



Issues and Opportunities of the FMCG Sector in the Indian Rural Market

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Abstract

A key component of the Indian economy is the FMCG industry. Over the past fifty or so years, the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry in India has started to take shape. Every area of human life has been impacted by this industry. The organised sector and the unorganised sector have long separated the Indian FMCG market. The FMCG business in the US is dominated by a small number of multinational companies, but India's sector, which is of Rs. 460 billion, is still quite fragmented, with around half of sales being contributed to unbranded, unpackaged, home-made goods. This creates a huge potential for manufacturers of branded goods who can persuade customers to purchase branded goods. The rural market markets have gained importance in recent years as a result of the increase in the purchasing power of rural consumers brought about by the overall growth of the economy. Due to the green revolution, rural communities are consuming a lot of produced goods from both urban and industrial sources.

Key words: rural market, FMCG product, Rural Consumer,

INTRODUCTION

All of us are consumers. Because of marketing, we can get the goods and services we need for the moment We are born until the moment we pass away (Ewen, S., 2022). Through the process of marketing, both the buyer and the seller contribute. (e.g. goods, services, and money etc.) to each other for maximum possible satisfaction. Rural marketing is becoming more significant today. These days, there is a significant demand for it as more businesses look to expand into rural areas for a variety of reasons. (Gopalswamy, TP. 2009)

Salient features of rural India: Some common characteristics that do exist among most of the rural areas in India are as follows:

1. Vast area and dispersed population: The rural Indian market is fairly sizable. There are 135 million people in India, and 65 percent of them reside in rural areas. In the rural India, which has 930 million

consumers spread across 627,000 villages, offers a sizable consumer base for businesses to seize, according to recent studies performed by the NCAER. It provides huge opportunities to marketers.

2. Growing buying power: Currently, 30% to 50% of all FMCG majors' sales come from the rural FMCG market. A valuation of Rs 14 lakh crore annually is also anticipated for the sector in India by 2025 (Chattaraj, D. 2015). Additionally, a 38% share of the rural market is predicted, providing Indian marketers with new opportunities. In light of the fact that 65% of the population still lives in rural areas, rural marketing is a booming business both now and, in the future, (Butler, R. 2022).

3. Constant market expansion: The Indian growth story is currently reaching India's interior. About two-thirds of India's 930 million people live in rural areas, which are experiencing growth in income, consumption (Dube, A. 2022), and output. With a US\$ 5.83 billion investment for 2009–10, the current Budget's emphasis on expanding the rural development and government introduced different schemes in rural areas such as vibrant villages etc. to all states will help the rural economy since industry and services often have greater employment multipliers than the agricultural sector (Economic survey 2022). In the current fiscal year, the combined share of industry and services in rural GDP increased to 58 percent from 27% in the previous fiscal year, according to research by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER 2020).

5. A poor quality of life. Indian villages typically have homes made of mud, clay, and bamboo. For fresh milk and eggs, the majority of these homes keep cows and hens. They keep domesticated animals as well. The villages' commitment to environmental preservation is their best quality. The majority of the locals are farmers, and they gather forest products. Blacksmiths carpenters and potters are typical examples of other occupations. There aren't many rooms in their residences. In most cases, they wouldn't even have doors. Even though majority of villages now have electricity (Economic survey 2022), the still few does not, but there is very low connectivity of internet and mobile network (Chen, C. F., Greig, J., Nelson, H., & Li, F. 2022). They typically cultivate their own veggies and food crops and share a well for water. Due to the lack of water, women in places like Rajasthan, Bundelkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra (Latur) travel great distances just to fetch it (A. R. T., & Pandey, 2016).

There aren't many transportation options available in the villages unless they're significant ones. As a result, one would need to board a bus or auto-rickshaw from the next town, which one would have to share with at least four other people (Agrawal, R.2018).

6. A traditional viewpoint. The majority of rural residents have traditional views. They hold to the doctrine of spirituality. Likewise, they don't understand scientific principles since some spiritual leaders have a profound influence on their thinking. They advocate returning to ancient civilization. For this reason, rural populations are reluctant to adopt new concepts, ideas, and services or products. They believe that the past was a glorious age. If new systems and thinking is adopted, it can damage our society (Prasad, S. C., & Quet, M. 2022).

7. Separate marketing mix required: as we understand that distribution of rural community is scattered, low purchasing power, traditional view point of thinking and some misconception about modern life style, create different scenario in rural area. Due to this, FMCG Manufacturers need different marketing mix

procurement for rural area, before purchasing a product or services, rural consumers take advice from different person like elders, brother, sister, friends and neighbor etc(Singh. A. & Kumar. R. 209 and Attri, R., & Bairagi, R. 2022). And rural consumers don't believe on television, radio, newspapers' advertising without verification. For this rural area required separate marketing mixed strategy than urban area in India (Datta, H., van Heerde, H. J., Dekimpe, M. G., & Steenkamp, J. B. E. 2022).

FMCG Sector in India

The Indian Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry began to shape during the last fifty- odd years. The FMCG sector is a cornerstone of the Indian economy. In India, the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry is vital to the country's economic health. This sector touches every aspect of human life. Indian FMCG market has been divided for a long time between the organized sector and the unorganized sector (Anupama, S., Dharmajan, D., & Nair, R. 2022). The fourth-largest sector in India is fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), and it has been growing steadily over time as a result of increased disposable income, a growing youth population, and growing consumer brand awareness. In India, household and personal care products account for 50% of FMCG sales, making this sector a significant contribution to the country's GDP (Singh, A., & Kumar, R. 2017).

Due to its middle-class population, which is larger than the entire population of the United States, India is a country that no FMCG player can afford to leave out. As more people begin to climb the economic ladder and the general public has access to the advantages of economic advancement, the FMCG market in India is expanding. More importantly, India's population is getting more consumerist due to rising aspirations, with a median age of barely Government programmed to broaden financial inclusion and create social safety (Kumar, B. 2022).

The primary growth factors for the industry have been greater awareness, better access, and shifting lifestyles. The largest contributor to the entire revenue produced by the FMCG sector in India, which accounts for a revenue share of about 55% is the urban segment. However, compared to urban India, the FMCG market has risen more quickly in rural India during the past few years. The semi-urban and rural populations are expanding quickly, and 50% of all rural expenditure is on FMCG products (Tambe, S. 2022).

NEED OF STUDY

This study focuses on the key issues and opportunities of FMCG industry in rural areas. Numerous studies have examined FMCG products in rural areas. However, the majority of researches concentrate on a small number of goods on specific rural area issues. While the rural market may have a huge untapped potential, it should be noted that due to a number of associated issues, doing business there is not always straightforward. Therefore, rural marketing is a time-consuming endeavor and solving the issues calls for significant financial inputs in developing effective tactics. The number of people living in poverty has not significantly decreased. As a result; rural marketplaces are typically characterized by less developed markets and less developed people. The vast majorities of rural residents are fatalistic, tied by tradition, and adhere to long-held taboos and practices. The lifestyles of the people vary significantly. The typical number

of brand options for a rural customer is 2 or 3, compared to many more for an urban one. Comparatively to this urban counterpart, the rural customer thinks in a somewhat straightforward manner. People may not readily adopt new behaviors in rural areas since customs and traditions still dominate daily life.

4. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objective of this study is:-

- To identify the key issues and opportunities present in the rural area to FMCG sector.

• RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

Descriptive research design has been used in this study to understand the challenges and opportunities facing the FMCG industry in rural areas.

Sources of Data: The study was based on secondary data. The secondary data from both published and unpublished forms were used to build a support base. The main source of secondary data was relevant journals, magazines, various research reports and surveys published by different organization.

Key issues and opportunities of FMCG Sector in Rural Area

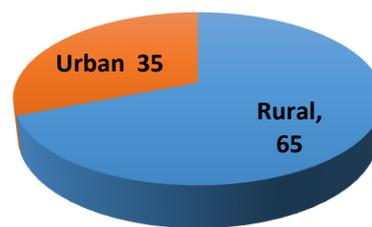
The FMCG industry is India's fourth-largest sector based on secondary statistics. It provides its clients with a broad range of goods and services. Currently, FMCG Sector plays an essential role in rural development. This industry has altered the landscape of rural areas in recent years. In rural areas, FMCG producers offer a variety of goods and services at reasonable prices (Das, A. K. 2022). As a result, rural residents' lifestyle has improved. The rural areas have enormous opportunity for FMCG marketers, but they also present some significant hurdles (Mayer, A. 2022). The following opportunities and issues present in Indian rural areas:

Opportunities in rural market

Large market: The FMCG marketers have access to a sizable market in India's rural areas. The manufacturers benefit greatly from these fantastic prospects. Given that 65 percent of Indians live in rural areas, there are a large number of potential customers. Focusing on this region will allow FMCG marketers to generate more money than they would in urban areas (Arial, S. 2022).

High Growth Rate: More than a million new customers have been added to the market annually as its growth has been between 3 and 4 percent. According to recent statistics, sales of several consumer brands, including those for communications, eatables, vehicles, and cosmetics, have increased dramatically in rural markets relative to metropolitan markets (Hagargi, A. K. S., & Kumar, A. 2011 & Rani, M, 2013 & Pattnaik, I., & Lahiri-Dutt, K. 2022)

Sr. No	Population	Percentage
1	Rural	65
2	Urban	35



Source (Census, 2011)

High Demand: According to Morgan Stanley (2022), India's rural demand will return as a result of a number of factors including greater accessibility, an improving labor market, and better trade terms for the rural sector, Efforts are being made by policymakers to diversify rural livelihoods, increase access to necessities which helps lower barriers to structural transformation and boost agricultural output. This condition poses high demand in rural areas (Yaqoob, N., et al2022).



(Source: MMR, 2020)

Brand consciousness: The rural people prefer to purchase loose goods over packaged goods or unbranded goods over branded goods. This is only a myth right now. The rural customers have switched from buying loose or unbranded produce to buying brands. As a result of an increase in disposable income and literacy rates, they were attracted to the modern way of life (Paul, J. 2019). They now frequently buy packaged and branded goods. However, because branded goods are scarce in rural areas, the consumers buy domestic goods due to unavailability of branded or FMCG goods. Thus, marketers want to increase their revenue from this area. They should make sure their goods are available in this market (Kumar, V., Rajan, B., Venkatesan, R., &Lecinski, J. 2019).

Change in lifestyle: In response to changes in socio-economic environment, people in rural areas are adopting modern lifestyles. Thus, the needs of the rural population have changed. They require a variety of products and services to maintain their lifestyle (Sun, T., & Wu, G. 2004 & Sonawane, P. A. 2021). Due to

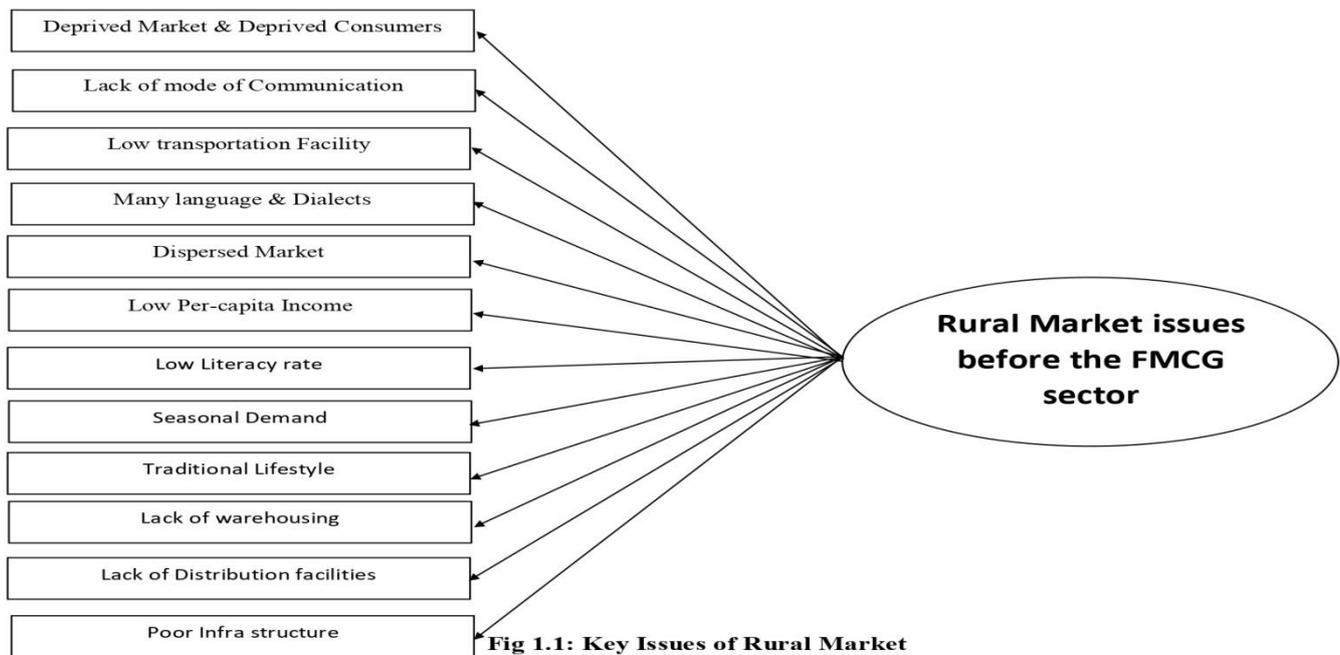
this, the situation of demand remains. This creates an opportunity for the FMCG manufacturer. At this time, the marketers should take advantage of this situation and increase their production and market is also easily accessible to new marketers (Giddy, J. K., Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. 2022).

Issues of FMCG Sector in the rural area

The characteristics of rural markets and consumers make it difficult for marketers to properly connect with them. While arguing for the opportunities that are quickly emerging in rural areas, one should not minimize the very difficult challenges associated with planning for expansion (Ray, S. 2019). The transportation and adequate infrastructure is needed for marketing activities. The marketing professionals struggle to access markets due to inadequate transportation infrastructure. There are no possibilities for both public and private storage in the rural areas. The marketers struggle with the issue of product storage (Gupta, M., & Jain, M. 2016 & Lamani, C., & Thimmaiah, T. D. 2022). It is a crucial first stage in the processing of the product. A high cost for packing will raise the final price of the goods. It is advised that marketers create packaging for rural markets using less expensive materials. Rural communities face numerous media-related issues. Seasonal demand is rural marketing's biggest obstacle. It's because a seasonal component accounts for 75% of rural income.

In this area, demand comes from the rural population, and demand is influenced by behavior and income of consumer. Compared to urban areas, rural areas have lower per capita incomes. Again, the structure of land ownership, which is a fundamental asset, contributes to the severely skewed distribution of rural income. Compared to metropolitan areas, rural areas have a lower literacy rate. This brings up the issue of communication for marketing purposes once more (De Mooij, M. 2021). The main issues that marketers face are distribution costs and a lack of retail outlets in this area. At the product arrangement stage, it is important to consider the unique consuming habits, preferences, and demands of rural consumers to ensure that the final product meets their requirements (Mahajan, Y. 2020). Although there is a clear trend nationally, marketers must understand the social dynamics and approach changes inside each community. There are some important issues in rural market listed as under.





(Source: Authors compiled based secondary data)

There is no doubt that the rural market has a wealth of possibilities for FMCG manufacturers. The rural market has a wide variety of consumer groups. This condition poses numerous difficulties. The above figure 1.1 indicates the main issues that are present in rural areas in India. If the marketers ignore these issues, they may not be successful in this market. During collection of secondary data, many challenges have been found in rural areas of India. These challenges as listed in the given figures 1.1.

However, the rural market in India is a huge market. The market is scattered and divided into 627000 villages, with more than 60 per cent of the villages being inhabited by less than 2,000 people. There are no proper means of communication. Introduction of mobile revolution, mobile connectivity has increased (Revankar, B. 2021). Due to low literacy rate, it is an ineffective medium of communication (Gokilavani, R., Durgarani, M., & Krishnakumari, S. 2022). This situation creates less awareness about the product and services.

There are numerous dialects and languages in rural area. Because the rural consumers only speak their local language, the rural consumers are unable to properly read the product's name. They identify product based on color, logo, size of products (Singh, A & Kumar. R., 2017). This location's lack of transportation infrastructure, along with the product or service's very erratic distribution, creates ideal conditions for the production of Counterfeit goods. They make enormous profits by marketing their goods as a branded item.

India is an agricultural country. There are two seasons of cropping pattern namely Rabi and Kharif. People earn money after harvesting the crops. After that they buy goods and services, make various festive events like marriage, purchase of luxury items etc. on bases on this information, there is seasonal demand in rural area of India.

Although, there has been a lot of technological development in the rural sector, technology changes the landscape of rural area. Yet most of the rural people live a traditional lifestyle. They believe in traditional and spiritual thinking. This thinking also affects the buying behavior of the rural consumer. The rural people buy products and services based on their cultural, old beliefs and customs. So, the manufacturer should focus on the traditional life style of the rural consumers (Goyal, D., Soni, Y., & Gandhi, G. 2022).

Due to inadequate infrastructure, there is a lack of storage and distribution. The result is that the goods and service are unavailable. Most marketers are unable to reach all local regions (Mudalkar, d. 2022). Because of poor transportation and roads, it is the main cause of poor distribution. The manufacturers are unable to store their goods in rural areas due to storage issues (Gupta, M., & Jain, M. 2016&Adewumi, S. A. 2020). These are the key problems that exist in the rural environment. If marketers want to success in this market, he ought to be aware of these issues. They achieve enormous success in rural India if they can get beyond these difficulties (Kumar, R., & Kumar, R.2021).

Findings

This study found that India's rural areas provide a wealth of prospects. Since these regions are home to nearly 65 percent of the population. can give marketers a large consumer base. Because there is little rivalry in this sector, marketers can easily enter in it. Because of this marketer could enter this market with easily, there is relatively limited competition. The rural consumers adopted a modern lifestyle as a result of technical advancement, which greatly increased demand in rural areas. The purchasing power of rural consumers has increased as a result of the rise in per capita income. Due to this, rural consumers can buy luxury or branded goods.

However, opportunities abound in the rural sector. But some of the most important picks are available in this market. These issues are scattered market size, low literacy, lack of communication facilities, multiple languages, low per capita income, seasonal demand, traditional lifestyle, poor infrastructure, lack of storage and distribution facilities. These are important issues in the rural market before FMCG producers.

Suggestion and Recommendation

It is a fact that India's rural market has incredible opportunities. But very few marketers operate their business in this area. The reason behind this is that the marketers have minimal knowledge about this market. And they believe that there is no scope of FMCG products in rural areas. It is a common myth that rural consumers have a traditional lifestyle. They do not buy luxury or branded products. But the scenario is different in this market. With the introduction of technology and availability of a vast range of goods and services, they are moving from domestic product to luxury or branded product. Now they are ready to accept any change which increases the standard of living without reducing the cultural diversity. This study suggests that marketers should understand these opportunities and issues of rural market before entering this market.

Conclusion

The rural Indian market has a huge amount of potential. And there is no doubt that India is home to a sizable number of companies. Yes, marketers are hesitant to join these areas. because they are unfamiliar with rural areas. They construct many myths in their minds based on this information. This study's primary

goal is to inform FMCG manufacturers on the current situation of the rural areas. The majority of FMCG businesses will enter this market based on actual information. Following that, rural area development would be ensured. Additionally, marketers will make profit as well.

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