Rural Brand Awareness and Preferences for FMCGs: An Empirical Study on Keonjhar District of Odisha, India

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Abstract: *The rural market has been growing steadily over the years and is now bigger than the urban market for FMCGs but their lies a great state wise disparity in India in terms of consumption pattern. Though Odisha's economy is expanding through sectoral shifts from agriculture to industry to service but in terms of per capita expenditure, rural Odisha remains one of the poorest states which is only at Rs. 904.78[1].*

Consumers brand preferences represent a fundamental step in understanding consumer behaviour. A deeper understanding of such preference can help marketers' better design marketing program and build a long term relationship with consumers. This warrants an empirical study for such specific rural pockets to help marketers improvise the dynamics of segmentation and marketing mix variables to capitalize their efforts to the fullest in rural markets.

The basic purpose of this paper was to explore the rural consumer buying behavior through brand awareness and influence of demographic factors on brand preference .This paper was based on primary as well as secondary data. The sampling regions included one of the rural district of Odisha viz, Keonjhar.

The results indicated that there were statistical relationships between age, gender, family type and education with brand preference. However, there was no statistical relationship between occupation and annual income with the brand preference. Thus age, gender, family type and education only had statistical relationship with the brand preference of rural consumers in the Keonjhar district of Odisha.

Key Word: *Rural, FMCGs, Bathing Soap, Demography, Brand Awareness, Brand Preference*

I. Introduction

1.1 Rural market in India:

The Census of India defines rural as any habitation where the population density is less than 400 per square kilometer, and where at least 75 percent of male working population is engaged in agriculture, and where there is no municipality or board. The same is defined by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as any location with population up to 10,000 will be considered as rural and 10,000 to 1,00,000 as semi-urban. NABARD defined rural market as, all locations irrespective of villages or town, up to a population of 10,000 will be considered as rural.

Most companies in Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) and agri-inputs sector define rural as a place with population of up to 20,000. Durable goods companies would consider any town with a population below 50,000 as a rural market (Kashyap and Raut2010: 3).

Rural India now accounts for almost 50 percent of country's income. It is a half trillion dollar economy. Already 54 percent of all FMCGs, 59 percent durables, 100 percent of agri-inputs and between 10 to 50 percent of four-wheelers and two-wheelers are sold in Rural India. The situation is similar in Insurance, Banking, Telecom and other services. The rural market is now bigger than the urban market for most categories. According to Mc. Kinsey's &Co., a global consulting firm, Indian rural market will touch 500 billion by 2020.

1.2 Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs)

FMCG is the abbreviated form of Fast Moving Consumer Goods. In West, FMCG is also called consumer- packaged goods. Any product that is used very frequently, sometimes daily and move relatively faster (consumption at least once in a month) at the retailer end can be classified as FMCG. Examples are soap, toothpaste, batteries, beverages and cigarettes. Thus, FMCGs are essential, low price goods, which get repeat sales. FMGCs are also termed as non-durable goods, a tangible item that is quickly consumed, worn out or outdated and consumed in single use or few uses (Majumdar, 1998)[2].

Some of the leading FMCG companies all over the world are Sara Lee, Nestlé, Unilever, Procter and Gamble (P&G), Coca-cola, Carlsberg, Kleenex, General Mills, Mars etc. The major players in the FMCG

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[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Odisha (Accessed on 15/07/14).
[2] Majumdar, R. (1998) *Product Management in India*. (2nd ed.), New Delhi:Prentice Hall India, pp26.

category in rural markets are HUL, Dabur, Marico, Colgate-Palmolive, ITC, Nirma, CavinKare, Godrej, Procter & Gamble etc.

The Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is a corner stone of the Indian economy. This sector touches every aspect of human life. The FMCG producers have realized that there is ample opportunity for them to enter into the rural market. Today we notice this shift towards branded FMCGs in rural areas as a result of Socio-Economic & Political changes in the recent times. This has made rural areas more viable markets even compared to urban areas. The Socio Economic and Political changes contributed to a great extent for changes in the lifestyles of rural people who patronized branded FMCG products. The Government policies to promote education in rural areas enhanced their brand awareness due to the presence of at least one student pursuing higher education in their family or neighboring family. The different Government policies are also being helpful for rural people contributed in enhancing people's income followed by a change in their lifestyles resulted in patronizing the branded products. According to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) about 70 percent of Indian population living in villages, India has perhaps the largest potential rural market in the world. It has as many as 47,000 haats (congregation markets or local bazaars), compared to 35,000 supermarkets in the US.

1.2.1 Key Indicators of Indian FMCG Industry
The FMCG sector is the fourth largest in the Indian economy, with a total market size of USD 44.9 billion in 2013.The sector grew at a CAGR of 16.2 percent during 2006-13. Though the FMCG sector continues to grow in double digits, there has been some moderation (9.4%) in growth rates during 2013 due to deceleration in GDP growth and high inflation (A C Nielsen & Economic Times).

1.2.2 Sector Composition of FMCGs-Urban versus Rural

Figure-1.1: Percent Share of FMCGs
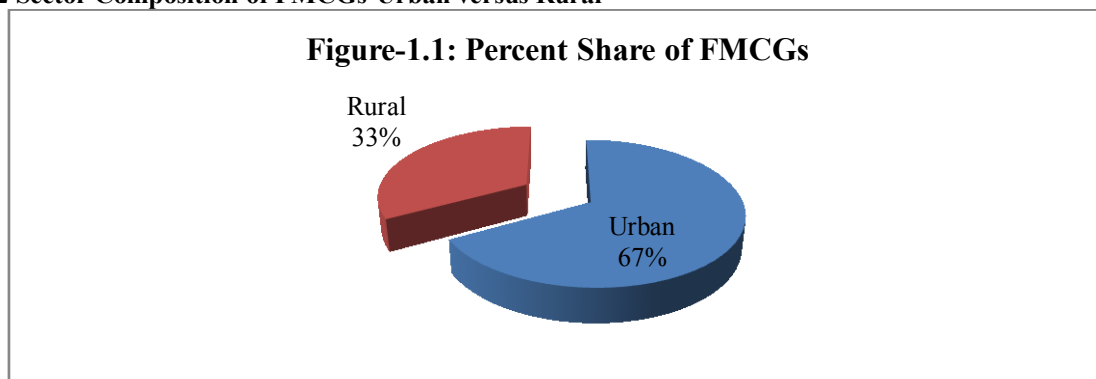
Source: A C Nielsen

The urban sector constitutes 67 percent of the total FMCG market and had a market size of USD 30 billion in 2013.The rural FMCG sector was with a market size of USD15 billion contributes the remaining 33 percent. However, in the last few years, the FMCG market has grown at a faster pace in rural India compared to urban India. The urban FMCG market grew 8 percent while rural India expanded 12.2 percent in 2013. It was also forecasted that the rural FMCG market to reach USD 100billion by 2025 (A C Nielsen).
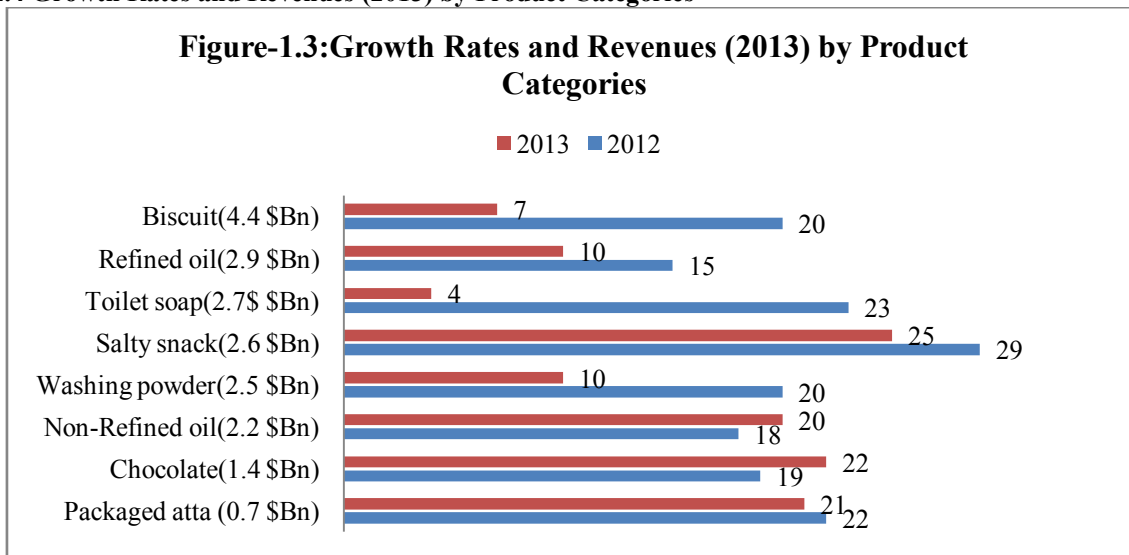
1.2.3 The Rural FMCG Market

Figure-1.2: Rural FMCG Market Size (USD Billion)
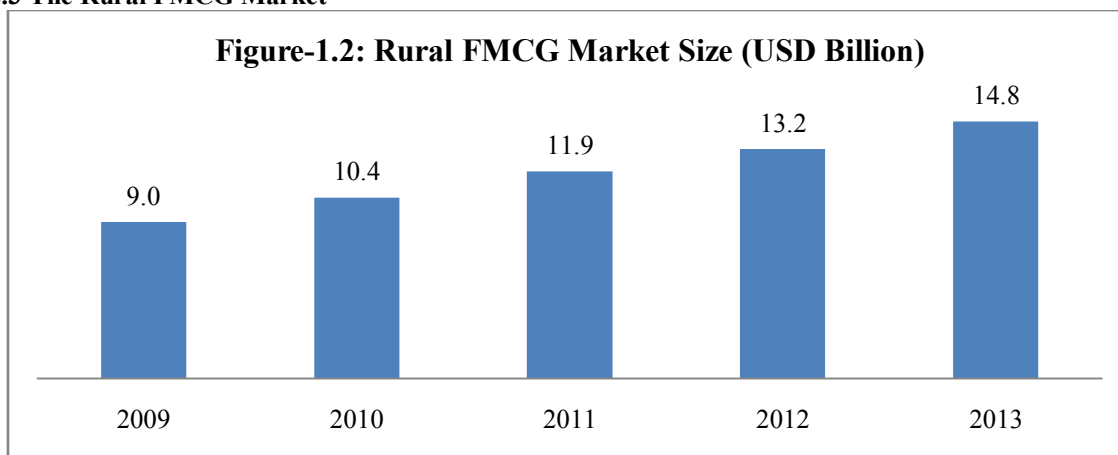
Source: Dabur Investors Presentation, February 2013

The rural FMCG market expanded at a CAGR of 13.3 percent to USD14.8 billion during 2009-13. The growth of the rural market can be attributed to various development schemes, such as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Mid Day Meal (MDM), Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) etc. introduced by the Indian government. These schemes have empowered the rural masses and increased their purchasing power, thus boosting FMCG consumption. The government's focus on rural markets is also encouraging many FMCG companies, such as HUL, Dabur and ITC to expand their rural network and increase product penetration.

1.2.4 Growth Rates and Revenues (2013) by Product Categories

Figure-1.3:Growth Rates and Revenues (2013) by Product Categories

■ 2013　■ 2012

Category	2013	2012
Biscuit(4.4 $Bn)	7	20
Refined oil(2.9 $Bn)	10	15
Toilet soap(2.7$ $Bn)	4	23
Salty snack(2.6 $Bn)	25	29
Washing powder(2.5 $Bn)	10	20
Non-Refined oil(2.2 $Bn)	20	18
Chocolate(1.4 $Bn)	22	19
Packaged atta (0.7 $Bn)	21	22

Source: A C Nielsen Report, The Economic Times

Food products was the largest FMCG segment, constituting 43 percent of the total market , followed by personal care products 22 percent, tobacco 16 percent, household care, 5 percent and Others 10 percent. Salty snacks were the fastest growing FMCG category in 2013 with a growth rate of 25 percent. Other categories such as packaged atta (wheat flour), chocolates, and non refined oil grew over 20 percent in 2013, as companies aggressively focused on increasing their penetration. Sales in biscuits, refined oil, soap, and washing powder were top five FMCG product categories, grew 4-10 percent in 2013, down from 15-23 percent in 2012. Their value growth was affected due to consumers opting for cheaper options due to economic slowdown and inflation, forcing companies to offer discounts to push higher volume of sales.

1.2.5 Indian Bathing Soap Market

India today is one of the largest producers of soaps in the world. The per capita consumption of toilet and bathing soap in India is about 800 gms, whereas it is 6.5 kgs. in U.S.A., 4.0 kgs. in China,1.1 kgs. in Brazil and 2.5 kgs. in Indonesia.
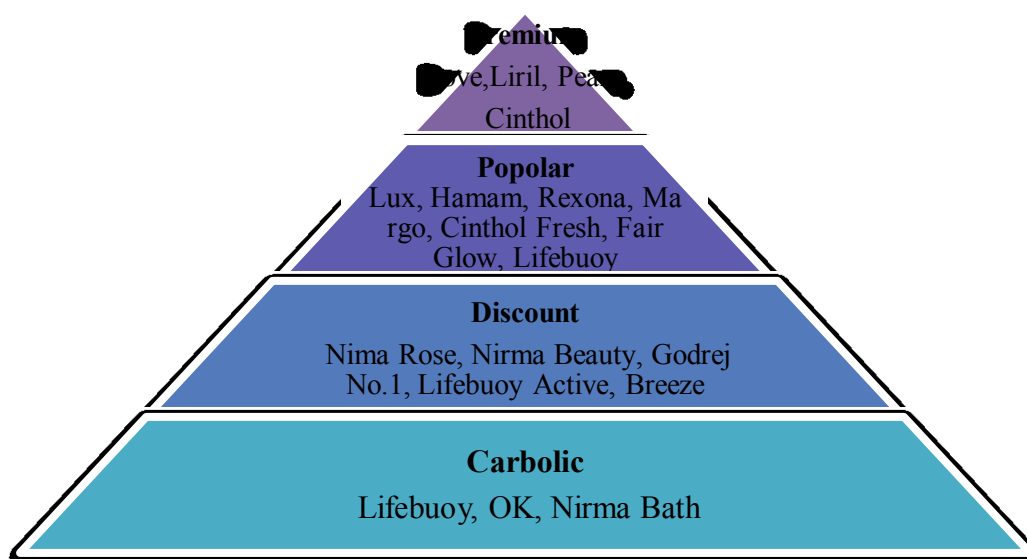
According to Business Standard, Indian soap market is worth INR 10000 crore. The HUL's Lifebuoy is largest selling soap with 15 percent market share, Lux has market share of 13-14 percent, Dettol at 8.5 percent and Santoor at 8.2 percent.

The Indian soap market is ruled by three major giants, HUL, Godrej and Nirma. These three companies alone account for 88 percent of the total market share in India. HUL with its brands like Lux and Lifebuoy has dominated the Indian lather industry since the last few decades. Nirma another top soap brand in India is one of the major competitors of HUL and holds a 15 percent market share in the Indian soap market[3].

At present, the Indian Soap Industry is mainly divided based on price segmentation into the Premium, Popular, Discount and Carbolic segments.

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[3] http://business.mapsofindia.com/top-brands-india/top-soap-brands-in-india.html

Figure-1.4: Soap Categories

Price of the premium segment products is twice that of economy segment products. The popular and economy segments cover up about 80 percent of the entire soap market. The penetration level of toilet soaps is about 88 percent. In India, soaps are available in five million retail stores, out of which, 3.75 million retail stores are in the rural areas.

Therefore, availability of these products is not an issue. 70 percent of India's population resides in the rural areas; hence around 50 percent of the soaps are sold in the rural markets. With increase in disposable incomes, growth in rural demand is expected to increase because the consumers are moving up towards premium products.

However, in the recent past, there has not been much change in the volume of premium soaps in proportion to economy soaps, because increase in prices has led some consumers to look for cheaper substitutes. In the soap industry, the popular segment has witnessed maximum growth within toilet soaps and it is the category driver. Consumers down grade from the premium segment as and when they see better value in the popular category, at the same time consumer's upgrade from the economy segment due to increased aspirations and affordability. With the rising disposable income in the rural sector and semi-metros, we expect good demand coming from this category in the popular range[4].

1.3. Brand Awareness and Brand Preference:
1.3.1 Brand awareness: It is the degree of familiarity among consumers about the life and availability of the product. Brand awareness includes both brand recognition as well as brand recall. Brand recognition is the ability of customer to recognize prior knowledge of when they are asked questions about that brand or when they are shown that specific brand, while brand recall is the potential of customer to recover a brand from his memory when given the product class/category, needs satisfied by that category or buying scenario as a signal. In other words, it refers that consumers should correctly recover brand from the memory when given a clue or he can recall the specific brand when the product category is mentioned. It is generally easier to recognize a brand rather than recall it from the memory.

1.3.2 Brand preference: It is defined as the subjective or individual tastes, as measured by utility, of various bundles of goods. They permit the consumer to rank these bundles of goods according to the levels of utility they give the consumer. Note that preferences are independent of income and prices. Ability to purchase goods does not determine a consumer's likes or dislikes. This is used primarily to mean an option that has the greatest anticipated value among a number of options. Preference and acceptance can in certain circumstances mean the same thing but it is useful to keep the distinction in mind with preference tending to indicate choices among

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4 http://www.crirec.com/2011/01/soap-and-detergent-industry-in-india/ (Accessed on 17/07/14)

neutral or more valued options with acceptance indicating a willingness to tolerate the status quo or some less desirable option.

Brand preference is 'attitudes toward one object in relation to another. The consumers' preference over one brand does not directly translate into buying intention. Hence, there are differences between consumers' preference and buying intention. It seems that most business organizations are interested to the latter one, neglecting the fact that consumers' preferences play a role in purchase decision (Blackwell, 2001).

In marketing literature, the word preference means the desirability or choice of an alternative. Preferences are above all behavioural tendencies (Zajonc and Markus, 1982). Brand preference is defined variously as the consumer's predispositions toward a brand that varies depending on the salient beliefs that are activated at a given time; the consumer biasness toward a certain brand; the extent to which a consumer favours one brand over another. There is difference between brand preference and brand loyalty. Brand preference represents the attitudinal brand loyalty excluding the action of repeat purchasing; the brand-oriented attitudinal loyalty. The main theme is that the first three decision-making phases of brand loyalty constitute the focal of brand preference. Thus, brand preference is related to brand loyalty; however, brand loyalty is more consistent depicted by the long term repeated purchasing behaviour. Many researchers agree that sought benefits and consumer perception are the main antecedents of brand preferences, which is as follows:

BP =∑PA+ CP

Where,

BP - Brand preferences

PA - Product attributes

CP - Consumer perception (Yang, 2002).

A more complex combination to predict brand preferences which is as follows:

BP = PU + PP + A + B +∑R (MV)

Where,

BP - Brand preferences

PU - Product usage

PP - Purchase patterns

A - Attitude

B - Benefits sought

R - Consumer response

MV - Marketing Variables (O'Connor and Sulivan, 1995)[5].

II. Literature Review

A brand can be a label of ownership, name, term, design, or symbol. Further brand can be product, service or concept. Brand preference is measure of brand loyalty in which consumers will choose a particular brand in presence of competing brands (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/brand-preference.html). Also it can be defined that the degree to which consumers prefer one brand over another (http://www.answers.com/topic/brand-preference). A greater brand loyalty among consumers' leads to greater sales of the brand (Howard and Sheth, 1969).There has been a long standing interest from marketers to understand how consumers form their preferences toward a specific brand. Brand preference is closely related to brand choice that can facilitate consumer decision making and activate brand purchase. Knowing the pattern of consumer preferences across the population is a critical input for designing and developing innovative marketing strategies. It also uncovers the heterogeneity of consumer choices leading to efficient market segmentation strategies. Prior studies on brand preference can be divided into two groups, the first group is for studies examined the impact of consumer-related factors. They focused on the impact of cultural, social, psychological and personal factors of consumers. The main findings of the studies of this group revealed that changes in consumers' life style can cause changes in their brand preferences. The consumers' personality traits and values are also considered to be important predicators of brand preference. The second group addressed the impact of brand-related factors such as the brand price and other marketing communications tools with particular concern on advertising and promotion. One of the major findings of these studies is that the brand attributes, plus other brand factors such as perceived value have a significant impact on brand preference. In addition, the interaction between the self-image and brand-image; the self-image congruence has shown to be important in brand preference building. Most of the early models focused on brand attributes in preference construction (Fishbein, 1965). Thus the evolving marketing strategies focus on analyzing and communicating information about product attributes. Although these cognitive responses derived from beliefs about brand

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http://www.academia.edu/1133044/A_conceptual_model_of_consumer_personalitybrand_preferences_relationship (Accessed on 14/06/14).

attributes are important in building preferences, there are other emotional responses (Elaboration likelihood model, 1982), social influences (Extended Fishbein model) that can influence brand preferences. It is demonstrated that consumers can have an already established preference and refer to the brand attributes that confirm their preferences. In addition, this traditional cognitive view that deemed consumer as rational decision making had been shifted to the experiential view focuses on the emotional, cognitive, symbolic responses of consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). This shift echoed the changes that companies have moved from focusing on attributes and features toward creating experiences to their consumers. Brands are no longer bundles of functional characteristic but are means of providing experiences (Schmitt, 1999). Moreover, these experiences were hypothesized to be an important driver in building brand preferences (Rehman Ebrahim, 2011)[6]. The two important measure of brand awareness is brand recognition and recall (Hoyer and Brown, 1990). Study on recall of pictorial advertisements as compared to non-pictorial advertisements were more effective to rural consumers as compared to urban consumers (Laurent, Kapferer and Roussel, 1995). According to Kotler and Amstrong (1989) influencing factors for purchasing behavior are marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) and demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status, family type, income, education level and occupation). Most of the studies have shown marketing mix factors have a relationship on the purchasing behavior of the consumer. The proper alignment of the marketing mix is essential in achieving the consumers mind share for the brand. Gupta (1988) indicates that marketing mix have a strong relationship with consumers buying patterns, brand choices and incidences of purchase. The impact of demographical factors also plays a significant role in consumers buying behavior. Age group is an attribute which has a direct impact on person's attitude towards a brand. Based on the maturity the preference for toilet soap or any other product may vary. The education level of a person also influence in the decision making process. A well educated person may analyze the ingredients in particular beauty soap but less educated person may not, due to lack of knowledge. Income level of a person has a direct impact on the purchasing of a product. When the income levels rises naturally people tend to buy more luxury/premium products. The income affects the type of goods that consumers are likely to buy (McConnell and Brue, 1999).

Consumer preferences are varied and are more regionally specific. India is divided into four regions: North, East, West, and South. Consumers in the North prefer pink colored soaps, which have floral profiles. Here the fragrance preference is for more sophisticated profiles reflecting their lifestyles. Freshness soaps with lime and citrus note are also popular preferences as the climate in the North is very hot and citrus/lime scented soaps are seen to be refreshing. The East is not a big soap market; hence no particular preference skews. Consumers in the West exhibit preferences for strong, impactful fragrances and somewhat harsher profiles compared to the North. Preferences are more for the pink soaps with floral fragrances, primarily rose, which are positioned on the beauty platform. In the South, the skew is towards specific soap segments like the Herbal/Ayurvedic profiles and also the Sandal profiles. Consumers here do not exhibit high brand loyalty and are ready to experiment and try out new brands. Hence, the most fast moving consumer goods companies tend to launch their new brands in these markets, which they call test launch markets (http://www.crirec.com/2011/01/soap-and-detergent-industry-in-india/). The present paper is an attempt to find the soap preference skewness for Odisha state which is on the east coast by the way of Bengal.

III. Objectives of the Study
1. To study the Indian FMCG Industry with emphasis on toilet soap industry.
2. To study the factors influencing brand awareness and Preferences toward toilet soaps in rural consumers.

IV. Research Model and Hypotheses
The following research model was designed to study the factors influencing brand preference of rural consumers towards toilet soap. This describes the product, price, place, promotion, age, gender, family type, income level, education, occupation, social-cultural factors, psychological factors, political factors, technological factors as independent variables and brand preference as dependent variable.

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[6] http://www.brunel.ac.uk/__data/assets/file/0003/91182/phdSimp2011RehamEbrahim.pdf (Accessed on 14/06/14).

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│  ┌──────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐                          │
│  │  Marketing Mix   │   ➤    │     Product      │                          │
│  │    Variables     │        │     Price        │                          │
│  │                  │        │     Place        │                          │
│  │        ▲         │        │    Promotion     │                          │
│  └──────────────────┘        ├──────────────────┤                          │
│  ┌──────────────────┐        │      Age         │                          │
│  │   Demographic    │   ➤    │     Gender       │      ┌──────────────────┐ │
│  │    Variables     │        │   Family type    │  ➤   │  Brand Preference│ │
│  │                  │        │   Education      │      └──────────────────┘ │
│  │        ▼         │        │     Income       │                          │
│  └──────────────────┘        │   Occupation     │                          │
│  ┌──────────────────┐        ├──────────────────┤                          │
│  │ Other Variables  │   ➤    │Socio-cultural Factor                        │
│  │                  │        │Psychological Factors                        │
│  │                  │        │ Political Factors │                          │
│  │                  │        │Technological Factors                        │
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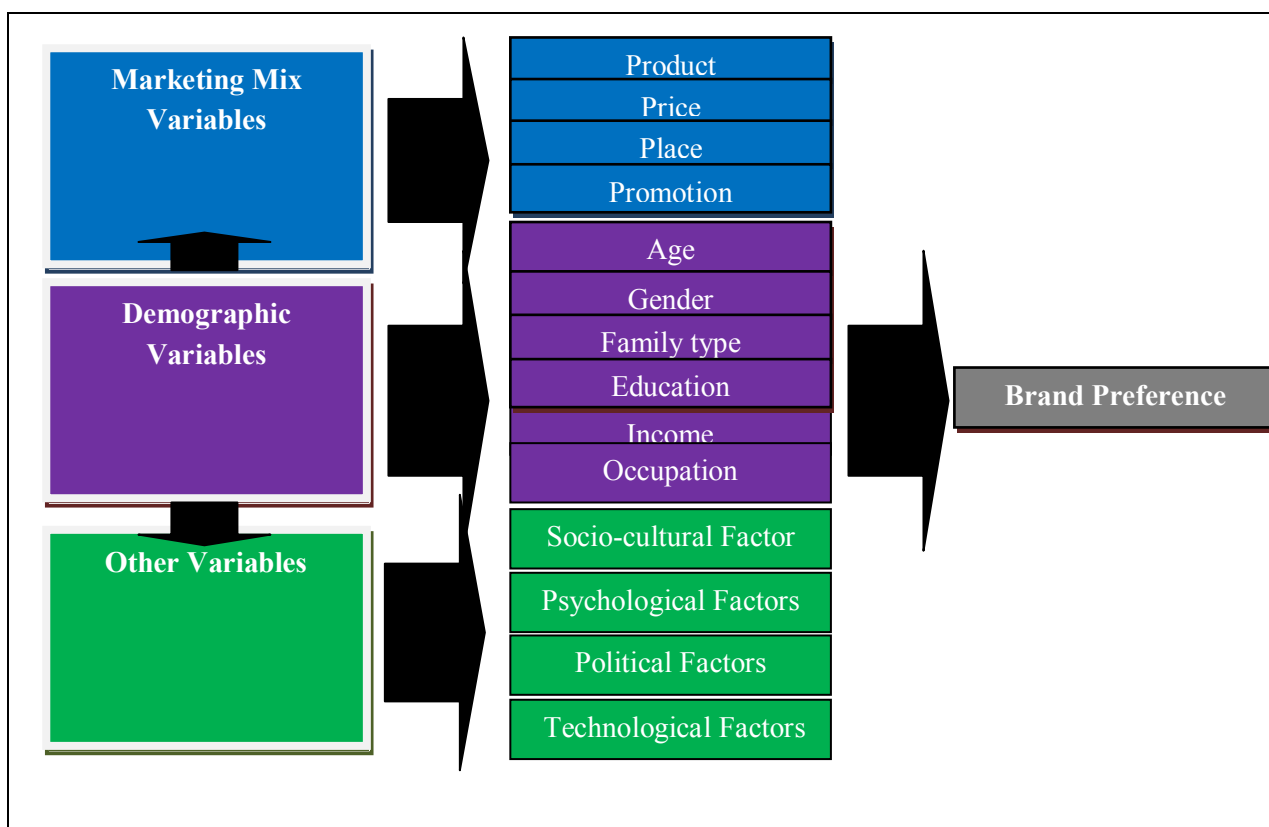
4.1 Hypotheses of the Study

The main aim of the study is to test the following hypotheses:

H1: There is no significant association between age and brand preference.
H2: There is no significant association between gender and brand preference.
H3: There is no significant association between family-type and brand preference.
H4: There is no significant association between Income and brand preference.
H5: There is no significant association between Occupation and brand preference.
H6: There is no significant association between Education and brand preference.

V. Scope and limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in one of the rural districts of Eastern India viz. Keonjhar, Odisha state, India. It is believed that the findings in this district are fair representative of the other parts of the State and the lifestyle and other parameters are not much different from what exist in the area of survey. Though the market has over two hundred toilet soap brands but only nineteen brands were studied for brand awareness and seven brands were chosen for the study of brand preference. Other limitations have been identified in this study are, the research work covers only five villages, the sample size do not ensure representative and conclusive finding and finally, a more robust analysis is needed to reach a strong conclusion.

VI. Methodology

The present study was undertaken to study the rural brand awareness and brand preference towards toilet soaps. A descriptive research was carried out. A field survey was conducted for a period of 30 days (May-June, 2014) in five villages of Keonjhar district, the villages were selected conveniently. Thirty consumers from each village were selected randomly constituting sample size as 150. Rrural consumers were served with a structured schedule as data collection tool. The retailers also were questioned to gain new insights on rural buying behavior and brand preference. The data collected was analyzed mainly thorough descriptive statistics, using Chi-Square method. The SPSS (Version 20.0) software was used to execute the analysis process. Methods such as bar charts and tabular formats were used to derive and summarize the data. The desired level of significant was 0.05 with the chi square test.

VII. Results and Discussion

7.1 Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Table-8.1: Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Details	Frequency (N)	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	122	81.3%
Female	28	18.7%
Total	**150**	**100%**
Age		
<25 Years	02	1.3%
25-30 Years	24	16.0%
30-50 Years	92	61.3%
>50 Years	32	21.3%
Total	**150**	**100%**
Family Type		
Joint	80	53.3%
Nuclear	70	46.7%
Total	**150**	**100%**
Education Level		
Illiterate	04	2.7%
Up to 5th Standard	06	4.0%
Up to 7th Standard	18	12.0%
Up to 10th Standard	54	36.0%
Up to 12th Standard	22	14.7%
Under-Graduation	34	22.7%
Post-Graduation	12	08.0%
Total	**150**	**100%**
Occupation		
Agriculture	48	32%
Govt. Service	26	17.3%
Pvt. Service	12	8.0%
Business	48	32%
Others	16	10.7%
Total	**150**	**100%**
Annual Income		
Rs. 20,000-50,000	02	1.3
Rs. 50,000-1,00,000	10	6.7
Rs. 1,00,000-2,00,000	70	46.7
>Rs. 2,00,000	68	45.3
Total	**150**	**100%**

7.2 Brand Awareness in Rural Market

Table-7.2: Brand Awareness in Rural Market

Sl. No.	Soap Brands	Frequency	Percent
1	Breeze	110	73.3%
2	Nima	106	70.7%
3	Godrej No. 1	48	32.0%
4	Superia	46	30.7%
5	Lifebuoy	150	100%
6	Vivel	22	14.7%
7	Rexona	60	40.0%
8	Lux	134	89.3%
9	Hamam	74	49.3%
10	Santoor	24	16.0%
11	Margo	58	38.7%
12	Medimix	22	14.7%
13	Fiama Di Wills	12	08.0%
14	Dettol	50	33.3%
15	Cinthol	48	32.0%
16	Liril	58	38.7%
17	Mysore Sandal	22	14.7%
18	Pears	24	16.0%
19	Dove	14	09.3%
Average	-	-	**37.96%**

Interpretation: It was concluded from the above table that the average awareness of respondents towards toilet soap in the Keonjhar district was 37.96%. The highest degree of awareness was found with Lifebuoy followed by Lux and the brand awareness was least for Dove.

7.3 Demographic Factors and Brand Preference
7. 3.1. Age versus brand preference
Ho: There is no significant association between age and brand preference.
HA: There is significant association between age and brand preference.

Table-7.3.1: Age versus brand preference

Age	Brand Preference							Total	Sig. (Chi-Square)
	Breeze	Hamam	Lifebuoy	Lux	Nima	Rexona	Superia		
<25	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.171
25-30	0	0	6	8	2	4	4	24	
31-50	16	6	30	22	8	0	10	92	
> 50	2	0	12	6	4	6	2	32	

Interpretation: The Chi-square test revealed that the significant level 0.171(Pearson's) which is greater than significance level +0.05 at 95 percent confidence level, hence, there is no relationship between the variables. The null hypothesis is accepted. And we conclude that there is no statistical significant relationship between the age groups and the brand preference.

7. 3.2 Gender versus brand preference
Ho: There is no significant association between gender and brand preference.
HA: There is significant association between gender and brand preference.

Table-7.3.2: Gender versus brand preference

Gender	Brand Preference							Total	Sig. (Chi-Square)
	Breeze	Hamam	Lifebuoy	Lux	Nima	Rexona	Superia		
Male	14	4	44	28	16	8	8	122	0.155
Female	4	2	4	8	0	2	8	28	

Interpretation: From Chi-square test, a significance level of 0.155 was achieved. This means the Chi-sqaure test is showing a significant association at 84.5% confidence level (100-15.5). There is no statistical association between gender and brand preference at 95% confidence level. It leads to a conclusion that gender does not play a role in brand preference of toilet soap.

7.3.3 Family type versus brand preference
Ho: There is no significant association between family-type and brand preference.
HA: There is significant association between family-type and brand preference.

Table-7.3.3: Family type and Brand Preference

Family type	Brand Preference							Total	Sig. (Chi-Square)
	Breeze	Hamam	Lifebuoy	Lux	Nima	Rexona	Superia		
Joint	6	0	22	16	12	8	10	80	0.211
Nuclear	6	6	26	20	4	2	6	70	

Interpretation: The Chi-sqaure significance level is 0.211, which is greater than significance level 0.05. This means that there is no statistical significant relationship between the family type and the brand preference.

7.3.4 Education level versus brand preference
Ho: There is no significant association between education level and brand preference.
HA: There is significant association between education level and brand preference.

Table-7.3.4: Education level and Brand Preference

Education level	Brand Preference							Total	Sig. (Chi-Square)
	Breeze	Hamam	Lifebuoy	Lux	Nima	Rexona	Superia		
Illiterate	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Up to 5th	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	
Up to 7th	2	0	6	10	0	0	0	18	
Upto10th	0	4	18	8	6	4	14	54	0.087
Upto12th	4	0	6	8	2	0	2	22	
Degree	8	2	6	8	4	6	0	34	
PG	0	0	8	2	2	0	0	12	

Interpretation: The Chi-sqaure significance level is 0.087, which is greater than significance level 0.05. This means there is no statistical significant relationship between the level of education and the brand preference.

7.3.5 Occupation versus brand preference

Ho: There is no significant association between occupation and brand preference.

HA: There is significant association between occupation and brand preference.

Table-7.3.5: Occupation and Brand Preference

Occupation	Brand Preference							Total	Sig. (Chi-Square
	Breeze	Hamam	Lifebuoy	Lux	Nima	Rexona	Superia		
Agriculture	6	0	18	6	10	0	8	48	
Govt. Service	6	2	10	4	0	4	0	26	
Pvt. Service	0	4	0	2	4	0	2	12	0.002
Business	6	0	16	12	2	6	6	48	
Others	0	0	4	12	0	0	0	16	

Interpretation: The Chi-sqaure significance level is 0.002, which is less than significance level 0.05 at 95% confidence level. This means there is statistical significant relationship between the occupation and the brand preference. It leads to a conclusion that occupation plays a vital role in brand preference of toilet soap.

7.3.6. Annual Income and brand preference

Ho: There is no significant association between annual income and brand preference.

HA: There is significant association between annual income and brand preference.

Table-7.3.6: Annual income and Brand Preference

Annual Income	Brand Preference							Total	Sig. (Chi-Square
	Breeze	Hamam	Lifebuoy	Lux	Nima	Rexona	Superia		
20,000-50,000	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	
50,000-100000	4	0	6	0	0	0	0	10	0.023
100000-200000	4	2	24	20	4	2	14	70	
Above 200000	10	4	18	16	12	6	2	68	

Interpretation: The Chi-sqaure significance level is 0.023, which is less than significance level 0.05. This means there is statistical significant relationship between annual income and the brand preference towards toilet soap.

### 7.4 Influence of Marketing-mix Variables on brand preference

Figure-7.4: Influence of Marketing-Mix Variables on brand preference

Interpretation: It was inferred from the chart that most important marketing mix variable which influenced the brand preference was price (38.7%), followed by product quality (32%), shopkeeper's advice (17.3%), and promotion (9.3%).

7.5 Important attribute and benefits sought by rural consumers from toilet soaps

Figure-7.5: Important attribute and benefits sought by rural consumers from toilet soaps
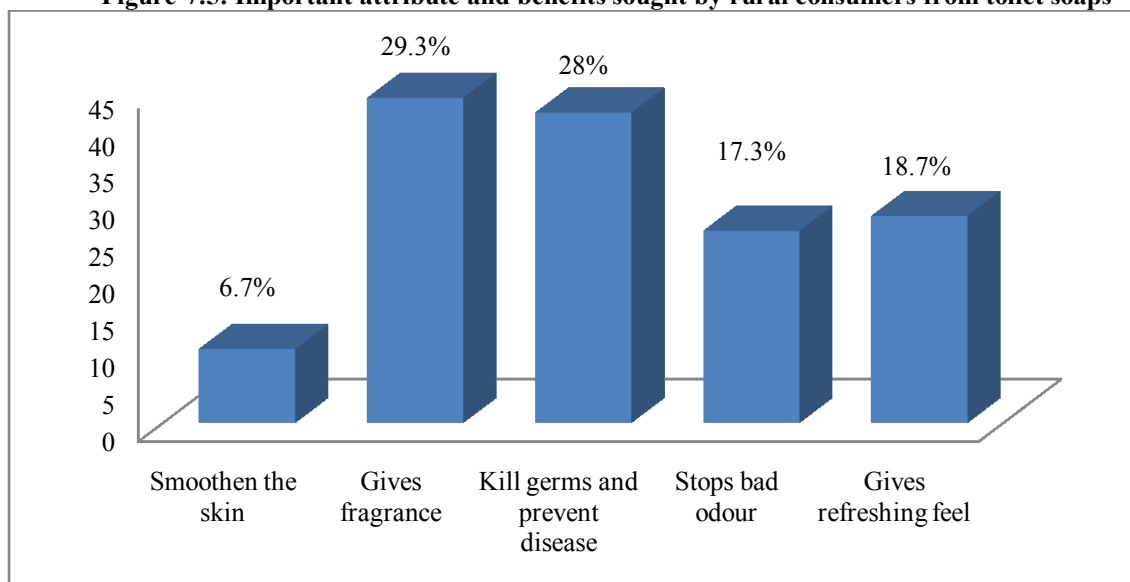
Interpretation: It was inferred from the above chart that most of the rural consumers look for fragrance (29.3%) in toilet soap, followed by germ killing and disease prevention (28%), refreshing feel (18.7%), stopping bad odour (17.3%) and smoothening the skin (6.7%).

VIII. Findings

8.1 The average awareness of the respondents in the rural market for toilet soap was 37.96%. The highest degree of awareness was found with Lifebuoy (100%) followed by Lux (89.3%) and the brand awareness was least for Dove (09.3%). It was inferred that people in rural market have varying brand awareness for different toilet soaps.

8.2 Testing the hypothesis, it was found that there is no statistical significant relationship between the age and the brand preference towards toilet soaps. In other words, males and females have same attitude towards soap brands.

8.3 There was no statistical association between gender and brand preference towards toilet soaps in rural market.

8.4 There was no statistical significant relationship between the family type and the brand preference in rural market.

8.5 There was statistical significant relationship between the occupation and the brand preference. In other words, different occupational categories have different brand preference towards toilet soaps.

8.6 There was statistical significant relationship between the annual income and the brand preference.

8.7 It was found that most important marketing mix variable which influences the brand preference in rural markets was price (38.7%), followed by product quality (32%), shopkeeper's advice (17.3%), and promotion (9.3%).

8.8 It was found that most of the rural consumers look for fragrance (29.3%) in toilet soap, followed by germ killing and disease prevention (28%), refreshing feel (18.7%), stopping bad odour (17.3%) and smoothening the skin (6.7%).

IX. Conclusion:

The brand awareness in rural markets with respect to FMCGs in general and toilet soaps in particular is showing an increasing trend. People living in rural India are enthusiastic and curious to learn new things and thus are becoming more demanding. This is not an overnight change; it took many years to witness these changes and there are several factors involved, viz., globalization, revolution in telecommunication, exposure to culture of cities, higher education, migration of people to cities for employment etc. These factors not only boosted their economy and purchasing power but also ignited the inherent virtue of human beings to look and feel better and thus inclined towards toilet soaps and other cosmetics. To move rural buyers from brand trial to brand preference, brands need to deliver on their value proposition. All the marketing mix variables have remarkable impact on the position of the brand in the buyer's preference. Quality is also important in the context of rural purchase preference and consumption of FMCG. Therefore, organizations should not compromise on the quality of FMCG. The responses of customers are quite heterogeneous in the rural India. Customers prefer

some of the popular brands but they also prefer to use relatively new and less popular brands. Marketers need to focus on plummeting the information search time by inducing product trials and successfully reaching out to the consumer through ideal information channels. Marketers also need to understand the product specific evaluation process from primary research to mapping the succession of their brand from consideration set to preference set.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE
TOPIC: "Rural Brand Awareness and Preferences for FMCGs: An Empirical Study on Keonjhar District of Odisha, India.''

NOTE: 1. Kindly tick (√) against the item which is most applicable.
2. Information provided will be treated as confidential and used only for the purpose of research.
* * *   * * *   * * *

1. Name of the Respondent (Optional): _____
2. Residential Address: Village _____
3. Gender: Male: [   ] Female: [   ]
4. Age Group:
    Up to 25 [   ], 25-30 [   ], 31-50 [   ], 51& above [   ]
5. Family Type: Joint [   ]
                 Nuclear [   ]
6. Educational level of the Respondent:
- Illiterate [   ]
- Up to 5th [   ]
- Up to 7th [   ]
- Up to 10th [   ]
- Up to 12th [   ]
- Degree [   ]
- PG [   ]
7. Occupation of the respondent:
- Agriculture [   ]
- Govt. Service [   ]
- Pvt. Service [   ]
- Business [   ]

- Others [   ]
8. Annual Income of Household :
- Below Rs. 20,000   [   ]
- Rs. 20,001-50,000   [   ]
- Rs. 50,001-1,00,000   [   ]
- Rs. 1,00,000-2,00,000 [   ]
- Above Rs. 2,00,000   [   ]
9. Which of the following brands are known to you? Please tick (√) against the brands (Brand Awareness).

Sl. No.	Soap Brands	Response
1	Breeze	
2	Nima	
3	Godrej No. 1	
4	Superia	
5	Lifebuoy	
6	Vivel	
7	Rexona	
8	Lux	
9	Hamam	
10	Santoor	
11	Margo	
12	Medimix	
13	Fiama Di Wills	
14	Dettol	
15	Cinthol	
16	Liril	
17	Mysore Sandal	
18	Pears	
19	Dove	

10. Which brand of soap do you prefer the most from following list?**(Brand Preference)**
- Lux [   ]
- Lifebuoy [   ]
- Nima [   ]
- Breeze [   ]
- Rexona [   ]
- Hamam [   ]
- Superia [   ]

11. What is the most important factor which leads to prefer your soap brand?
- Product quality[   ]
- Price [   ]
- Only brand available at my shop [   ]
- Shopkeepers Advice [   ]
- Promotion [   ]
12. What is the most important attribute and benefit you look forward in a soaps?
- It should smoothen the skin [   ]
- It should give fragrance [   ]
- It should kills germs and prevents disease [   ]
- It should stops bad odor [   ]
- It should gives refreshing feel [   ]