6.0: INTRODUCTION:

Indian rural market, with its vast size and demand offers great opportunities to marketers. Rural market involves over 700 million potential customers and over 40 percent of Indian middle income groups. Indian rural markets have been a vital source of growth for most companies. In today’s rural market in India, various media of communication, television and radio have played prominent role. Penetration level of satellite television is very high in rural areas. Due to globalization, economic liberalization, Information Technology (IT) revolution, women power and improving infrastructure, rural India has more disposal income. Indian FMCG sector is the fourth largest sector in the economy. Penetration level as well as per capita consumption is low in rural India and hence indicates an untapped market potential.

Rural marketing is getting new heights in addition to rural advertising. The size of the rural market is one that companies cannot afford to ignore, looking at the challenges and opportunities, which rural markets offer to the marketers, it can be said that the future is very promising. The study uses a wide range of primary data collected through self field survey and through prepared questionnaires specially designed for fulfillment of the objectives set for the study. In this chapter the researcher has presented a summary of findings, suggestions and conclusion.

6.1: FINDINGS:

1. Now a day’s FMCG products plays a vital role in the rural area. People from different occupation, different income groups and irrespective of age groups uses FMCG products in every aspect of life and have a good knowledge of awareness level.

2. In case of awareness of the FMCG products, rural people are well aware of all the selected products listed in the questionnaires. Rural people have a good idea about the products ranging from high price to low price.

3. Though rural people are aware about premium category products, they are not interest to use those products. It is mainly due to higher product price.
4. Though the purchase behavior of FMCG products is backed by media influence, the price of the products plays a significant role in case of rural consumers.

5. Due to low rate of literacy level among rural consumers, promotion of FMCG products plays an important role. Well reached promotions made by the merchandiser create awareness level among rural consumers.

6. In case of FMCG products in the segment of laundry soap, it is seen; though all the products are well known to the rural people, Janata soap is the most trusted and highest selling laundry soap in the rural area with 91.80 percent users with 96.6 percent of total awareness. Tide has the second highest selling detergent powder 58.26 percent of users which has a total awareness of 91.3 percent among the consumers.

7. In case of bathing soap, namely Lux, Vivel, Dettol and Lifebouy, the highest number of awareness level is more than 90 percent each among the rural consumers. It is seen that the price of the products are comparatively low in respect of premium products.

8. In toothpaste segment it is seen that Colgate dental cream is the most popular FMCG product in rural market with 98.9 percent of awareness level followed by Pepsodent with 91.7 percent of awareness level. The main reason behind the highest number of awareness level is the promotion of the two products, Colgate and Pepsodent in rural area which is well reach by the merchandiser.

9. In case of shampoo it is seen that Clinic Plus is the most trusted brand with 91.6 percent of user, and of 98.9 percent of total awareness level in rural areas. Sunsilk is the second most popular shampoo with 50.2 percent of user, and 95.5 percent of total awareness. Rural consumer prefers to buy small sachet, of shampoo due to low price of the product. Though all the shampoo packets are available in small sachet price of the premium product, popular product and economic product differ from each other. Rural consumer goes to buy relatively low price product.
10. FMCG products in the segment of hair oils, Parachute coconut oil and Bajaj Almond Drops are the highest used hair oils with 79.01 percent and 52.0 percent. Total awareness level for these top two products are 98.9 percent and 93.6 percent respectively.

11. In the segment of biscuits Biskfarm Top, Mari Gold and Britannia Good Day are the most popular products among rural consumers with more than 95 percent of awareness. Biskfarm Top and Mari Gold is the highest used biscuits with 95.72 percent and 95.48 percent of user. Here it can be seen that price of the products plays a vital role among rural consumers. Though Britannia Good Day has an awareness level of 95.1 percent, only 44.4 percent of consumer consumes the product.

12. Media is playing an important role while creating demand of FMCG products. Advertisement via audio-visual media, i.e. TV is the most powerful media used by the merchandiser to promote their products. It is seen in the study that more than 58 percent of the rural people watch TV.

13. Audio media i.e. radio is also a popular media for creating demand of FMCG products in rural areas. Advertisements appearing in various FM channels are well reached to the consumers. But it is seen that non availability of FM channels in Jorhat is the main factor of not a single respondent for radio.

14. News paper is another form of communication which also creates a demand of FMCG products in the market. But it is seen that due to high price rural people are not much interested to buy newspaper. One thing also needs to mention that the news appearing in newspaper also comes in TV. So, people are more interested to watch audio-visual media that is Television.

15. Prime and evening time together is the most preferable time by the rural people to watch TV, which is the highest among the entire selected time segment, with 69.7 percent. In case of Jorhat it is seen that 69.2 percent and 75.9 percent of the people watch TV at evening and prime time together.

16. The numbers of people who come across through advertisement in between their favorite TV programs are 74.5 percent and 60.9 percent respectively for
17. In both the districts, it is seen that irrespective of any age group people are more interested to watch TV, rather than going through radio or newspaper. People from rural areas are not much interested to read daily newspaper due to high price and the same news available in news channel also. People used to be busy throughout the day due to farming or daily wagers work, and non availability of electricity in day time, rural people watch TV mostly at evening and prime time only.

18. In this research study it can be seen that movies, regional TV serials, regional news channels are most popular programs among all the age groups. More than 50 percent of the respondents from all the selected age groups prefer news, serials and movies all together. TV viewers from different age groups respond that they frequently come across through advertisement displayed in between their favorite TV programs. Thus advertisements through TV affect the rural consumers while purchasing FMCG products.

19. In the study it is found that, when educational qualification increases people go through the news paper and magazine. Thus, promotion through print media is effective in rural areas, although TV is the most popular media among rural consumers irrespective of education level. Irrespective of any educational qualification frequently, rural people come across advertisement.

20. Increase in literacy rate, income level effect the rural people’s life style and living standard and hence uses of FMCG products are also increasing. Now a day’s rural people are very much conscious about health and beauty, as a result FMCG products get importance over the traditional products.

21. In the behavior of spending pattern, it is seen that FMCG products gets medium priority with 24.0 percent in the five point likert scale starting from “Not a priority, Low priority, Medium Priority, High priority and Essential.” 15.4 percent of the rural consumer says that FMCG products have high priority in their day to day life. Only 0.4 percent says that FMCG products are not a priority in their life.
22. In Jorhat district it is seen that 23.8 percent and 23.6 percent respond FMCG products as medium priority and high priority in their day to day life.

23. In Kamrup it is seen that 24.1 percent of the respondents have medium priority and 7.4 percent of the people have high priority over the FMCG products.

24. Income level plays an important role in the rural market, as we know that low level income affect a buyer’s decision making process while buying FMCG products. It is seen that 36.0 percent of the total population in this research study belongs to income group 5001-10000. Consumers from this income group responds FMCG products as medium priority with 48.71 percent followed by 38.46 percent have low priority. For the income group ≤ 5000, 60 percent of the people have medium priority and 30 percent of the people have low priority for FMCG products.

25. It is clear from the above discussion that while the income level is increasing the priority level for the FMCG products in also increasing. 15.78 percent of the respondents from the income group above 25000 respond that FMCG products are essential to their day to day life.

26. From the research study it is clear that rural consumers never bargain over the MRP of the products, though there is a scope of bargain of the FMCG products, it is mainly due to low level of literacy level and small purchasing of units at a time. Another important factor is that people from rural areas purchase products from the same retail store available near their house and after bargaining for two or three times if the retailer refuses to reduce the price, rural people do not bargain for the next time. 17.5 percent from Jorhat and 22.5 percent from Kamrup respond that frequently they bargain over the MRP of FMCG products.

27. Regarding the verification of the expiry date, rural consumers never verify the expiry date while purchasing FMCG products. This is due to low level of literacy, that people from rural area think that retailer never give them an outdated product. Rural people also believe that retailers from local areas
frequently went to city market or to distributor to purchase FMCG products and the retailers will never buy expired date product.

28. Rural consumers also think that the products available in the retailers of the local area are quickly sold out and the option never comes for the expiry date.

29. Only 2.6 percent of the total respond regularly verify the expiry date before purchasing the FMCG products.

30. Regarding the trade mark and ISI mark majority of the people have no idea about the issue. 94.3 percent of the total respondents never go through the ISI mark or trade mark before buying FMCG products.

31. In case of cash memo, rural people never ask for vouchers or cash memo after purchasing of FMCG products. 96.5 percent and 96.0 percent people from Jorhat and Kamrup respond that they never ask cash memo after purchasing FMCG products. This is because of small quantity purchase and lack of knowledge. Retailers generally provide a small paper slip with the total amount mentioned.

32. 78.1 percent and 65.6 percent of the rural people from Jorhat and Kamrup districts respond positively when asked about the Grahak Suraksha Committee, i.e. majority of the people with 70.9 percent knows about the committee. But while asking about the lodging of complaint at the time of dissatisfaction majority of the respondents with 99.3 percent replied that they never complain. This is because of low level of literacy.

33. In this research study it can be seen that product packaging plays an important role in the selection of FMCG products. This means that if a product with new packaging or new size available in the market then people get attracted towards the product. A total of 41.7 percent of people and 49.2 percent of people strongly agreed and agreed that product packaging plays an important role in the selection of FMCG products. A total number of 6.1 percent and 7.9 percent of people from Jorhat disagreed and strongly
disagreed that product packaging do not play an important role in the selection of FMCG products, where the percentage is nil in Kamrup district.

34. From the study it is clear that though product packaging is important in the selection of FMCG products, it never gets priority over the content. Rural people always quality oriented rather than good packaging. A total of 58.3 percent of people from both the districts strongly agreed that product quality should be good than packaging. 16.8 percent of the total people from both the districts strongly disagreed that product packaging gets priority over the content. Respondents from both the districts approximately same in this regards.

35. In the study area, it is seen that more than half of the total sample selected have the opinion that well packaged FMCG products attract more customer at the first sight. 55.3 percent respondent from Jorhat and 51.0 percent respondent from Kamrup district, a total of 52.8 percent of the respondent are agree with the statement that well packaging products attract more consumer.

36. In respect to reliability of the product and packaging, rural people never agreed that if the product is well packed than the product must be good. In Kamrup 57.0 percent and in Jorhat 51.8 percent of people which is highest among both the districts strongly disagree that well packed products are more reliable.

37. It is seen that irrespective of education qualification most of the rural people agreed that packaging plays an important role in the selection of FMCG products.

38. People from the rural area believe that a product should be quality oriented instead of good packaging with low quality. It is seen that when education level increase people can easily determined the quality of the product.

39. In the study it is seen that irrespective of education level people believe that well packaged FMCG products attract more consumer. When a product with
a new look, new size with well packaging then people at the first sight get attraction towards the product and use to purchase the product.

40. Though packaging plays important role, rural people believe that well packaged FMCG products does not mean the product is more reliable. In this regard the researcher had found education does not play a role while they are responds to the questions, that well packed products are more reliable.

6.2: SUGGESTIONS:

Considering the objectives and findings of the study some suggestions are mentioned below.

- Promotion of the FMCG products in rural areas are not well reached, merchandisers of the FMCG product have to look at this matter seriously. Promotion of FMCG brands in rural markets requires the special measures. Due to the social and backward condition, the personal selling efforts have a challenging role to play in this regard. The word of mouth is an important message carrier in rural areas. Companies can use new technology for proper communication of its products and services to their customers. There is always a trade–off between the product quality, a consumer perceive and the merchandiser wants to communicate. So, the positioning of the technology is very crucial in this regard. Promotion through local language and linking with the folk culture is very important while preparing an advertisement.

- Availability of the products in the rural market plays an important role in the purchasing behavior of rural consumers. So, FMCG products producers have to prepare a proper distribution channel for rural market. A proper distribution channel which can reach the corner of the country, local paan wala, and local baniya or kirana shop owners is very much important to penetrate the rural market. Big Multinational companies in India can capture the rural market share if they can go through to the local market shoe sellers with low priced products.
• Instead of appointing sales manager’s in distributor or managers from urban areas, company can appoint local graduates who have a good knowledge of surrounding villages with fluency in local language. Rural people are very much attached by emotion, so word of mouth by local sales manager can play an important role in this regard.

• Though Television plays an important part in the product promotion via advertisement, producers can use traditional media which include melas, puppetry, folk theatre etc. to promote their products. Rural mindset accepts the brands easily, which are close to their culture, as rural people are very much attached to their tradition and custom, traditional mode of product promotion will be benefited.

• Merchandiser can use television as an advertising media to grab the rural market, because rural people are mostly interested to watch television rather than go through newspaper or radio. Advertisement in local language in between the regional television programs will be more beneficial or effective to penetrate the rural market.

• As the rural consumers are strictly adhere to their choice of FMCG products, producers can go for distribution of free sample of their newly launched product to create a change of their perception. Free sample distribution will help the consumers to get a different taste regarding the product quality and that will create a new dimension in the sale of that product.

• Government also has to look at the matters of legal issues seriously, and try to conduct awareness camp frequently as per the requirement. Awareness camp is respect of various legal issues will be beneficial for the rural people regarding the asking of cash memo, verification of expiry date, Grahak Suraksha committee in case of grievance etc.

• As the income level is low in rural areas, and people use to buy small units of products, the small size packets or sachets priced between rupees 1 for shampoo and hair oils, and rupees 5 for soap, face cream, detergent and biscuits will be beneficial in rural areas. Producers should promote that kind
of packets where pricing of the products is low and affordable so that one can buy the product.

- Now a day’s rural people know the difference between the products and the utilities derived out of it. So, producers have to look at the quality of the product with minimum price level. As rural Indian customer always wanted value for money. Producers have to give more importance at the price of the product by promoting small packet, as price of the product plays vital role in the rural areas.

- Apart from the various distribution channels, corporate houses required giving considerable attention to the rural haat and melas as these are considered as important places for gathering of rural people weekly or monthly for various consumer goods. So, corporate houses can use these haats and melas as a platform to promote their products.

- Lack of communication through advertising media, door to door selling of the product will be more beneficial, for proper communication. It will help the consumer to collect information regarding the product.

6.3: CONCLUSION:

FMCG products now a day’s playing an important role in the life style of rural people. Assam is state where 26807034 people living in rural areas, with its vast size and demand for FMCG products offers a great opportunity to the marketers of FMCG products. Increase in education and income level, life style and living standards of the rural people is increasing and hence uses of FMCG products are also increasing. There are various FMCG products are available in the rural market which fulfill wants and needs of the rural consumers. Rural people are interested to spend on FMCG products which have relatively low cost and provide a quality service by fulfilling their needs. Though people are well aware about different FMCG products, they are not interested to buy products which are relatively costly. Small size packets or sachets are more demanded in rural areas, as the price is low and convinient for rural consumers. Both Illiterate and literate groups are interested to buy branded products with the assurance that quality is assured as the manufacturer from reputed companies. As the change in attitude to
spend more on highly price branded products among high income groups in rural areas clearly suggest that there is an ample scope for such products to capture the markets in these areas by increasing the supply of these products. There is a lack of knowledge among consumers regarding various legal issues which are most important to a consumer. Government can go for various camp organizations to create awareness among rural consumer. The marketing agencies can conduct health awareness programs by educating the people about the need to use the health care products to capture hair fall, dry skin etc. In the end it is certain that FMCG companies will really gain in the rural markets in order to achieve double digit growth targets in future.