well known brands in this product are also absorbed by the consumers but in meager number. In case of hair oil, respondents have significant awareness about almost all the leading national brands but the Dabur Amla is consumed most by the rural consumers followed by the mustard oil which is locally made and is available with many brand names. Parachute, Keo Karpin and Vatika are the other brands which are also consumed by the few respondents (table VI).

Table IV: Awareness and usage regarding toothpaste brands

Toothpastes	Awareness		Usage	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Pepsodent	371	89.4	95	22.9
Neem	160	38.6	8	1.9
Colgate	317	76.4	181	43.6
Close up	299	72.0	51	12.3
Dabur lal	201	48.4	30	7.2
Anchor	139	33.5	30	7.2
Babool	204	49.1	16	3.9
Aquafresh	81	19.5	0	0
Miswak	165	39.8	0	0
Vicco	12	2.9	0	0
Any other	--	--	0	0
Non users	--	--	4	1.0
Total			415	100.0

Source: Primary data
Frequencies regarding awareness are more than the actual because of multiple responses.

Table V: Awareness and usage regarding shampoo brands

Shampoos	Awareness		Usage	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Pentene	246	59.3	4	1.0
Clinic Plus	319	76.9	247	59.5
Sunsilk	309	74.5	45	10.8
Ayur	142	34.2	18	4.3
Clinic All Clear	223	53.7	13	3.1
Head & Shoulder	169	40.7	16	3.9
Chik	186	44.8	12	2.9
Garnier Frutics	59	14.2	20	4.8
Ayush	48	11.6	4	1.0
Lure	09	2.2	0	0
Shikakai	48	11.6	0	0
Halo	73	17.6	0	0
Non users	--	--	36	8.7
Total	--	--	415	100.0

Source: Primary data
Frequencies regarding awareness are more than the actual because of multiple responses.

Table VI: Awareness and usage regarding hair oil brands

Hair Oil	Awareness		Usage	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Vatika	313	75.4	20	4.8
Dabur Amla	322	77.6	149	35.9
Almond Drops	143	34.5	13	3.1
Clinic All Clear	268	64.6	20	4.8
Navratan	284	68.4	14	3.4
Parachute	247	59.5	47	11.3
Keo Karpin	146	35.2	33	8.0

Hair & Care	134	32.3	9	2.2
Mustard Oil	--	--	106	25.5
Any other	32	7.7	4	1.0
Total	--	--	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Frequencies regarding awareness are more than the actual because of multiple responses.

Motives behind Use of Products

It can be traced from table VII that the utilitarian aspect of detergent i.e. removal of stains has been found the most dominating reason for its purchase. The few respondents bought it for its fragrance value. The consumers buy washing soap due to its primary function for cleanliness and few respondents buy it for its fragrance (table VIII).

Table VII: Motives for using detergent

Motive	Frequency	Percentage
Fragrance	73	17.6
Remove stains	316	76.1
Washing machine friendly	4	1.0
Non users	22	5.3
Any other	0	0
Total	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table VIII: Motives for using washing soap

Motive	Frequency	Percentage
Fragrance	50	12.0
Cleanliness	365	88.0
Skin friendly	0	0
Any other	0	0
Total	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table IX gauges that the skincare and fragrance have been found as the prime reasons for using bathing soaps. However meager number of respondents have mentioned that they use it for medicinal purpose or to enhance beauty. Table X highlights that the cleanliness followed by freshness have been found as the primary motives for the purchase of toothpaste. Some of the respondents also purchase it for the purpose of protection from germs and whiteness value. Cleanliness has been found as the primary motive behind the purchase of shampoos. The very few respondents also buy it for removal of dandruff or hair conditioning (table XI). Table XII gauges into the reason for buying hair oil and it is found that the respondents have been buying it for hair care and good looks.

Table IX: Motives for using bathing soap

Motive	Frequency	Percentage
Fragrance	180	43.4
Skincare	197	47.5
Medicinal Use	14	3.4
Enhance beauty	12	2.9
Any other	4	1.0
Non users	8	1.9
Total	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Period of using the brands

The table XIII gives a perception of rural consumers sticking to a particular brand once they are satisfied. It can be observed that majority of respondents have been buying their preferred brands for more than a year. The buying pattern of ruralites reflects their brand loyalty because in such category of products, the consumers can switch to other brands easily.

Table X: Motives for using toothpaste

Motive	Frequency	Percentage
Cleanliness	204	49.2
Freshness	103	24.8
Check germs	48	11.6
Whiteness	48	11.6
Bad Breath	4	1.0
Taste	4	1.0
Non users	4	1.0
Total	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table XI: Motives for using shampoo

Motive	Frequency	Percentage
Cleanliness	282	68.0
Remove Dandruff	59	14.2
Medicinal use	4	1.0
Hair conditioning	34	8.2
Non users	36	8.7
Total	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table XII: Motives for using hair oil

Motive	Frequency	Percentage
Hair care	259	62.4
Good look	137	33.0
Fragrance	10	2.4
Medicinal use	5	1.2
Any other	4	1.0
Total	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table XIII: Time period of using the same brand

Product	6 months	6-12 months	More than a year
Detergent	35(8.4)	30(7.2)	328(79)
Washing Soap	60(14.5)	20(4.8)	335(80.7)
Bathing Soap	55(13.2)	25(6.0)	327(78.8)
Toothpaste	35(8.4)	30(7.2)	342(82.4)
Hair Oil	47(11.3)	25(6.0)	343(82.6)
Shampoo	56(13.5)	45(10.8)	278(67.0)

Source: Primary data
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

Household expenditure on home and personal care products

Table XIV exhibits that majority of respondents spend more than Rs.400 on such products and almost equal number of respondents spend in between Rs.200 to Rs.400 whereas meager number of respondents have been found spending less than Rs.200.

Table XIV: Monthly expenditure on home and personal care items

Amount	Frequency	Percentage
0-200	36	8.7
201-400	186	44.8
above 400	193	46.5
Total	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Factors affecting purchase decision

Table XV discusses the factors influencing the purchase decision of the respondents. It can be well observed from the table that quality has been the major factor behind the purchase of these items whereas advertisement and retailer's influence also play a vital role in deciding about a particular brand. A small number of respondents also give weight to the lower prices when it comes to purchase. Any other factors like hoarding and mobile van etc. do not have any significant effect on the consumers.

Table XV: Factors affecting purchase decision

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Advertisement	80	19.3
Low Prices	63	15.2
Good Quality	165	39.8
Friends & Relatives	24	5.8
Retailer's Influence	70	16.9
Any other	13	3.1
Total	415	100.0

Source: Primary data

Sources of information for brands

As far as sources of information are concerned, television is far ahead than the other sources. Newspaper also play a significant role in imparting information to consumers probably due to their local edition. Retailers, radio and relatives are the other sources of information for the rural consumers (table XVI).

Table XVI: Sources of Information

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Television	367	88.4
Radio	47	11.3
Retailer	80	19.3
Newspaper	144	34.7
Hoarding	25	6.0
Relatives	40	9.6
Magazines	4	1
Any other	20	4.8

Source: Primary data

Frequencies are more than the actual because of multiple responses.

Association of demographic variables and brand usage

It can be observed from the table XVII that Nirma is the sole leader in all the income categories in comparison to the other brands of detergents. But in case of sophisticated brands like Surf Excel, Ariel and Tide, the usage increases as the income level increases. This association is also reflected from the value of chi-square as well. When it comes to the association between education level and brand consumption of detergents(table XVIII), Nirma is the only brand which is consumed by the all illiterate respondents. However, as the education level of respondents increases, the trend is downward in case of Nirma whereas Wheel, Rin and Surf Excel show an increasing trend.

Table XVII: Chi square analysis of income and detergents' brand consumption

Detergent / Monthly Income	Nirma	Wheel	Rin	Rin Surf Excel	Any other	Total
below 5000	32(57.1)	12(21.4)	4(7.1)	4(7.1)	4(7.1)	**56(100.0)**
5001-10000	133(76.0)	4(2.3)	4(2.3)	21(12.0)	13(7.4)	**175(100.0)**
10001-15000	29(27.6)	12(11.4)	21(20.0)	25(23.8)	18(17.1)	**105(100.0)**
above 15000	33(57.9)	8(14.0)	8(14.0)	0(0)	8(14.0)	**57(10.0)**
Total	**227(57.8)**	**36(9.2)**	**37(9.4)**	**50(12.7)**	**43(10.9)**	**393(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 96.179, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage
*Any other also includes Ariel & Tide

Table XVIII: Education level wise detergents' brand consumption

Detergent / Education level	Nirma	Wheel	Rin	Rin Surf Excel	Any other	Total
Illiterate	37(100.0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	**37(100.0)**
Upto 12th	156(59.1)	20(7.6)	12(4.5)	33(12.5)	43(16.3)	**264(100.0)**
Graduate/P.G.	34(37.0)	16(17.4)	25(27.2)	17(18.5)	0(.0)	**92(100.0)**
Total	**227(57.8)**	**36(9.2)**	**37(9.4)**	**50(12.7)**	**43(10.9)**	**393(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

The table XIX discloses that Nirol(a local brand) is the most utilized washing soap brand among all income categories. However, the figures reflect the decreasing trend with the increasing income level. But it is vice-versa in case of Rin. This fact is also revealed by chi-square value. By seeing the pattern of washing soap brands as per the education level of the respondents(table XX), Nirol is being used by the majority of illiterate respondents and its use is decreasing with the increasing education level. But, Nirma and Rin are on increasing side as the education level increases. Hence, the figures reveal that as the education level of respondents goes up, they tend to use more sophisticated national brands.

Table XIX: Income wise washing soaps' brand consumption

Washing Soap / Monthly Income	Nirma	Rin	Nirol	Any other	Total
below 5000	8(11.6)	8(11.6)	45(65.2)	8(11.6)	**69(100.0)**
5001-10000	16(9.1)	12(6.9)	121(69.1)	26(14.9)	**175(100.0)**
10001-15000	8(7.0)	15(13.2)	58(50.9)	33(28.9)	**114(100.0)**

above 15000	4(7.0)	13(22.0)	32(56.1)	8(14.0)	**57(100.0)**
Total	**36(8.7)**	**48(11.6)**	**269(61.7)**	**75(18.1)**	**415(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 25.833, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage
*Any other also includes Wheel, Tide, Henko and Rin Surf Excel.

Table XX: Education level wise washing soaps' brand consumption

Washing Soap / Education level	Nirma	Rin	Nirol	Any other	Total
Illiterate	4(10.8)	9(24.3)	24(64.9)	0(0)	**37(100.0)**
Upto 12th	20(7.2)	21(7.6)	181(65.3)	55(19.9)	**277(100.0)**
Graduate/P.G	12(11.9)	18(17.8)	51(50.5)	20(19.8)	**101(100.0)**
Total	**36(8.7)**	**48(11.6)**	**256(61.7)**	**75(18.1)**	**415(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 24.547, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

The table XXI reveals the fact that Lux is the most consumed bathing soap irrespective of different income categories however it also discloses that the consumers seek more variety as the income level goes up. Chi-square value also shows a significant association between income level and bathing soaps brand usage. As per table XXII again Lux is the leading brand in all education categories of respondents with a decreasing trend with the increasing education level whereas consumption of Dettol and other brand increases with the increasing education level. So education has a positive association with brand choice. Lower age groups are more variety seeking whereas with the increase in age, the respondents stick to the two leading brands i.e. Lux and Lifebuoy(table XXIII).

Table XXI: Income wise bathing soaps' brand consumption

Bathing Soap / Monthly Income	Lux	Lifebuoy	Dettol	Any other	Total
below 5000	41(63.1)	16(24.6)	0(0)	8(12.3)	**65(100.0)**
5001-10000	96(56.1)	59(34.5)	8(4.7)	8(4.7)	**171(100.0)**
10001-15000	55(48.2)	24(21.1)	18(15.8)	17(14.9)	**114(100.0)**
above 15000	45(78.9)	4(7.0)	0(0)	8(14.0)	**57(100.0)**
Total	**237(58.2)**	**103(25.3)**	**26(6.4)**	**24(5.9)**	**407(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 53.769, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage
*Any other also includes Nirma, Breeze, Godrej , Medimix & Cinthol.

Table XXII: Education level wise bathing soaps' brand consumption

Bathing Soap / Education level	Lux	Lifebuoy	Dettol	Any other	Total
Illiterate	33(100.0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	**33(100.0)**
Upto 12th	160(58.6)	83(30.4)	14(5.1)	16(5.9)	**273(100.0)**
Graduate/P.G.	44(43.6)	20(19.8)	12(11.9)	25(24.8)	**101(100.0)**
Total	**237(58.2)**	**103(25.3)**	**26(6.4)**	**41(10.1)**	**407(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

The table XXIV gauges about the association between income level of the respondents and their brand consumption with regard to toothpaste. It reveals that Colgate is the most preferred brand among low and middle income categories but in the income category of above Rs.15000, it is the Pepsodent which leads. Close up is also used by a significant number of respondents in the middle income categories. When we look at the table XXV to see the association between age and toothpaste brand consumption, it can be found that Colgate is preferred by every age category but it is on much higher side in the case of aged people(50 and above) whereas the young respondents are more variety seeking as they use different brands. These associations are also highlighted by chi-square values.

Table XXIII: Age wise bathing soaps' brand consumption

Bathing soap / Age	Lux	Lifebuoy	Dettol	Any other	Total
15-25	61(53.0)	29(25.2)	8(7.0)	17(14.8)	**115(100.0)**
26-35	124(63.3)	46(23.5)	14(7.1)	12(6.1)	**196(100.0)**
36-50	48(63.2)	12(15.8)	4(5.3)	12(15.8)	**76(100.0)**
above 50	4(20.0)	16(80.0)	0(0)	0(0)	**20(100.0)**
Total	**237(58.2)**	**103(25.3)**	**26(6.4)**	**41(10.1)**	**407(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 45.053, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

Table XXIV: Income wise toothpastes' brand consumption

Toothpaste / Monthly Income	Pepsodent	Colgate	Close up	Any other	Total
below 5000	8(12.3)	28(43.1)	4(6.2)	25(38.5)	**65(100.0)**
5001-10000	33(18.9)	87(49.7)	38(21.7)	17(9.7)	**175(100.0)**
10001-15000	17(14.9)	54(47.4)	9(7.9)	34(29.8)	**114(100.0)**
above 15000	37(64.9)	12(21.1)	0(0)	8(14.0)	**57(100.0)**
Total	**95(23.1)**	**181(44.0)**	**51(12.4)**	**84(20.4)**	**411(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 108.919, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage
*Any other also includes Neem , Babool, Dabur Lal & Anchor.

Table XXV: Age wise toothpastes' brand consumption

Toothpaste / Age	Pepsodent	Colgate	Close up	Any other	Total
15-25	27(23.5)	33(28.7)	17(14.8)	38(33.0)	**115(100.0)**
26-35	48(24.0)	96(48.0)	30(15.0)	26(13.0)	**200(100.0)**
36-50	16(21.1)	36(47.4)	4(5.3)	20(26.3)	**76(100.0)**
above 50	4(20.0)	16(80.0)	0(0)	0(0)	**20(100.0)**
Total	**95(23.1)**	**181(44.0)**	**51(12.4)**	**84(20.4)**	**411(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 40.163, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

Tables XXVI exhibits the association between education level of respondents and brand usage of shampoo. It is highlighted that Clinic Plus is the only brand used by each and every illiterate respondent. It shows a declining trend as the education level goes up but there is a reverse trend in case of Sunsilk and Garnier frutics etc. As far as association with gender is concerned(table XXVII), Clinic Plus is the choice of both the genders, however, it is little bit higher in case of males. But the brands like Ayur, Sunsilk and Garnier frutics are consumed dominantly by female whereas Head & Shoulder is solely used by males.

In case of hair oil(table XXVIII), it is the Dabur Amla followed by mustard oil which are most consumed brands among all age groups. But a significant number of respondents belonging to the age category of 15 to 25 years also use Parachute. The table reflects clearly that old age people are stick to two brands(Dabur Amla and locally produced mustard oil) only whereas the youth also go for experiencing newer and latest brands of the hair oil. Although Dabur Amla and local brands of mustard oil are being used heavily by both the genders(table XXIX), but Parachute is also used by a considerable number of female respondents, this association is also conformed by chi-square values.

Table XXVI: Education level wise shampoos' brand consumption

Shampoo / Edu.level	Ayur	Clinic Plus	Sunsilk	Head & Shoulder	Garnier Frutics	Any other	Total
Illiterate	0(0)	33(100.0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	**33(100.0)**
Upto 12th	18(7.3)	167(68.2)	28(11.4)	0(0)	16(6.5)	16(6.5)	**245(100.0)**
Graduate/P.G.	0(0)	47(46.5)	17(16.8)	16(15.8)	4(4.0)	17(16.8)	**101(100.0)**
Total	**18(4.7)**	**247(65.2)**	**45(11.9)**	**16(4.2)**	**20(5.3)**	**33(8.7)**	**379(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage
*Any other also includes Pentene, Clinic All Clear, Chik & Ayush

Table XXVII: ender wise shampoos' brand consumption

Shampoo / Gender	Ayur	Clinic Plus	Sunsilk	Head & Shoulder	Garnier Frutics	Any other	Total
Male	9(3.5)	172(67.7)	28(11.0)	16(6.3)	4(1.6)	25(9.8)	**254(100.0)**
Female	9(7.2)	75(60.0)	17(13.6)	0(0)	16(12.8)	8(6.4)	**125(100.0)**
Total	**18(4.7)**	**247(65.2)**	**45(1.9)**	**16(4.2)**	**20(5.3)**	**33(8.7)**	**379(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

Table XXVIII: Age wise hair oils' brand consumption

Hair oil / Age	Dabur Amla	Parachute	Mustard oil	Any other	Total
15-25	39(33.9)	30(26.1)	21(18.3)	25(21.7)	**115(100.0)**
26-35	62(31.0)	9(4.5)	65(32.5)	64(32.0)	**200(100.0)**
36-50	32(42.1)	4(5.3)	16(21.1)	24(31.6)	**76(100.0)**
above 50	16(66.7)	4(16.7)	4(16.7)	0(0)	**24(100.0)**
Total	**149(35.9)**	**47(11.3)**	**106(25.5)**	**113(27.2)**	**415(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 59.556, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage
*Any other also includes Almond Drops, Navratan ,Hair & Care, Vatika, Clinic All Clear and Keo Karpin

Table XXIX: Gender wise hair oils' brand consumption

Hair Oil / Gender	Dabur Amla	Parachute	Mustard oil	Any other	Total
Male	116(40.0)	12(4.1)	86(29.7)	76(26.2)	**290(00.0)**
Female	33(26.4)	35(28.0)	20(16.0)	37(29.6)	**125(100.0)**
Total	**149(35.9)**	**47(11.3)**	**106(25.5)**	**113(27.2)**	**415(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Chi-square value 55.162, significant at 5% level
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

Association between income level and expenditure

The table XXX displays about the association of income level and expenditure on the items under study. The table clearly reveals that in lower income category, majority of respondents spend upto Rs.200 whereas almost equal number of respondents spend Rs.201 to Rs.400 and more than Rs.400 on these items. In lower middle income category, more than half of the respondents spend between Rs.201 to Rs.400 and a considerable number of respondents make expenditure more than Rs.400. The table further highlights that majority of respondents of high middle income category spend more than Rs.400 to obtain these products. In high income class, most of the consumers get their choice of products by spending more than Rs.400 a month. In nutshell, we can conclude that as the income level increases, the expenditure on these items also increases.

Table XXX: Income wise total expenditure on home and personal care items

Expenditure / Income level	0-200	201-400	Above 400	Total
below 5000	28(40.6)	20(29.0)	21(30.4)	**69(100.0)**
5001-10000	8(4.6)	97(55.4)	70(40.0)	**175(100.0)**
10001-15000	0(0)	44(38.6)	70(61.4)	**114(100.0)**
above 15000	0(0)	25(43.9)	32(56.1)	**57(100.0)**
Total	**36(8.7)**	**186(44.8)**	**193(46.5)**	**415(100.0)**

Source: Primary data
Figures in parenthesis denote percentage

Findings

The overall analysis of brand usage and its association with the certain demographic variables, motives behind the purchase, the factors affecting purchase decision of the ruralites and sources of information regarding major home and personal care products have helped in reaching certain conclusions. The following are the main findings thereof:

- In the rural Haryana, consumers have been found using the leading national brands in case of detergents and the Nirma is leading by the front amongst these brands. But in case of washing soaps, the trend has been different as the locally produced soaps named Nirol has been the front runner. As far as bathing soaps are concerned, Lux and Lifebuoy dominate the rural market of Haryana. The similar kind of trend is also true in case of toothpaste where leading national brands like Colgate and Pepsodent have been found as the leader and Clinic Plus has been the most consumed brand in case of shampoo. Dabur Amla and local brands of mustard oil are predominately used by the rural consumers in case of hair oil.
- When it comes to the brand awareness level of the rural consumers, it has been found that they are fully aware of the leading brands in case of bathing soaps, toothpaste and detergent but it is moderate regarding few brands of shampoo, hair oil and washing soaps.

- It is traced from the study that primarily consumers buy these products for their prime utilitarian value than the peripheral aspects.
- It is also revealed that rural consumers stick to a particular brand once they are satisfied as they are using these brands for more than an year. It reflects their brand loyalty because in such product categories, the consumers can change frequently unlike the durables.
- It has also been found from the study that there is a clear association between income level and expenditure pattern regarding these products.
- The television has been the primary source of information besides newspapers. They also seek information from their relatives and the concerned retailers. The study revealed that the rural consumers are very much quality conscious and consider the advertisement and retailer's advice while deciding about purchasing a particular brand. They are also little cautious about the prices as well.
- The study highlights some very interesting aspects that whatever is the leading brand in all the products, that remains leading irrespective of any demographic variables be it income, education, age or gender. But with the increasing income and education level, the consumers were found using other sophisticated brands in that product category. The younger rural consumers have been found more variety seeking whereas the old aged consumers are stick to two or three brands.

Policy implications

It is apparent from the study that once the rural consumers convinced regarding the utility of the product for current use, there are every likely chances of ruralites going for it. Therefore, marketers desirous of tapping rural market must first study the consumers' requirement related to the utilitarian aspect that they attach to the products and then design the product accordingly. Ruralites in Haryana are conscious about the quality of the products, this underlines a very important fact for the marketers that they must consistently try to build upon the perceived image about the quality of the product along with maintaining the quality. As the main source of information are television and newspaper, it is suggested to the marketers that reaching rural consumer is not a difficult task but strategy needs to be properly designed based on the kind of media and programmes they are exposed to.

Conclusion

The study conducted on the awareness and consumption pattern of rural consumers towards home and personal care products. This study on the one hand has broken many old beliefs regarding rural market whereas it upheld many others. Contrary to the belief that only rich and well educated consumers utilize the top national brands but even low income level consumers were found to be absorbing such brands. Similarly the consumers have been found well exposed to the different media primarily to the television and newspapers. The younger rural consumers have been found more variety seeking in comparison to their old aged counterparts. Once satisfied, they become loyal to the brand. The rural consumer can be convinced on the utilitarian value of the product. In nutshell, the study can be concluded by saying that though rural market is full of complexities yet accessible if tapped through well conceived and properly designed marketing programmes which is a bigger challenge but equally rewarding.

Future research direction

This is an effort to study the awareness and consumption pattern of rural consumers towards select products in the category of home and personal care. It is a broader view of the certain aspects. Further research can be conducted on a single product while taking into consideration the more variables. This study is conducted only in the state of Haryana in India. For comprehensive and detailed understanding of rural market in India, studies should be conducted at national level by taking larger sample size.

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