CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

Health is wealth – so goes an adage
This is very true for as long as one is healthy he can earn any amount of wealth. Man has always tried all methods like yoga, medicine etc. to correct any illness and remain in pink of health. In this process medical science that strives to treat all types of illness has recorded tremendous progress. These can be treated by the in-take of drugs whose efficacy is normally known to the laymen as well. The drugs that are used to treat these MINOR AILMENTS are directly sold to the patients even without prescription of medical practitioners. These drugs are known as “Over The Counter” (OTC) drugs. The market for non-prescription or OTC drugs is free from government pricing controls. Market forced influence pricing. It is this characteristic of OTC market that calls for developing various innovative strategies to increase sales. Secondly the consumers at large are unaware about the minor ailments treatment using OTC drugs which can save time and money.

This chapter concludes the research work by some important findings emerging from the study. The study was more important for the researcher because even today the health care system is not enough in number wise and quality wise. Secondly the cost of health care in researched area has seen a high growth which is making an average patient unaffordable and most important the life style of is changing from all perspectives like anything. Society is running short of time in this fast-food world, hence going to Doctor for minor ailments treatment is question mark . treating minor ailments is becoming easy as like GlaxoSmithKline consumer healthcare and Ranbaxy Consumer health care are marketing OTC Medicines to patients in minor ailments as first line of defense. With the effective implementation of Four P’s Product, Price, Promotion and Place.

The strategies implemented in making the OTC products easily available, affordable, accessible and create awareness through effective implementation of marketing strategies will have a maximum of consumers . The trust is been build up among the consumers that the OTC drugs are affordable and effective.

To achieve the predefined objectives of study, the primary data was collected to find expectations and self medication among the consumers in research area and many more aspects in OTC drugs marketing. These aspects were relating to suffering from Minor ailments ,demographic profile of consumers and prospects to companies offering OTC medicines.

The data collected as analyses and interpreted , some important findings are drawn and some important suggestion are made for consideration and for future research in the area of self medication and bringing new categories and molecules under the umbrella of OTC drugs so that the rich and poor will treat minor ailments with low cost and easily.
7.2 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Since this being marketing study, the primary data was collected through a detail questionnaire with the view to study important aspects of minor ailments, Self medication through non-prescriptive drugs called as OTC drugs. Marketing of OTC drugs, using strategies to attract more and more consumers.

The summary of major findings in the study is presented as follows.

FINDINGS

1. The use of OTC medicines as first line of defense in minor ailments like cold and cough, pains, gastric problems, first-aid. Consumer across all segments were of the view that Self Medication strategy using OTC medicine is the easiest way of medication in minor ailments as the distribution strategy used by OTC marketing companies makes OTC product easily and timely available.

2. Consumer’s expectations and behavioral changes about health were similar across all segments consumer age, gender, income groups, education qualification there was minor difference in taking OTC medicines as first line of defense in minor ailments.

3. When suffering from minor ailments consumer were most likely strategy by consumer was found to be pop a pill, either stocked at home or visited nearby chemists. Very rare cases were noticed which directly approached Doctors in their minor ailments. Few cases of home remedies were also found.

4. The major findings came out from the survey was in major ailments were visiting doctor was necessary, the patients has tried OTC medicine from chemist shop asking consultation from chemist and if not recovered had visited Doctors.

5. Consumers Back experiences, family members and friends played an important role in influencing choices in minor ailments. OTC medicines marketing strategies and promotions strategies which made the products available at low cost and easily available at chemist were found to also influencing in decision making on choice of OTC medicine.

6. The important finding came out was majority of the OTC medicines were not available with general stores as these were permitted by FDA. General stores in the areas where chemist was not available also fail to provide OTC medicines. The cost of OTC medicines was much higher than generic drugs and secondly companies failed to reach shopkeepers assessing and solving the problems faced by shopkeeper in marketing their products.

7. An interesting finding came was, the surveyed consumers said that the consumer feel waiting of doctor at his clinic was wasting time in minor ailments; hence they would first visit chemist for treating illness as they are aware about the OTC products through effective promotion strategies adopted by pharmaceutical companies.
8. Advertising and promotional Strategies like word of mouth, television advertisements, and radio advertisement on OTC medicines on different channels by the sample companies were found to be most effective media. Secondly posters in doctor’s clinic and chemist shops were also found to be influential. there was no difference in impact of these media vehicles on the different segments of consumers studied.

9. OTC advertisement recalls was found to be good across the strata of consumers. Brands like Crocin, Eno, Voloni, Cherycof and Pepfiz were commonly recalled brands by Urban and semi urban supported with higher education and middle income groups. OTC Products advertising was a great influencer and was seen making the desired impact.

10. Consumers showed positive attitude towards OTC products marketing thru general shops, easily available and charging low cost products like Crocin, Revital, and Eno had made a good impact and reached the rural markets also but the speed of dispersion is slow.

11. The surveyed consumers perceived that OTC drug marketing strategies will make the drugs cheaper, easily available at stores and also information of the brand. This will encourage consumers to use OTC drugs as first line of defense and reduce cost on healthcare management.

12. Doctor’s response was highly negative towards self medication through OTC medicines across the consumer strata. As they felt that self medication with lead to taking health in hands and will have detrimental effects.

13. Few Gynecologist and dermatologist t prescribed OTC brands in minor ailments. As they were safe and easily available.

14. Doctors were of the opinion that consumers will get more involved in health management if more OTC Drugs are available in open market without prescription. this will decrease the Foot falls at their clinic. Hence they were against OTC promotions by company representatives at their clinic saying that against there ethics.

15. The study showed that Doctors in age group and with different specialties were in positive frame of mind stating that OTC products will reach the areas where primary health care is question market; private healthcare cost more even in minor ailment also so .the companies should bring down the cost of OTC products to reach the poor.
16. The study revealed that Chemist played an important role in pushing a specific brand based on his interest in the tune of loyal consumers, first time consumer and doctor’s consumers.

17. Among the various influencers chemist was the most reliable influencer for the consumer in treating minor ailments. As consumers rely more on chemists in treating their ailments.

18. Chemists are against making OTC products available at kirana and general store as they will increase competition and more and more life style products, vitamins and neutraceuticals will be available on retail counter. As these modern trade counters will charge less in the competitive markets and have better display and promotions.

19. Chemists are of the opinion that companies specifically Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy should innovate product strategy and media strategy as the many company’s are in the foray of OTC markets with more or less same compositions.

20. Most of the chemists felt that companies like Glaxo –Smithkline and Ranbaxy can empower consumers on the rational use of drugs through a well planned innovative marketing strategy revolving around the minor ailments knowledge and managing it through a effective distribution channel and increasing there trained sale force.

21. The researcher during his study found that the FDA doesn’t have a valid list of OTC molecules; hence the companies, doctors and consumers are at win- win situation companies specifically GlaxoSmithKline and Ranbaxy are more interested in making successful RX to OTC Switch as it happened in case of Iodex and Revital. The best strategy to revive the expired product is Rx-OTC switch.

22. The researcher during his study found that the permitting more OTC products will lead to safe medication of common ailments which will reduce burden of Doctors, government primary health care system, private hospitals and reduce the cost of healthcare for the poor and needy.
7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this growing market of OTC Products companies are trying there their best weapons to market their products through innovative marketing strategies. it is crystal clear that there would be number of possible measures which can improve the market share o the sample companies which are been studied. As reveled by the study, following are the areas where special and immediate measures are required.

Recommendations to GlaxoSmithKline and Ranbaxy Consumer Healthcare.Divison.

1. In OTC drug marketing the companies, consumers and the intermediate area in win – win situation, hence the companies should market its OTC products aggressively as the threat is from new entrants and existing competitors in this category. As More successful switches from prescription drug to Non Prescription are becoming successful.

2. GlaxoSmithKline and Ranbaxy should maintain a good balance between distributors, chemists and modern trade as they are taking products to the consumers in all possible way. This calls for an effective storage and logistic strategies.

3. Glaxo SmithKline and Ranbaxy should bring up an OTC Drug Delivery model as they have a strong distribution strategy and open to new ventures in the area of distribution.

4. Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy should create value in OTC drug marketing as it is driven by consumer need and leads towards self-medication and preference to naturals. Emphasizes should be on providing high quality product, safe product, and product at competitive price by implementing an effective product strategy.

5. The studied companies should continue with advertising strategy specially using Medias like television, and doctor’s detailing at the same time should focus on radio advertisements, newspaper, magazines advertisements, hoardings and posters at doctor’s clinic, chemists and general stores as per the need in the area. POP material should be made available at every counter.

6. Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy should innovate their advertising strategy and promote the OTC products through local and regional languages n local newspaper. Chemist should be taken into consideration while framing advertising strategy at local level.

7. The Companies should focus more on the mother brands as they are in maturity stage, which requires heavy promotions and product improvements. As these brands have ruled the market at the same time competitions is killing the product.

8. The Companies should craft strategy enter organized retail modern trade. As more and more consumer at visiting malls this can be a good strategy to introduce all the OTC Products under one roof.
9. Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy should make OTC products less costlier, easily available, risk free and a quality product in this dynamic competitive environment.

10. It is expected that Consumers will depend heavily on these kinds of OTC products with changing life styles and health consciousness. Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy should remain up-to-date in their marketing strategies.

11. Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy should craft a strategy taking into consideration Doctor’s reluctance on OTC promotions and prescriptions. As Doctors are still the kings in pharmacy marketing, companies should train their marketing representatives in the area of ethical considerations and Social marketing so that they will motivate Doctors to think positively on OTC Products.

12. Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy will face severe competition from Dabur, pfizer, Novartis, morepen, Himalaya drug, etc in this sector. The company should plan to storm the market with fewer and pain reducing and even ayurvedic and herbals medicines.

13. Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy should think of Post Offices as their partners in distribution channel as the post offices are located at remote areas in Maharashtra where chemist’s shops are not available. Postman with efficient training in OTC drug marketing -product safety, efficacy, potency and price will enter directly into consumer’s home. Thus making OTC drugs readily available to consumers. This could be a competitive advantage for the sample companies.

14. Finally pharmacy companies like Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy should bring more drugs under OTC umbrella, so that the medical cost of an average consumer for treating minor ailments goes down as a fine line of defense, which could also achieve company’s corporate social responsibility.
7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS (-FDA, OPPI AND IDMA)

1) As on today, FDA doesn’t have a list of molecules under OTC category, seeing the growth rate of OTC sector the policy makers should bring out an official list of OTC drugs category. Which will be useful for companies to bring more OTC drugs under the category and this will reduce the burden of government’s primary health care system. Involved in minor ailments health care.

2) The growth of OTC drugs has just began, to boost the same, regulation which are proactive for this sector has to be framed, polices have to be brought at local level so that marketing and promotion of OTC becomes easier. In turn OTC marketing companies like Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy invest more this booming sector.

3) Most of the general stores are unaware of how many products are under OTC category and do they have permission to shelf these kinds of products at their counters. Hence it is necessary for the regulators to bring a rules and regulations for general stores and modern trades on OTC drugs marketing.

4) The policy makers should train the pharmacists on the lines of community pharmacists, so that the pharmacists will counsel the patients on usage of OTC drugs in case of minor ailments.

5) The policy makers should allow promotions and advertisements in local languages with detail information of active molecule, usage of products, side effects and a clear line like “Use only as first line of defense”. OR “only for Minor Ailments”.

6) Policy makers should encourage chemists for counseling patients on their minor ailments and suggesting most appropriate medicine in OTC category.

7) The companies if trying for new distribution networks like Postman, and post offices, policy makers should work as an arbitrator and solve these kinds of strategic issues. This will encourage pharmacy companies like Glaxo –SmithKline and Ranbaxy to market and distribute the products directly at consumers’ residence.

8) This study may be further studied in future period of time to study OTC medicines as a competitive advantage for consumer health care companies and problems of medical fraternity in endorsing OTC products.
7.5 FUTURE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Findings from this present study provide initial impression of how pharmaceutical companies market OTC products and consumers reactions to the marketing strategies used by the pharmaceutical companies in the research area, but further research is warranted.

The study of comparative marketing strategies of OTC products by GSK and Ranbaxy Consumer healthcare division can be conducted at national level. Deregulation of drugs and creating conducive Rx to OTC switch climate is of national importance and therefore understanding opinion of consumers across the country is necessary and secondly it will help the pharmaceutical companies to craft innovative marketing strategies. If a similar research can be conducted again, it will provide data to researchers to study and evaluate the practical importance of this issue in the self medication area and also provide practical significance to know the problems of marketing executives in the area. Earlier studies in the area of marketing strategy, including the presented here provide a predetermined aspect of potential marketing activities and ask the respondents to opine on importance level.

Marketing strategies are secret weapons of OTC marketing companies hence it is suggested that a format of allowing chemist, doctors and consumers to identify critical success factors of marketing OTC products.

Further research in this area can focus on making available and affordable health system through community chemist’s models. According to the findings of the study, OTC products are marketed and advertised freely so that maximum consumers are educated and treat minor ailments at home using OTC products as first line of defense.

Since it can be expected that more Rx to OTC switch will increase number of drugs in OTC category in near future, it may be valuable to conduct more research on group of consumer who consume OTC Products available to Counters freely and either switch from the existing brand or continue to earlier brand. A study on marketing of OTC Products using post office and postman can also be a studied as a channel of marketing OTC drugs at national area.