CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

With the far-reaching changes in rural India by means of the agricultural revolution, spread of education, improved infrastructure, better banking facilities etc., significant changes have been noticed in the buying and consumption patterns of the rural consumers. All these factors initiated a consumption drive among the rural population. As a result, a dominant theme emerging over the last few years in Indian marketing is rural marketing. The increasing penetration of electronic media and advertising into rural areas has also facilitated this. In addition to this, the rural population is also aspiring for better lifestyles, especially with the increasing disposable incomes accruing to a significant section of them. The Indian and multinational consumer durable and Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)\(^1\) companies identified the vast potential of the rural markets and have attempted to target these markets. Although the practical constraints in terms of lack of transportation and communication facilities along with

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limited rural understanding acted as impediments in fully comprehending the rural scenario, some companies did make inroads into the rural market overcoming such obstacles.

1.2 DEFINITION OF RURAL MARKET

The concept “rural market” is a very broad one and it is interpreted in many ways. In the Indian context, the word ‘rural’ is so much associated with agriculture and farmers that rural marketing tends to be seen as a marketing of inputs or outputs related to agriculture. As the primary occupation of the rural India is agriculture or its allied activities, this argument is true to a certain extent. According to 2001 census, almost three fourths of the rural populations were dependent on agriculture and its allied activities for their livelihood.

For understanding the rural marketing framework, three district areas have been identified within the domain of rural marketing. (Mithileshwar Jha)\(^2\). The rural to urban transactions deal with a wide range of products, which flow from the rural to the urban sector. These mainly include

agricultural products like food grains, oilseeds, cotton, sugarcane, etc., and finished products like handlooms, textiles, earthenware, brassware, etc., by rural industries, craftsmen and artisans that find a market in the urban areas. The rural to rural transactions limit production and consumption within the rural area itself. These may include agricultural tolls, baskets, ropes, household goods, earthenware, etc., which are produced by artisans like blacksmiths, carpenters and cobblers, who cater to the professional and household needs of the rural people. The urban to rural flow of manufactured branded goods namely consumables, durables and agricultural inputs, etc., as domain is the concern of this paper. As the rural population is aspiring to change their lifestyles, with the increasing disposable incomes, the urban manufacturing and service sectors have entered the rural scene with their consumables, durables and services.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF RURAL MARKETS

Rural India has a population of around 742 million in 200 million households (Census of India, 2001). Agriculture and allied activities are still the means for livelihood for majority of this population. Although the institutional reforms and economic development programmes did not have
any significant impact, the green revolution had a sweeping effect on the rural sector in many parts of India, especially in those regions with access to irrigation. The advent of market-oriented farming on commercial lines with the help of improved and advance technology and mechanization resulted in appreciable increase in rural income in these and other regions especially for middle and large farmers³.

An estimated 75 per cent of India’s people live in rural areas, making for a market size of about 750 million people distributed across 6,00,000 villages. Though 350 million of these people are desperately poor and survive only at subsistence level, the remaining 400 million are economically better off due to a combination of 11 years’ favourable monsoon conditions, increased agricultural yields, and a rise in rural mini-industries. India’s National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) estimates that of these 400 million people, more than 200 million, a number roughly equal to India’s urban population, are active participants


[As per the survey of the marketing & Research Team (MART), a rural marketing and development consultancy, 53 per cent of FMCG and 59 per cent of consumer durable sales come from rural areas. In the mobile phone sector, out of the 2 million BSNL connections, 50 per cent are in small towns and villages, and out of 20 million rediffmail subscriptions, 60 per cent come from the small towns. The per capita income in rural areas is Rs.9481 compared to Rs.19,407 in urban areas].
in the modern economy. By this, the NCAER means that these 200 million people have enough disposable income to purchase (in some cases independently; in others, collectively) a few modern goods and services such as bicycles, water pumps, radios, kerosene lanterns, and more recently, tractors, motorbikes, TVs, and refrigerators. Rural purchasing power is apparent in that rural India accounts of a sizable percentage of the markets for many consumer goods sold in India. According to the NCAER, rural India comprise 50-60 per cent of the market for motorcycles, 40-50 per cent of the market for wristwatches, black and white TVs, cassette recorders, and mopeds, and 20-30 per cent of the market for colour TVs and refrigerators.

Although some companies have been successful in their rural ventures, it is noted that a comprehensive understanding of the villages does not exist. The published data available is mainly at the district level, which does not incorporate all the variables identified either due to the unavailability of data or the lack of skills in utilizing the available data. This gap in terms of the information brings in limitations in the formulation of marketing strategies and thereby the success of these strategies.

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1.4 RURAL MARKETING IN INDIAN ECONOMY

The concept of Rural Marketing in Indian Economy\(^5\) has always played an influential role in the lives of people. In India, leaving out a few metropolitan cities, all the districts and industrial townships are connected with rural markets.

The rural market in India is not a separate entity in itself and it is highly influenced by the sociological and behavioural factors operating in the country. The rural population in India accounts for around 627 million, which is exactly 74.3 percent of the total population.

The rural market in India brings in bigger revenues in the country, as the rural regions comprise the maximum consumers in this country. The rural market in Indian economy generates almost more than half of the country's income. Rural marketing in Indian economy can be classified under two broad categories. These are:

- The market for consumer goods that comprise both durable and non-durable goods

• The market for agricultural inputs that include fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, and so on

The concept of rural marketing in India has often been found to form ambiguity in the minds of people who think rural marketing is all about agricultural marketing. However, rural marketing determines the carrying out of business activities bringing in the flow of goods from urban sectors to the rural regions of the country as well as the marketing of various products manufactured by the non-agricultural workers from rural to urban areas. To be precise, Rural Marketing in India Economy covers two broad sections, namely:

• Selling of agricultural items in the urban areas
• Selling of manufactured products in the rural regions

Some of the important features or characteristics of Rural Marketing in India Economy are being listed below:

• With the initiation of various rural development programmes there have been an upsurge of employment opportunities for the rural poor.
One of the biggest causes behind the steady growth of rural market is that it is not exploited and also yet to be explored.

- The rural market in India is vast and scattered and offers a plethora of opportunities in comparison to the urban sector. It covers the maximum population and regions and thereby, the maximum number of consumers.

- The social status of the rural regions is precarious as the income level and literacy is extremely low along with the range of traditional values and superstitious beliefs that have always been a major impediment in the progression of this sector.

The steps taken by the Government of India to initiate proper irrigation, infrastructural developments, prevention of flood, grants for fertilizers, and various schemes to cut down the poverty line have improved the condition of the rural masses.
1.5 FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS

Fast moving consumer goods (FMCG)\textsuperscript{6}, are the products that are sold quickly at relatively low cost. Though the absolute profit made on FMCG products is relatively small, they generally sell in large quantities, so the cumulative profit on such products can be large. Examples of FMCG generally include a wide range of frequently purchased consumer products such as toiletries, soap, cosmetics, teeth cleaning products, shaving products and detergents, as well as other non-durables such as glassware, light bulbs, batteries, paper products and plastic goods. FMCG may also include pharmaceuticals, consumer electronics, packaged food products and drinks, although these are often categorized separately.

FMCG products are generally replaced or fully used up over a short period, usually a few days or weeks, or months, but within one year. This contrasts with durable goods or major appliances such as kitchen appliances, which are generally replaced over a period of several years. In Britain, “White goods” in FMCG refers to large households electronic items such as refrigerators. Smaller items such as TV sets and stereo systems are

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1.6 FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS INDUSTRY IN INDIA

The Indian FMCG market\(^7\) has slowed down in growth for sometimes. From a growth rate in excess of 12 per cent in early 90’s it has registered only 4.4 per cent odd so in the last five years. In the last five years, the GDP has grown by a Current Account Growth Rate (CAGR) of close to 6 per cent at real prices. So FMCG business is not even growing at the pace of the domestic economy. One would have thought that in a country where penetration and consumption are still low by international standards, this industry catering to basic necessities would have registered higher growth. But in the last decade sectors like telecom and durables have registered growth spectacularly but not FMCG.

The reasons for the slow growth have been discussed and debated endlessly. Primarily (a) The housing, telecom and durables sectors and a latent demand which ensured explosive growth. (b) The easier and cheaper availability of credit supported this growth. (c) The consumer started spending more on products of these sectors and had lesser money for FMCG products and so downgraded in FMCG.

To counter this, most companies have got into a battle of market share and aim to differentiate themselves on trade reach or advertising efficiency. The route to winning has been believed to be better distribution, operational improvements or outflanking the competition on pricing and promotions. However on hard evidence, these directions have delivered incremental growth and also not helped in exploding the categories.

1.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF FMCG IN INDIA

**Branding:** Creating strong brands is important for FMCG companies and they devote considerable money and effort in developing brands. With differentiation on functional attributes being difficult to achieve in this competitive market, branding results in consumer loyalty and sales growth.

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8 [www.erc.metu.edu.tr/menu/series05/0503](http://www.erc.metu.edu.tr/menu/series05/0503), 2007-09, p.3-4.
**Distribution Network:** Given the fragmented nature of the Indian retailing industry and the problems of infrastructure, FMCG companies need to develop extensive distribution networks to achieve a high level of penetration in both the urban and rural markets. Once they are able to create a strong distribution network, they obtain significant advantages over their competitors.

**Contract Manufacturing:** As FMCG companies concentrate on brand building, product development and creating distribution networks, they are at the same time outsourcing their production requirements to third party manufacturers. Moreover, with several items reserved for the small scale industry and with these SSI units enjoying tax incentives, the contract manufacturing route has grown in importance and popularity.

**Large Unorganized Sector:** The unorganized sector has a presence in most product categories of the FMCG sector. Small companies from this sector have used their locational advantages and regional presence to reach out to remote areas where large consumer products have only limited presence. The low cost structure also gives them an advantage.

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9 [www.consumergoods.indiabizclub.com](http://www.consumergoods.indiabizclub.com)
1.8 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN RURAL AREAS

In recent days\textsuperscript{10} consumer India is at the point where there is a multiplicative effect of income growth, aspiration to consume and a changed consumption friendly ideology/social discourse across the income board, especially in rural India. Hence, the buying behaviour of rural consumers has became a hot-topic of discussion because rural India, in recent days, is enthusiastically consuming everything from shampoo to motor cycles and this “rural predilection” is being considered as one of significant topics of market analysis. Besides, we know well that purchase decisions in India homes have become a collective process with women and teenage children playing a major role on product and brand choices. Decision-making has become a joint process in the family; woman is the initiator and/or product evaluator, man the financier and child, an influencer. Hence, the market analysts are adopting both the “product window” approach and “consumer or people window” approach for getting an insight into the structure and drives of consumer demand particularly in rural India. The first approach deals with the perspective of “how mush of what is being bought” and the

latter deals with “how many of what kind of people are buying”. The thrust is not just what is being bought but also who is buying and analysis has to be made considering both “product segments” and “consumer segments’.

The Indian Market Demographics Report – 1998 (NCAER) has estimated that rural India’s market for consumer durables is being worth around Rs.4,500 crores with an average annual growth rate of around 8 per cent. It is growing steadily and the recent estimates reveal that it is bigger than the urban market for both FMCGS (53 per cent share of the total market and durables (59 per cent). The annual size of the rural market in value terms is currently estimated at around 50,000 crores for FMCGS, Rs.5000 crores for durables, Rs.45,000 crore for automobiles. The market analysts feel that rural markets are vital for the growth of most companies like Hindustan lever, the largest FMCG Company in the country. More than half its annual turnover of Rs.9954 crores comes from the rural market. The situation is similar for companies manufacturing dry cells, wristwatches, cassette recorders, soaps, tea and many other products.\textsuperscript{11}

Marketing is all about knowing the consumer/customer. Rural consumers are fundamentally different from their urban counterparts and

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p.31-34.
different rural geographies display considerable heterogeneity and hence it requires rural–specific and region–specific analysis of consumer behaviour for understanding the rural consumers, to know well to what extent the consumer welfare is being enjoyed by the rural consumers. A rural consumer may be illiterate but he is not unintelligent. He is conscious of value for money and for every rupee he spends, he expects good value. After getting a 120 per cent satisfaction only, he pays for the product. His decision to purchase a product is influenced by a lot of consultations with family members, co-consumers and this approach is indicative of his high involvement to purchase a product. Tricky, clever, gimmicky or even suggestive advertising does not work with him. Rural consumer is very much influenced by ‘edutainment’ and he is said to be the pivot around which all the retail business practices and activities revolve. Hence, satisfaction of the consumers becomes the most important goal of retail business. Being influenced by all the above factors, consumer-shopping behaviour, which is a part of consumer behaviour assumes much importance in the present consumer–oriented marketing system in rural area, with particular reference to ‘gender attention’.
(i) Mode of Purchase

The rural consumers are different compared to the civilized urban consumers. They attach some personal preferences and goodwill to the shop owners. They habitually visit the same shops and are accustomed to purchasing the goods. They even introduce their children and suggest to them to buy from that shop only. This preference and intimacy often makes the shop owners also to extent goods on credit basis and the shop owners continue to lend the consumer goods on credit basis for years together.

(ii) Bargaining

Marketing strategists feel that rural consumer is more rational as a buyer and exhibits a higher level of rationality compared to the urban consumer. Whenever a consumer is familiar and aware of information about prices of the products and marketing conditions, certainly he tries to get good value for each and every rupee spent on the purchase of goods. This rationality often leads to bargaining and bargaining is an attempt of that consumer to keep the selling cost of a product lower or equal to the utility or satisfaction that he derives form that particular product. This tendency of bargaining is generally found in the consumers who belong to the lower
income groups and bargaining springs form the economic situation wherein the means to purchase are insufficient to purchase the quantity of products required. The level of bargaining decreases or does not exist even, whenever the means to purchase (income) are excessively available with consumers.

(iii) Involvement of Family Members

One of the most important areas\(^{12}\) for markets to understand in planning their strategies is how families reach their purchase decisions. Following are the major characteristics of a family:

1. A family makes, and spends money continuously for many years: The sheer number of decisions is so large that it is almost impossible to measure them all or to generalize about them accurately.

2. Family decisions are made with a private, intimate, social group. They are therefore not easy to observe and may depend upon personal histories within the family, which the researcher is unaware of.

3. Family consumption decisions are often not independent from one another: They are difficult to study in isolation. In most families, the family members’ needs and desires for purchase exceed the limited

income. The allocation of resources is thus necessary and trade-offs occur among alternative products and services.

4. Family has multiple decisions Decisions range from individual choices made by members within the home, to truly joint decisions that may involve any combination of members. The husband and wife might decide about buying a bed, while the wife and daughter might think of a dress. Capturing what actually goes on when multiple decision-makers are involved is another area worthy of research.

5. Family decision-making differs by the type of product being studied: Most marketeers are interested in family decision process for “their” particular product or service.

6. Families differ significantly among themselves: Families differ in terms of individual personalities, wealth, age, social standing, lifestyles, goods already owned etc. In addition, decision styles also vary. Some families are patriarchies, in which the father exercises influence over major consumer decisions, while others are matriarchies, in which the mother rules supreme; still others are egalitarian where the power is more equally shared with the children perhaps weighing in with considerable influences of their own.
Further, within each family, the styles may shift overtime, as the spouse’s work, and situations change, the children mature, and divorce may intervene\textsuperscript{13}.

**Family Decision-making**

Family decision-making basically refers to the manner in which family members interact and influence each other when making purchase choices for the household\textsuperscript{14}. Although a family is being recognized as the basic decision-making unit, marketeers most frequently examine the attitudes and behaviour of one family member whom they believe to be the major decision-maker marketeers need to identify which family members take on what roles\textsuperscript{15}.

**Family Roles**

There are multiple roles enacted within a household’s buying process. Some roles are more important than the others depending on the product and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13}William L. Wilkie, *Consumer Behaviour*, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Ed. (John Wiley and Sons), New York, 1994, pp.399-400.
  \item \textsuperscript{14}Peter J. Paul and Olson c. Jerry, *Consumer Behaviour*, 3\textsuperscript{rd} Edition, (Richard D. Irwin, Home wood III), 1993, pp.515-516.
\end{itemize}
situation. It is possible for the same person to play all the roles or for many
members to be involved at various stages. Five of the most important
buying roles identified by Kotler are:

**Initiator:** A person who first suggests the idea of buying the particular
product or service.

**Influencer:** A person whose views or advice carries some weight in making
the final decision.

**Decider:** A person who decides on any component of a buying decision:
whether to buy, what to buy, how to buy, or where to buy.

**Buyer:** The person who makes the actual purchase.

**User:** A person who consumes or uses the product or service.

Seven of the most important buying roles enlisted by Wilkies are as
follows:

**Stimulator:** This person who first brings up the idea of the purchase.

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Influential: These are the members whose opinions have either direct or indirect influences on the final purchase decision.

Expert: These members contribute information about the product, the possible options, where it can be bought and so on. Often, this person or person will shop around, talk to friends or consult consumer reports to obtain the information that will be passed on to the other members.

Decision-maker: In a joint decision, several persons will perform this role, which involves a decision about exactly what to buy or not to buy. In other purchases only one of the members will actually make the final decision, usually in the store.

Buyer: This person actually purchases that product, pays for it, and either takes it home or arranges for delivery. At times, this person acts as the decision-maker and at times, as a purchasing agent for another person.

Consumer: This is the person who actually uses the product.

Caretaker: This is the person or persons who undertake various tasks to store the product, prepare it for use and maintain it in an operating condition.

These roles can be enacted either openly or through non-verbal means. Several roles lead to gatekeeper activity. This means that a person
can decide either to “let in” certain information or products if he or she is in control of the “gate” through which it would enter.

**1.9 COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION IN RURAL MARKETS**

In a country\(^{19}\), where the bulk of the population still lives in villages, no development programme can make any impact unless due care is taken to carry it to the villages in a successful manner. Villagers have to be adequately informed, suitably motivated and duly facilitated, so that they not only participate but also feel involved in these programmes. This calls for an effective rural communication system.

An effective communication system helps in the transmission of messages with the help of media, from the communicator to the receiver, so that it is interpreted correctly. Thus, selection of an appropriate media-mix becomes a pre-requisite for an effective communication system. When the target audience comprises rural people, the task of designing the message as well as selecting the media-mix poses challenge to the communicator.

\(^{19}\) Darshan Parikh, darshan_j_parikh@hotmail.com, Communication and Promotion in Rural Markets, *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 2005, pp.16-17.
There is low awareness among the rural people about the government-aided rural development programmes like IRDP, TRYSEM, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Million Wells Scheme, Indira Awas Yojna, Wasteland Development Project. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of effective communication. If this is the fate of government-aided schemes having requisite facilities such as machinery, infrastructure and funds at their disposal, one can imagine the challenges for marketeers who have to face limited funds, undeveloped infrastructures, low literacy rates, etc.

Due to liberalization, companies are increasingly targeting villages since approximately 72 per cent of Indians reside there and future battles between companies for market-shares will be fought on the village battlefields. 90 per cent of the rural population is concentrated in such villages that have a population of less than 2000 (NCAER). This reflects the great potential that rural India has to drive the much-needed volumes and help the FMCG companies to bank upon the volume-driven growth. This is a boon in disguise for FMCG companies that have already reached the plateau of their business cycle in urban India.
As per the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) study, there are as many middle income and above households in the rural areas as there are in the urban areas. There are almost twice as many lower middle income households in rural areas as in the urban areas. At the highest income level there are 2.3 million urban households as against 1.6 million households in rural areas.

According to the NCAER projections, the number of middle and high-income households in rural India is expected to grow from 80 million to 111 million by 2007. In urban India, the same is expected to grow from 46 million to 59 million. Thus, the absolute size of rural India is expected to be double that of urban India.²⁰

1.10 RURAL MARKETING STRATEGY

In-depth knowledge of the village psyche, strong distribution channels and awareness are the prerequisites for making a dent into the rural market.

²⁰Ibid., p.16-17.
The Psyche

The price sensitivity of a consumer in a village is an important factor that rural marketeers should be aware of. According to Mr. Dalveer Singh – VP, Ogilvy outreach (the rural marketing division belonging to O&M) their strategy revolves around what attracts the rural customers to a product. For instance packaging: the rural customers are generally daily wage earners and thus they do not have monthly incomes like their urban counterparts. So, packaging in smaller units and lesser – priced packs makes sense to increase their affordability. "Colour" that attracts them is also an important factor. "Convenience" is the other key factor. Here "Colgate" is an apt example. First of all it introduced sachets as was required by their rural income streams. Secondly, since many households do not have proper sanitation facilities, it made sense to cap these sachets for convenience of storage while in use. Similarly, Britannia's low priced and conveniently packaged Tiger brand of biscuits became a success story in rural marketing.
Importance of distribution channel

Study on buying behaviour of rural consumer\textsuperscript{21} indicates that the rural retailers influence 35 per cent of purchase occasions. Therefore, sheer product availability can affect brand choice, volumes and market share. Some of the FMCG giants like HLL came up with a series of projects to significantly enhance the control on the rural supply chain through a network of rural sub-stockists, based in villages. Apart from this, to acquire further edge in distribution, HLL started project Shakti in partnership with self Help groups of rural women.

Awareness

Mass media is able to reach only 57 per cent of the rural population. Creating awareness then, means utilizing targeted, unconventional media including ambient media. For generating awareness, events like fairs and festivals Hats etc. are used as occasions for brand communication. Cinema vans, shop – fronts, walls and wells are other media vehicles that have been utilized to increase brand and pack visibility. Some instances of innovation in advertising like putting stickers on hand pumps and walls of the wells, putting tin plates on trees surrounding the pond have been used for

\footnote{www.hll.com.}
promoting personal care brands such as Lux and Lifebuoy and fabric wash brands like in and wheel. The strategy was to advertise not only at the point of purchase but also at the time of consumption.

Though there is definitely a lot of money in rural India, there are hindrances at the same time. The greatest obstacle is that the rural market is still evolving and there is no set format to understand consumer behaviour. A lot of research is still to be conducted in order to understand the rural consumer. Only FMCGs with deeper pockets unwavering rural commitment and staying power will be able to succeed in this rural race. Rural population's disposable incomes are increasing, their attitudes are changing, and their desire for durable and non-durable branded products is increasing. But, to tap this vast expanding market, companies need to develop effective communication strategies taking all the challenges into account.
1.11 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There was a time when rural consumers purchased most of their requirements from nearby towns and only a few select households consumed branded goods. Today, a customer in rural area is quite aware of countless products that are on offer in the market place. To reach the rural mass market the marketeers are continuously inventing various marketing strategies. In India, approximately three fourths of the population is rural and nearly one third of the national income is generated by rural areas. As such, it becomes increasingly necessary to understand the rural marketing environment, needs and buying practices of rural consumers. The importance of the rural market for some FMCG and durable marketeers is underlined by the fact that the rural market accounts for close to the 70 per cent of toilet soap users and 38 per cent of all two-wheelers purchased. The rural market accounts for half the total market for T.V. Sets, Fans, Pressure cookers, bicycles, washing soaps, shampoo, tooth paste, health drinks, blades, tea and the like. It reveals that the rural market for FMCG product is growing much faster than the urban counterpart. Hence, the present study is an attempt to analyse the buying practices of rural consumers for selected
Fast Moving consumer goods namely tooth paste, health drinks, toilet soap and shampoo in Madurai District.

1.12 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To discuss the characteristics of the sample respondents and their shopping pattern.
2. To study the extent of consultation and factors influencing the consultation with other family members.
3. To analyse the role of influences and the extent of consideration of influences suggestions.
4. To discuss the different types of promotion schemes and incentives.
5. To analyse the belief structure of the consumer towards sales promotion.
1.13 LIMITATIONS

The geographical area was limited, time was a limiting factor for the study, the researcher could concentrate on only a few FMCG like toothpaste, health drinks, shampoo and toilet soap, apart from it respondents bias. The time period gives a snapshot of activities undertaken over the year. This is another limitation. The schemes compiled also do not represent an exhaustive calendar of categories in practice. Hence generalisations drawn have to be viewed keeping in mind these limitations. If such a study is conducted over a few years, trends can be analysed. Linking incentives to the outcome (sales) would provide a better understanding of the rationale for designing promotions.
1.14 CHAPTERIZATION

The report of the present study “An Economic Study on Consumer Behaviour with special reference to selected Fast Moving Consumer Goods in Rural Areas of Madurai District” has been organized and presented in seven chapters.

Chapter I introduces the subject and deals with the definition of rural market, importance of rural markets, rural marketing in Indian economy, fast moving consumer goods, fast moving consumer goods industry in India, characteristics of FMCG in India, consumer behaviour in rural areas communication and promotion in rural market, rural marketing strategy, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, limitations and chapterization.

Chapter II discusses the Review of Literature relating to the past studies.

Chapter III describes the Methodology which includes the sample design, collection of data, period of study and tools of analysis and Profile of the Study Area.
Chapter IV analyses the characterizations of the sample respondents, and their shopping pattern. Further, it deals with the extent of consultation for the product purchased.

Chapter V examines the role of influences, extent of consideration of influences incentive schemes and belief structure of consumers.

Chapter VI analyses the brand preference, its relationship with profile variables and perceived dissimilarity between brands of selected consumer goods.

Chapter VII presents the summary of findings, conclusions and suggestions.