

A Study on Impact of Branding For Increasing Awareness about Products in Rural Market

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ABSTRACT

Various Branding concepts are used by the company to influence consumer in brand choice behavior in rural market, many investigators supported that- it is well worth to investigate the relative effectiveness of using of brand to increase awareness. There is several type of brand communication strategies are being used in supporting the brand imagery. Due to modern and colorful marketing communication strategies it becomes difficult to get every promotional activities noticed, so it becomes very essential for the brand designer to differentiate his product/service from others and attract viewer's attention. For a successful brand promotion and enhancing consumer's attention it becomes essential for companies to induct all possible measures to influence the purchase intentions of a consumer and to inculcate the deep desire to own a particular brand.

KEY WORDS: Branding, Awareness, Product.

Date of Submission: 01-06-2020

Date of Acceptance: 15-06-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

Branding is a marketing concept in which a company creates signs, design, name, logo or/and a combination of the above variables to help in identifying a product and to differentiate it from competitors offerings. Branding has been a late entrant in rural markets. Consumers have graduated from unbranded to branded products with increased affordability, as a result of increasing rural incomes in recent years. Branded consumption now accounts for 80 per cent of total sales in as many as 18 product categories; brands may be national, regional or local.

If we scan the brands that have become popular in rural markets, we find an unusual trend. The brand association is mainly with colors, numbers and visuals and not necessarily with the name of the brand.

Association	Brands
Colors	Lal Dant Manjan, Lal sabun (Lifebuoy), Red Battery (Eveready)
Numbers	302 Pataka bidi, 555 detergent bar, 502 pataka chai
Visuals	Ghari detergent, Rath Vanaspati, Bagh Bakri Tea, 3 Roses tea, mosquito coil

Retailers play a major role in brand promotion in rural markets.. Due to the strong bonding and trust between customers and retailers, coupled with low brand awareness, consumers often do not ask for the product by brand but instead will request the retailer, '*Paanch rupaye waali chai*' dena that is, 'Give me the five-rupee tea pack'. Now it is up to the retailer to push the brand that he chooses since he is a strong and influential force in rural markets and because consumers trust his recommendation.

The first-mover brands in rural have become generic brands. Detergent powder came to be identified with Surf, vegetable oil with *Dalda* and mosquito coil with *Katchua Chaap*.

Also, brands like Clinic Plus and Lifebuoy, which were first movers at the national level in rural India, have become the most successful brands despite being priced higher than the competition.

As more products are identified with by brand names (thus becoming generic brands), converting consumers to a better brand in the same product category is a rather difficult proposition.

Brand Building in Rural India

Brand Name Development.

A brand name in the rural context facilitates easy brand recall and in drawing any color, visual or numeric association. But some brands are known by their names, for example, Nirma and *Baba zarda*. The choice of *Sampoorna* as the name for its rural television brand helped LG as it is a Sanskrit word (the mother of all Indian languages) meaning 'wholesome' and hence it cuts across all regional linguistic barriers. Names like

Ajanta (for toothpaste) and *Sansar* (for sewing machines) were chosen for the same reason.

Creating a Brand Identity

The challenges in creating a brand identity in rural involve the need to relate the brand with the rural lifestyle, or with appropriate status symbols, or with the rural environment. As most brands are introduced in urban markets and then move to rural, creating a brand identity in rural becomes a tough challenge. Tata Steel branded its galvanized corrugated sheets *Tata Shakti* to create a brand identity that conveys the qualities of strength, durability and toughness. Britannia Tiger biscuits created an identity associated with a smart, active and sharp child.

Building a Brand Image

The brand should have a personality of its own. It should emote, empathize and talk to its consumers. Such an ability helps in brand connect with rural audiences and contributes a great deal to brand equity and competitive advantage. Mahindra & Mahindra have maintained their sterling image in rural. The *Bhumiputra* (son of soil) series of tractors, with its rugged features and the Sarpanch (village head) series have helped to improve sales. The Sarpanch brand helped to draw close brand recognition between the product and the head of the village. In this way, it provided an opportunity to the consumer to relate himself with the Sarpanch, who commands high status and respect in the village.

Advertising –Celebrity endorsement and Brand Building

The purpose of advertising is to communicate about brand and increase brand market share (Runyon, 1984). In modern time advertising has been playing a significant role in our daily life. It is considered an excellent tool for communication and non economic purposes. In the era of globalization it has gained a new status. Advertising being an art is created in an attractive manner by using attractive words, symbols pictures, messages and technological advances has added new feathers to the entire gamut of promotion campaigns. Promotion is a critical element of the marketing mix for any brand. In recent years, as the amount of advertisement clutter has increased dramatically, the ability of conceptual advertisements to gain attention has become more valuable.

Various advertising styles are used by advertisers to influence consumer brand choice behavior and among these different available choices are very popular choice is Celebrity Endorsement (Alsmadi, 2006). Many investigators supported that it is well worth to investigate the relative effectiveness of using celebrity endorsers compared to non celebrity spoke persons. There is several type of communication strategies are being used in supporting the brand imagery. Due to modern and colorful marketing communication strategies it becomes difficult to get every advertisement gets noticed, so it becomes very essential for the designer of an advertising campaign to differentiate his ad from others and attract viewer’s attention. For a successful brand promotion and enhancing consumer’s attention it becomes essential for companies to induct all possible measures to influence the purchase intentions of a consumer and to inculcate the deep desire to own a particular brand.

Brand Spectrum in Rural

Brand choices in rural are often limited due to the small market size and the limited investment capacity available with the rural retailer.

According to an ORG survey of 2018, against six to nine brands in urban shops, only three brands are available in rural in each category.

Largest Rural Brands

Brand	Category	Growth (%)
Parle – G	Biscuits	8.2
Lifebuoy Active	Toilet soap	6.4
Lux	Toilet soap	5.6
Ghari	Washing powder	21.5
Nirma	Washing powder	-13.1

Figure are year-on-year growth for MAT July 2018 by value
Source : A.C. Nielsen Retail Store Audit MAT July 2018

The growing share of a large number of FMCG brands shows the dominance of branded products in rural markets. Some of the biggest urban brands such as Parle-G, Lifebuoy Active and Lux are also big draws in rural India.

Rural Brand Penetration (% of house holds)

	Toilet Soap	Washing Powder	
Lifebuoy	31.9	Surf	6.7
Breeze	10.3	Wheel	15.0
Lux	2.4	Nirma	45.7
Pears	1.2		

Source : Business World 7-12 April, 2019

Brand Loyalty vs. Stickiness

Low levels of literacy and awareness make rural people less likely to switch brands as they do not have the required knowledge or information to exercise a choice. They feel more comfortable in purchasing tried and tested brands. They are, therefore, 'brand sticky' rather than 'brand loyal' as is often but erroneously believed by most marketers. For a brand to establish itself, the company needs to educate rural consumers, develop their interest through interactive communication, encourage their desire to own/use new products and deepen their confidence in the brand through live demonstrations.

Building a meaningful and long-term relationship with rural consumers helps them identify and associate with the company brand and develops an emotional connect, leading to a positive brand perception.

Another reason for brand stickiness is that many rural consumers are still discovering the core benefits of the product. Marketers have often observed that one brand seems to dominate the category in a particular village. This is a result of an early-mover advantage. Whichever brand enters a village market first seems to gain acceptance in the community through 'word of mouth' communication (provided, of course that the early users are satisfied with the core benefits) and thereafter many prefer to 'stick' to this particular brand. A new brand then finds it difficult to gain entry into people's homes in that village.

This phenomenon of stickiness is more visible among consumer groups of older people who are low on literacy and exposure levels, whereas the more educated younger generation, which has considerable exposure to the media, is experimenting with new brands.

Loyalty Levels

Category	% Loyalty
Chyawanprash	77.3
Shaving preparations	67.3
Toothpowder	47.3
Tea	25.3
Biscuits	22.8
Iodized salt	24.2

Source : Business World, 7-12 April, 2019

Due to this peculiar behavior of consumers in the rural market, the entry of new brands becomes difficult. This loyalty also varies according to product categories. Loyalty is low in low-involvement products such as toilet soaps and toothpaste, but it is high in the case of *Chyawanprash*, skin creams, hair oil and shaving preparations. Brand loyalty is mostly lower in product categories where there are more product choices and where not much brand building and brand differentiation has been attempted by companies.

A study of toilet soap usage in rural settings in a south Indian state discovered that many families used multiple brands. The older family members preferred Lifebuoy soap while the younger generation used newer brands available in the market. The use of multiple brands is highest in the category of toilet soaps.

Fake Brands

Fake Brands Fakes are rampant in rural India. A visit to a traditional haat from where many villagers purchase their daily-need products will reveal the total absence of genuine brands. An ORG-MARG retail audit found that for every 100 strips of genuine Vicks Action 500, there were 54 counterfeit strips sold in the market. Similarly, other major brands and products are facing huge problems from spurious products, for example, Bond's (for Pond's) talc, Fair & Lonely (for Fair & Lovely), Likebuoy (for Lifebuoy)—the list goes on.

Rural markets suffer from the problems of low penetration and poor availability of branded products. Hence, although there exists a huge demand for branded products, there are no distribution channels to make the product reach the customer. This has led to the growth of spurious brands to fill this gap in the demand.

Exposure to the electronic and print media has increased the consumers' awareness about different brands, but the lack of physical distribution has created a gap in the supply chain. This has led to the presence of spurious and me-too products in the hinterland. Pond's has been replaced with Bonds, Clinic shampoo with Clamic and Tiger biscuits with Fighter. This has cast a shadow over the FMCG industry, resulting in the loss of business amounting to Rs. 1,700 crores, according to a ORG survey in 2000.

Look-alikes

Look alike are products where the color scheme on the packaging material closely resembles that of a popular brand but the pack carries a different name. The overall appearance is similar to that of a popular brand in the same product category, for example, *Shagun* for Lifebuoy (150 gm.) and *Lalita Amla* for Dabur Amla.

Spell-alike

Spell-alike are fakes of original brands packaged in colors and designs similar to those of the originals but have names that are subtly and cleverly mis-spelt, for example, Paracute for Parachute, Fare & Lovely for Fair & Lovely and Pomes for Pond's.

Duplicates

Duplicates are exact replicas of original brands. The color, design and name on the package are the same as those of the original brand. All the details that are mentioned on the wrapper of the original brand, i.e. ingredients, brand name, manufacturer's name, etc., are also present verbatim on the duplicate.

The following table compares the different categories of fakes on several parameters.

Features of Duplicates, Spell-alike& look-alikes

Features	Duplicates	Spell-alike	look-alikes
Brand name	Original	Misspell	Different
Pack appearance	Replica	Identical	Similar
Manufacturer's address	Original	Incomplete	Own name
Price	M.R.P.	40% LOW	10-15%LOW
Margins	200-300%	100-150%	60-70%
Quality	Very poor	Poor	Reasonable
Intention of retailer	To cheat	To mislead	To freeloader
Consumers	Unaware	Unaware	Want cheaper products
Identify	None	Only literate	Majority
Offer	None	Discounts	schemes

Brand awareness in rural India has gone up significantly because of the extended reach of television and the print media coupled with the heavy advertising spends by companies. This has created an unprecedented demand, but genuine brands have not been able to reach remote rural locations because of limitations in distribution reach. This has created a demand-supply gap, which is being filled by manufacturers of spurious products, who pass off their fakes against the demand for genuine brands.

Scope of the Study

Covering the whole population of rural India was beyond the time and cost resources. Therefore the scope of the study was kept limited. I have covered the rural areas of 7 states namely: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and covered 34 districts from these 7 states.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To assess the impact of branding in creation of awareness for a few popular names in each product category in different geographical segments of market
- 2) To compare the brand awareness in various product categories

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive study on the above topic highlights branding increases product awareness Dr.Badi R. V., Badi N. V. in their book on Rural Marketing (2017),.

Krisnamoorthy R (2018),highlighted Branding increases awreness as well as ,it increases recall value. “

Krishnamacharyulu C.S.G., Ramakrishnan Lalitha,in ther book Rural Marketing Text & Cases (2018), have shown an different angle of branding to awareness creation.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher have used both primary and. secondary data for the study. In order to collect primary data, self-administered questionnaire was used.The sample size was 400

Brand Awareness

Brands	Brand Awareness					
	Identified		Not Identified		Total	
	Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Binaca	340	85	60	15	400	100
Lifebouy	396	99	4	1	400	100
Jannatul	262	65.5	138	34.5	400	100
Firdaus						
Rin	393	98.25	7	1.75	400	100
Banderchhap	272	68	128	32	400	100
Dabur Amla	77	19.25	23	5.75	400	100

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Liril	324	81	76	19	400	100
Cuticura	115	28.75	285	71.25	400	100
Wheel	173	43.25	227	56.75	400	100
Tata coconut	331	82.75	69	17.25	400	100
Afghan	318	79.5	82	20.5	400	100
Keo-Karpin	258	64.5	142	35.5	400	100
Vicco-Vajrdanti	263	65.75	137	34.25	400	100
Eu-De-Cologne	14	3.5	386	96.5	400	100
Nycil	212	53	188	47	400	100
Close-up	200	50	200	50	400	100
Nivea	209	52.25	191	47.75	400	100
Total	4457	65.54	2343	34.46	6800	100

From, the above table it can be concluded that daily need products and comparatively high used products (like tooth paste, detergent bar) are having more awareness compared to hair oil and perfumes

Awareness of Low-priced and High-priced Brands

Products	Low-priced Brand	Percentage aware	High-priced Brands	Percentage aware
Soaps and Detergents	Wheel	43.25	Rin	98.25
Toilet soaps	Lifebouy	99	Liril	81
Hair oils	Tata coconut	82.75	Keo-karpin	64.5
Toothpastes	Binaca	85	Close-up	50
Toothpowders	Bandarchhap	68	Vicco-vajrdanti	65.75
Perfumes	Jannatul-Firdaus	65.5	Eu-de-cologne	3.5
Face creams	Afghan	79.5	Nivea	52.25
Face powders	Nycil	53	Cuticura	28.75
All products average		72	Curticura	55.5

From the above table it can be concluded that brand awareness is more in low priced product than in a high priced product. in rural areas.

The Dominant Reason for Brand choice-product-wise

The Dominant Reason	No. of Respondents mentioned for different Products							
	Soaps & Detergents	Toilet soaps	Hair oils	Toothpastes / toothpowder	perfumes	face powder	Face creams	Total
Price	53(13.2)	26(6.5)	25(6.3)	34(8.8)	18(5.9)	18(5.2)	15(4.3)	189(7.3)
Quality	269(67.3)	287(71.7)	278(71.7)	278(71.7)	238(78.3)	249(71.3)	262(74.7)	1870(72.1)
Availability	20(5.0)	34(8.5)	28(7.0)	18(4.6)	8(2.6)	19(5.4)	13(3.7)	140(5.4)
Company Image	44(11.0)	34(8.5)	45(11.2)	42(10.8)	27(8.9)	48(13.8)	37(10.5)	277(10.7)
Brands Image	14(3.5)	19(4.8)	15(3.8)	16(4.1)	13(4.3)	15(4.3)	24(6.8)	116(4.5)
Total	400(100)	400(100)	400(100)	388(100)	304(100)	349(100)	351(100)	2592(100)

In the above graph, it has been shown, how various factors like price, quality etc influences brand choice.

**The Dominant Reason for Brand choice-area-wise
(All products combined)**

The Dominant Reason	No. of respondents in different area wise					
	W India	C India	E India	N India	S India	Total
Price	28(6.2)	44(11.1)	36(5.6)	51(9.6)	30(5.3)	189(7.3)
Quality	326(71.8)	289(72.8)	501(78.5)	348(65.3)	406(71.2)	1870(72.1)
Availability	41(9.0)	13(3.3)	27(4.2)	29(5.4)	30(5.3)	140(5.4)
Company Image	36(7.9)	40(10.1)	45(7.1)	85(15.9)	71(12.4)	277(10.7)
Brand Image	23(5.1)	11(2.7)	29(4.6)	20(3.8)	33(5.8)	116(4.5)
Total	434(100)	397(100)	638(100)	533(100)	570(100)	2592(100)

Note: Figures give in the parentheses show the percentages.

In the above table, the area wise data has been shown.

IV. CONCLUSION

In today's complex market, where there are at least 15-20 brands are available in each product range, creating awareness is must for success. If a company fails to create awareness, it will be impossible for the company to sale a product. –Branding helps in creating awareness and also increases top of the mind recall value.

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Dr. Kaustav Shyamal Mukherjee, et. al. "A Study on Impact of Branding For Increasing Awareness about Products in Rural Market." *International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI)*, vol. 09(06), 2020, pp 34-39. Journal DOI- 10.35629/8028