Findings and Conclusions
CHAPTER – 6
FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

6.1 FINDINGS

1. It is found that 81.5% of the respondents use HLL products, 41.2% of the respondents use products other than HLL and 22.8% of the respondents use both.

2. The amount spent for toilet soap per month is below Rs.50 by 51.6% of users. 39.5% of users spend between Rs.51-100. 5.2% users spend between Rs.100-150. 2.8% of users spend between Rs.151-200 and 1% of users spend above Rs.200. This shows very clearly that more than 50% of the users spend a maximum of Rs.50/- per month for the toilet soaps from their disposable income.

3. The non-users of toilet soap in the study area are 72. i.e. 6.6% of the respondents fall in non-user category.

4. Almost 70% of the toilet soap purchasers are very keen on brand name of the product

5. More than 80% of the users are not frequently changing their soaps. This shows that there is a consistency in consumption among the users of toilet soaps in rural area.

6. It is found that 27% of the toilet soap users in rural areas are considering weight of the soap as an important product feature.

7. It is found that 68% of the rural toilet soap users are not particular in the packaging aspects of the product.

8. It is observed that 67% of rural consumers are keen on fragrance aspects of the product when they go in for toilet soap purchase.
9. The present study is not aimed to measure brand loyalty separately. However, based on the number of years of using the same soap, it is possible to identify the loyal consumers. Hence, it is inferred that more than 75% of the rural consumers in this study area are loyal to the brand what they use now.

10. It is found that 75% of the rural consumers are not bothered about the colour of the product.

11. It is observed that 84% of the users of toilet soap in the study area are not purchasing the soap by its shape. Shape is immaterial for them.

12. It is found from the study that 70% of the users of toilet soap are not purchasing by seeing the advertisement of the product.

13. It is found that 84% of the users of toilet soap do not change their soap due to other brand soap advertisement.

14. It is found that 37% of the users purchase their toilet soaps because of wide popularity of the product.

15. It is observed that 87% of the users of toilet soap in the study area are not influenced by models or celebrities in the advertisement.

16. It is revealed from the study that 90% of the users of toilet soap are very keen on the quality of the product. This shows very clearly that rural consumers are quality conscious.

17. It is found that 30% of the users are willing to switch over to some other soap if the quality of that soap is better than the quality of the existing soap in use.
18. It is observed from the study that 19% of the users are influenced by the recommendation given by others while purchasing the toilet soap. It shows that 'word of mouth' plays a reasonable role in influencing the purchase of the product.

19. It is known from the study that 16% of the users purchase the product due to children pressure. This shows that children play a minor role in influencing the purchase of the product.

20. The study shows that 32% of the users purchase toilet soaps because of the reference by doctors. It is inferred that hygiene aspects in rural sector is gaining momentum and nowadays the awareness on health is seen among rural consumers.

21. Only 19% of the users are purchasing low cost soap. Rest of them is not keen on low cost soap. Hence, it is inferred that irrespective of the cost, 80% of the users purchase their toilet soaps.

22. Only 15% of the users are purchasing soaps based on availability of the soap in the shop that they normally buy. However, 85% of the users responded in such a way that if the product is not available in the shop, they have the tendency to go to some other shop and buy the soap that they normally use.

23. It is observed from the study that 57% of the users purchase the toilet soap based on the number of days of use. It is inferred that rural consumers weigh the utility value of the product.

24. The study shows that 85% of the users are very keen on their skin protection. Hence, it is inferred that the rural consumers are nowadays keen on safety aspects while using toilet soaps.
25. It is known from the study that 78% of the users are not purchasing their soaps because of an "offer". It is inferred that they are not keen on any offer. Rather, they may be keen on other aspects like foaming, fragrance, quality, etc.

26. It is found from the study that 89% of users do not change their brand because of the "offer" given by other brands. This shows very clearly that rural consumers are not keen on any type of "offer".

27. Only 32% of the users purchase their soap by seeing TFM. It is inferred that the "TFM" concept awareness has not yet percolated into the minds of rural consumers.

28. It is found that 82% of the consumers are satisfied with the price of the soap that they normally buy. It is inferred that it may be due to the consumers' perceived quality of the soap and the affordability level of the consumers.

29. It is found from the study that 68% of the consumers agree that TV is the best media for promoting toilet soap's advertisement. Hence, it is inferred that TV advertisement plays a key role in advertisement.

30. It is inferred that 69% of the users consider 'foaming' as an important parameter in soap. Hence, it can be concluded that 'foaming' is one of the major product features that influence consumer purchase.

31. It is found from the study that 78% of the consumers say that brand loyalty is possible only through sustained quality. Hence, it is inferred that if quality is not compromised, brand loyalty would be
there continuously and that is the key factor in retaining existing customers.

32. Only 50% of the users say that they may recommend the product to others. Hence, it is inferred that buying the product through 'word of mouth' is not a major factor in the consumer behaviour of rural consumers in the present scenario.

33. It is found that irrespective of the education status of the respondents, HUL brand is widely preferred. Next to HUL, respondents prefer products of Nature Power. It is inferred that Nature power is penetrating slowly and it may acquire a substantial market share in near future.

34. Next to HUL and Nature Power, Mysore Sandal soap is preferred by 64 respondents. Only a selected segment of the respondents prefers rest of the brands.

   It is concluded that the companies need to create awareness about their brands in the rural sector and then make use of the possible avenues to penetrate more.

35. Based on the disposable income of the various income groups, the amount spent for toilet soaps also varies. The amount spent for toilet soaps by each income group is different.

36. Cost of the soap is not the deciding factor towards purchase. Based on their choice, toilet soaps are purchased. Hence, cost is not a limiting factor. Approximately, 85% of respondents are happy with the price of the soap what they buy. Eighty-three percentages of
respondents have made it very clear that they do not go for low cost soap. Price of the soap is not an influencing factor for purchase. Rather, it may be due to product features like quality, foaming, fragrance, etc

37. Based on the perceived quality of the soap, 90% of the respondents purchase soap. Hence, it is inferred that inspite of the rural background, the respondents are very keen on quality and it is concluded that they are quality conscious.

38. It is found that 90% of the non-users fall in the age group of more than 45 years. It is inferred that the non-users in this age group are habitual in not using toilet soap.

39. All the age groups have the same pattern of purchase towards toilet soaps.

40. Consumer purchase towards toilet soaps is not the same for all the family sizes. All the family sizes have a different pattern of purchase of toilet Soaps.

41. Education level influences consumer purchase of toilet soaps.

42. As there is no much variation in the income level of non-users, it is observed that there is a consistency in the attitude towards the concept of "Toilet soap usage is a wasteful expenditure"

43. Though the family sizes are different, the users have exhibited a similar attitude on purchasing the low cost soap.

44. Not all the family sizes of users have similar satisfaction level on the cost of toilet soaps that they are using now.

45. Consumer attitude towards purchasing the product differs with
different levels of incomes of the respondents. Income is an important factor that is reflected on consumer attitude towards the purchase of toilet soaps.

46. Different monthly income level of users differ significantly in their choice of purchase of toilet soaps with regard to different product features. Monthly income is an important factor in choosing the products based on product features.

47. Educational qualification has influenced the respondents’ attitude towards product features on the purchase of the product.

48. Users with different educational qualification differ significantly on choosing their brand. It is not unique. Level of Educational qualification influences the respondents’ attitude in choosing their brand.

49. The users of toilet soaps with different income level are not unique in purchasing the toilet soap by seeing advertisement. Respondents’ attitude towards influence of advertisement in purchasing toilet soaps differ significantly according to the levels of income. Users of toilet soaps with different income level are not unique in purchasing the toilet soap by seeing advertisement.

50. Occupation and brand name are associated significantly. Occupation makes the respondents brand conscious, their attitude differs significantly with occupation.

51. Purchase of toilet soaps due to ‘offer’ differ according to the different levels of incomes. Attitude towards purchasing the toilet soap due to ‘offer’ significantly differ with level of educational qualification.
52. Educational level influences the respondents in purchasing the soap by seeing TFM.

53. Respondents' attitude towards quality differ with the level of education.

54. Nature of work i.e. occupation influences respondents differently towards their attitude on quality.

55. Levels of monthly income have an influence in the attitude of respondents on purchasing soaps based on quality.

56. The major contributing factor for illiterates to purchase soap is “Purchasing the soap because of models in the advertisements”.

57. Factor analysis on promotional features with educational qualification of the respondents has revealed the following results:
   Illiterates are in favour of soap's advertisement in TV.
   The respondents with elementary education are in favour of soap’s advertisement in TV.
   The respondents with High school education are influenced by models in the advertisements.
   The respondents with Higher secondary education are influenced by the “offer” provided to them.
   The respondents in the category of Graduates and Post graduates are influenced by models in the advertisements.

58. The most contributing factors among the promotional features' influence on the monthly income of the respondents based on factor analysis has been concluded as below:
The respondents with income less than Rs.2000, Rs.2001-4000, Rs.4001-6000 and above Rs.8000 are in favour of soap's advertisement in TV.

The respondents with income of 6001-8000 are in favour of models in the advertisements.

It is inferred that respondents feel that TV is the best media of promoting soap's advertisement.

59. Age, Monthly Income and Education are the factors that influence the Consumer's attitude towards non-purchase of toilet soaps.
6.2 INFERENCES:

1. It is inferred that 78% of the users are in the age between 26 and 55.

2. 80% of the users are with the educational qualification up to high school level. It is inferred that, in general, the literacy level is low in rural areas. But, compared to yester years, the literacy level is gradually increasing. But, inspite of their literacy level, respondents have awareness about using toilet soaps.

3. Non-users predominantly fall in the category of age above 45, illiterate with regard to educational qualification and with monthly income of less than Rs.4000. Hence, it is inferred that they have to be educated and strategies to be framed by the manufacturers.

4. Most of the users fall in the monthly income of less than Rs.6000/- per month. 50% of the consumers spend less than Rs.50 per month for toilet soaps.

5. More than 60% of the users are using the same soap for more than 10 years. This shows that they are loyal to a particular brand.

6. Rural consumers are aware of different brands that are available in the market.

7. Fragrance, quality, foaming and skin protection are the key features that play a vital role in the purchase of toilet soaps.

8. It is inferred that most of the users make it very clear that they are loyal to certain brands because of the quality of the products.

9. Awareness on various brands is very common in rural areas. It is inferred that 70% of the users purchase soaps only because of brand name.
their responses towards the number of years of using the same soap.

21. Age, Monthly Income and Educational qualification are the factors responsible for the non-purchase attitude of rural consumers.
6.3 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HUL brand is widely preferred in rural area especially the product “Hamam”. It is inferred that HUL has penetrated into rural market to a great extent. This may be due to company's excellent retail network.

Both Nature Power and Mysore Sandal can use aggressive marketing strategies to capture the rural market share to a reasonable extent. Brand awareness has to be created by the companies among rural users. The manufacturers should ensure the product availability in the retail shops of rural areas.

The toilet soap manufacturing companies should create good brand image and awareness with the help of mass advertising and through the shopkeepers.

Literacy level among rural consumers is in the upward trend now. Because of the enhancement in the literacy level among rural consumers, it is possible to create brand awareness.

From the study, it is inferred that most of the consumers are loyal to certain brands as they perceive that it is possible to a major extent only through sustained quality of the product. Hence, manufacturers should be very keen on maintaining the existing quality on a continuous basis and if possible, they should always aim for better quality to enhance customer satisfaction.

The users of toilet soap can be educated on the factor of “TFM”. Through this, ordinary brand users can be influenced to buy the “premium” category of brands. This would make their purchase on better quality of toilet soaps.
The advertisement for toilet soaps to rural consumers can be more focused on fragrance, quality, foaming and skin protection as these factors are primarily considered and accepted by them.

By reducing the cost on packing aspects of the product, cost of the product can be minimized to attract rural consumers as they are not very particular on packaging aspects of the product and they are cost conscious because of their limited disposable income. Sophisticated packaging should be avoided. Simple packaging can be adopted which can bring down the cost. Rural consumers are very keen on the utility value of the product rather than packaging aspects.

Television is more popular in promoting toilet soap’s advertisement according to the study conducted. Hence, companies can concentrate on advertisement through Television. Product positioning can be effectively done through Television as most of the consumers in rural areas have an access to see the programmes in TV. The wide reach of television network is an added advantage and it provides a golden opportunity for manufacturers to explore the as yet untapped rural market. Television has proved very advantageous in communicating with low literacy rural people.

Most of the rural consumers are not very keen on "offer". Hence, instead of concentrating on such promotional schemes, it is suggested that companies can concentrate on the quality and cost aspects of the product alone. Wherever possible, the cost of production can be minimized and through which unit cost can be reduced. This will help the manufacturer to reduce the price and the rural consumers may be benefited by that.
Rural consumers are very keen in choosing the product. They do not compromise the brand because of its non-availability in the shop which they normally buy. This shows that their attitude is more towards their choice only. However, still, it is the duty and responsibility of the manufacturer to ensure the product availability very near to their point of purchase.

Educational qualification makes them aware of the various brands and the features and benefits of the products also. Hence, any brand has to be suitably positioned to cater to the particular segment of customers.

The study shows that rural consumers are loyal to their brands of use. Hence, it is quite evident that once the consumers in rural area are satisfied with the product, they would definitely be loyal to the brand. From the study, it is further established that they are quality conscious. Hence, companies should be very keen on ensuring the right quality of the product always. They should not compromise on quality.

The advantage of using toilet soap on health grounds and hygiene aspects should be clearly focused to the non-user segment. The importance of maintaining their skin has to be clearly explained to them and some demo sessions can be organized to emphasize the need of using toilet soaps.

Converting the users into non-users can be done in the following method also:

Free samples can be given to rural consumers through public distribution system as most of their purchases are through Public Distribution System.
At the time of getting feedback, the non-users can be identified. After identifying the non-users, a doctor's visit for a health camp can be arranged. All the non-users can be requested to attend the camp. The non-users should be informed to assemble in a place where the doctor can talk on personal hygiene factors and the importance of using toilet soap.

After this, once again, free samples have to be provided to the non-users for one or two times. Having used the free samples, they may realize the importance of using the toilet soaps and there is a possibility that they may purchase the toilet soaps with lot of interest as the human beings are normally very keen on their health and hygiene aspects.

The impact of awareness programmes may result in converting the non-users into users.

The other way of converting the non-users into users' category is through door to door canvassing. This may also fetch good results.

One more method of creating awareness among rural non-users is through students of NSS as they are normally in the process of creating awareness on cleanliness, hygiene and safety aspects. They can talk to the rural non-users on the importance of using toilet soaps. This may create an impact among the rural non-users.

Improving the existing level of using toilet soaps can be done in the following way:

In maternity hospital itself, doctors can inform the parents about the toilet soap's importance on the health aspects of the born baby. They can suggest some suitable soap to take care of the tender skin of the babies. This would cultivate the habit of using the soap right from the beginning.
From the study, it is found that rural consumers are keen on fragrance, quality and foaming. Hence, suitable perfume has to be chosen by the manufactures for toilet soap manufacturing. To ensure effective foaming, appropriate water softener can be added as one of the ingredients during manufacturing. Quality of other ingredients should also be given prime importance to ensure right quality.
6.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

Following are the suggestions for future research:

- The study of consumer behaviour can be extended to other consumer products like shampoo, detergent cakes, cosmetic items, food products and other fast moving consumer goods in rural areas.
- The manufacturers can always explore the possibility of doing marketing research in rural areas for further penetration in the market.
- The rural untapped potential is an area to be concentrated more for which extensive research work can be carried out.
6.5 CONCLUSIONS

The rural market in India is much larger than the urban market in terms of population and number of households. The rural market consists of more than 100 million households with a total population of about 740 million. In spite of being larger in size, rural areas are characterized by low per capita income, low literacy, average agricultural productivity and low level of industrialization. These characteristics of rural India have resulted in limited capacity for consumption of goods and services when compared to consumption levels in any advanced country. This is the scenario of the rural market a decade back.

However, the scene now has changed considerably due to the rapid progress achieved in areas of agricultural development and allied activities like animal husbandry, sericulture, pisciculture and due to the encouragement given to rural and cottage industries.

The rural market has remained a 'dark area' for many companies manufacturing consumables and consumer durables. Development programmes in the fields of agriculture and allied activities, health, education, communications, rural electrification and others have improved the levels of general awareness in the rural areas and considerably changed the lifestyles of the rural populace.

To successfully exploit the potential offered by the rural market, there is a need to understand the market not just in terms of households and population but in terms of their occupation pattern, income generation, marketing arrangements for agricultural produce, the process of rural and cottage industrialization, communication facilities, infrastructure
development, rural buyer behaviour, attitude and belief of rural people and their changing values and aspirations.

Today, television has proved to be an effective mass medium for communication with the rural masses. The television network in the country today covers nearly 100 per cent of the population offering a greater reach when compared to any other mass medium. In addition, increased disposable incomes are available for spending an erstwhile 'luxury' goods like toilet and washing soaps, cosmetics, educational supplies, pharmaceutical products, etc. for the convenience of the rural family.

Infrastructure facilities like road and communications network, rural electrification, public distribution system, cinema, television coverage and the like have also received considerable attention in rural areas. The wide circulation of vernacular dailies in rural areas has created a demand not just for agricultural inputs but also for other products like mopeds, electrical goods, toilet soaps, washing soaps and services like banking, education, health, etc. in rural areas. With the various development programmes under implementation, rural demand is likely to be at least equal to urban demand, if not more.

Though rural India consists of more than 70% population, rural marketing is not fully encased by marketers. FMCG products could significantly increase their market share by extending attention to rural areas. More generic product with different advertisement camping will surely attract non users. This untapped source could be easily reached by FMCG manufacturing. It has been found that the market of FMCG products
in the rural area has been growing much faster than the urban market. Hence, Fast Moving consumer Goods companies need to market effectively to the large and under penetrated rural population to succeed in India.

The needs and wants of the rural consumers have to be studied in detail. Accordingly, the products should be designed and manufactured to ensure customer satisfaction. The manufacturing organizations of Fast Moving Consumer goods should be very keen on penetrating the untapped rural market. They should try to create innovative strategies to influence the rural consumers.

Quality is an important factor to be concentrated while designing a product for rural markets. Rural consumers are very keen on the utility value of the product. Most of the consumers are influenced by quality of the products. So, the FMCG companies should strictly stick on to the quality standards. Rural people expect quality oriented functional based product with reasonable price.

Apart from HUL, local manufacturers can also significantly increase their market share through strategies like product upgradation, new product launch, providing products at an affordable cost and enhancing the quality of the product.

Though awareness is there about toilet soaps, still, a certain percentage of the rural mass are not convinced with the use of toilet soaps. They are using home- made herbal powders for bathing. They have to be educated about the hygienic aspects of the toilet soap in terms of
protecting their skin. An awareness campaign can be done by toilet soap manufacturers in rural areas to convert the non-users into users.

The attitude and lifestyle of the rural folk has changed. They are increasingly become brand loyal. With increase in purchasing power and rise in literacy level, rural consumers have become more receptive. They are now getting influenced by "word of mouth" and have started looking at value for money.

Most of the consumers from rural area developed brand familiarity with brand names of various toilet soap manufacturers that are well known in urban areas.

The changing market scenario demands change in the corporate marketing strategies as well. The sales team has to be more aggressive towards the distribution of the toilet soaps in rural areas. Appointing an educated local salesman not only makes communication easier, cheaper and simpler, but he can also add a regional flavor to it. People can recognize and identify brands through color and packaging easily.

Hoardings and wall paintings are also highly suitable for rural areas since the hoarding or wall painting can include visuals with minimum write-up.

The various features that influence the rural consumers to purchase toilet soaps as per the present study are product features like quality, fragrance and foaming. Consumer attitude is reflected in the aspects of brand name, loyal towards the brand of use, not interested in "offer", no "switch over" to other brands just like that and no importance on "packaging aspects". With regard to promotional features, the rural consumers are not
convinced by advertisement, models appearing in advertisements and the various promotional offers given by companies. As per the study, rural consumers consider TV as the best media of promoting soap’s advertisement.

Effective communication is the key to reach rural customer. It has been observed that rural consumers are generally brand loyal. Advertisements touch the emotions of the rural folk. A marketer has to develop different brands to fulfill the requirement of different rural areas. They need to change product content as also packaging, communication or any association with the brand,

The brand has to suit the local needs. Manufacturers should understand the psyche of the rural people in terms of their requirements and tailor the products accordingly. Marketers can also offer the same product with a different brand name into different rural market segments.

It is understood from the study that manufacturers and marketers should do a proper marketing research to know the needs and wants of rural consumers.

Hence, it is concluded that once the requirements of rural consumers are clearly understood, a suitable product design could be made. Based on that, the products can be manufactured and delivered to suit their requirements and expectations.